

Beyond the neoliberal subject?

**Identity, practice and struggle in the youth services
sector of England and Wales, 2007-2022**

G. M. Turner

A thesis submitted for the degree of
PhD in Ideology and Discourse Analysis

Department of Government

University of Essex

Date of submission for examination: January 2024

COVID-19 Impact Statement

The research for this thesis, undertaken on a part-time basis from early 2018 to completion in early 2024, was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in various ways. The circumstances of the pandemic, with public health measures such as lockdowns and other social distancing restrictions, impacted the studying process as well as the scope, direction and presentation of the research.

The various impacts have included the following points:

- (i) For the duration of this doctoral study a decision was made, during the COVID-19 pandemic, to not collect and analyse data through face-to-face research or other forms of in-person fieldwork. For extended time periods there were strict social distancing rules, travel constraints and risk assessments that ruled out face-to-face research and other in-person fieldwork. There was also ongoing uncertainty and caution surrounding new variants and the potential for protective measures (once eased) to be reintroduced.

- (ii) As a part-time doctoral student there were extended periods when my own research capabilities - including my allocated study time and home working spaces - were significantly impinged and constrained by the COVID-19 pandemic. For many people, including myself, there were repeated disruptions to their children's schooling with associated changes to caring responsibilities and home-schooling, there were family illnesses with associated caring responsibilities, and repeated isolation periods for

household members. Additionally, as a part-time doctoral student undertaking research alongside full-time employment (with 'key worker' status), there was a new and more intense working environment (resulting from COVID-19) to manage. All of this impacted the studying process and my research capabilities. There were research delays, there was the 'reining-in' of potential data collection approaches, and the prioritisation of specific data collection methods over others.

(iii) Potentially, an alternative research strategy (i.e. one developed outside of a pandemic) might have been based upon field visits and field notes, as well as in-person, on-site interviews and focus groups. As such the collection of data and the type of data collected could have taken the thesis in a different direction and adjusted its scope and presentation (including the nature of the case studies). For instance, thick descriptions developed from field visits and field notes could have been further developed and included in the thesis, and in-person group discussions could have been held with research participants and integrated too, but this has not been the case.

(iv) During the 2020-2021 academic year, while aiming to keep research options relatively open, a pragmatic emphasis was placed upon developing a research strategy that prioritised the core data collection methods of image-based and document research, alongside a more limited number of online interviews. As such the scope, direction and presentation of the research has developed in the way that it has.

(v) Another key development within the thesis has been the decision to adopt a bricolage approach within the research strategy. As such the substance of the research process is framed and produced through a bricolage in chapters 4-6 of the thesis. Arguably, this is a constructive and creative development that has been integrated within the thesis to further the analysis of relevant policy, services and practice - plus it, hopefully, offers a novel and fruitful approach for providing insight into each of the selected case studies.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the participants who shared their time to be involved with the research for this thesis, and for sharing their experiences, knowledge, passion, and commitment to their line of work, their services, their communities and to young people.

Thank you to my supervisory team of Jason Glynos, David Howarth and Vasilios Ioakimidis who have guided, supported and prompted me with their feedback and feedforward over the years of developing this thesis. Notably Jason has played a key role as my principal supervisor, and he has been fantastic in this role. Prior to the introduction of Zoom during the pandemic, I recall that after each of my in-person supervisory team meetings I would have lots and lots of ideas and suggestions to mull over - and write up - on the long train journeys into the evenings and back home. The great prompts and 'food for thought' still occurred once Zoom meetings were introduced, though without the lengthy rail trips to follow straight afterwards.

Informal feedback and discussions with doctoral students at the Ideology and Discourse Analysis (IDA) sessions have also been very valuable, and in turn I will have encountered the breadth of research interests from various cohorts while I studied part-time alongside them. Thank you too to the various staff at the University of Essex who have put on numerous training sessions for research students, and for staff who have provided various administrative support along the way.

A final thank you to my family and friends for their support and patience as I have worked on this thesis alongside my other (non-PhD) commitments.

Abstract

This thesis contributes to knowledge surrounding recent changes in the youth services sector in England and Wales, 2007-2022. Incorporating the age of austerity, this period saw significant policy and service developments impacting the so-called *Lost and COVID Generations*. With this as backdrop, the thesis critically explores how a community of educators - youth workers - experience, navigate and seek to go beyond the neoliberalising logics associated with these developments.

The thesis draws on work associated with the Essex School of Discourse Analysis to develop a theoretical framework and case-based research strategy to critically compare the National Citizen Service in England and the Youth Service in Wales. The former is delivered to young people aged 15-17 through a competitively tendered programme. The latter's remit is young people aged 11-25, through a partnership of local authorities and the voluntary sector. A bespoke methodological bricoleur approach is developed in which documentary and interview material from the cases are gathered and organised around pairs of paradigmatic images. A logics-based nodal framework is then used to analyse the logics for each service's provision, distribution, delivery and governance.

The thesis shows - in considerable detail - how the 'roll back' (austerity) and 'roll out' (marketisation) phases of neoliberalisation have impacted this sector. It provides analysis of variations, commonalities, contestations and spaces of agency across the cases. Furthermore the thesis identifies a set of alternative logics that are characterised as nurturing a post(-)neoliberal outlook.

This thesis contributes to existing literature: *substantively* - with this cross-national and systematic piece of comparative work of variegated neoliberalisation within the youth services sector; *methodologically* - by deploying an image-based bricolage in conjunction with a logics-based nodal framework analysis; and, *theoretically* - by introducing a post(-)neoliberal framework to articulate alternative practices and to acknowledge spaces of institutional and professional agency.

Table of Contents

COVID-19 Impact Statement	ii
Acknowledgements	v
Abstract.....	vi
List of Tables	xiv
List of Appendix Tables.....	xiv
List of Images	xv
List of Acronyms	xvi
1. Introduction	1
<i>Overview of Thesis.....</i>	<i>1</i>
Principal Argument	5
<i>Background Narrative and Scene Setting: An Autoethnographic Account.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Overview of Research</i>	<i>11</i>
Research Question, Aim and Objectives.....	12
Research Puzzle and Existing Literature	14
The Research Strategy and its Operationalisation.....	18
The Bricolage Approach.....	20
Delimitations and Parameters of the Study.....	21
<i>Overview of Chapters and Findings.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Conclusion.....</i>	<i>26</i>
2. Literature Review	28
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>28</i>

The Literature Review: Structure, Themes and Bodies of Knowledge	28
<i>Part One: Typologies of Youth Work and Youth Workers</i>	<i>30</i>
The Neoliberal Subject and the Performative Professional.....	35
Summary of Part One	38
<i>Part Two: Understanding and Analysing Neoliberalism.....</i>	<i>39</i>
The Process of Neoliberalisation	43
Critiques and Defences of Neoliberalism Analysis	44
Beyond Neoliberalism? Resistances, Disruptions and Alternatives	47
Analysing Neoliberalisation, Agency and Resistance.....	52
Post-neoliberalism/Postneoliberalism?	57
Summary of Part Two	61
<i>Part Three: Agendas for Youth Work.....</i>	<i>62</i>
Youth Work Discourse vs. External Demands: Historic Tensions.....	63
Youth Work Discourse vs. External Demands: Targeting and the Deficit-Model.....	65
The Agenda of Youth Transitions	68
The Rise of the 'NEET' and 'Employability' Agendas	70
Youth Services and the NEET Agenda: England	73
Youth Services and the NEET Agenda: Wales	75
Summary of Part Three.....	76
<i>Part Four: Researching Youth Work and Youth Services.....</i>	<i>76</i>
Problematizing Research Studies of Youth Work and Youth Services	77
The Roles of Qualitative and Quantitative Research	80
Highlighted Gaps in Research	81
Summary of Part Four.....	85
<i>Conclusion.....</i>	<i>86</i>
3. Theoretical Approach and Research Strategy.....	88
<i>Introduction.....</i>	<i>88</i>

Structure and Argument	88
<i>Part One: Contextualising the Research and its PDT Approach</i>	89
Contextualisation: Literature on Youth Work and Neoliberalism	89
Contextualisation: Theoretical and Methodological Approaches	93
Contextualisation: 'Insider' Research and Self-Problematisation	95
<i>Part Two: The PDT Approach</i>	100
Preliminary Clarifications: Poststructuralism, Discourse and Subjectivity	100
The Theoretical Approach of PDT	106
PDT's Approach to Discourse Analysis	108
<i>Part Three: Research Strategy</i>	111
Research Aim and Objectives	111
The English and Welsh Case Studies	112
Rationale for Case Studies and Case Study Selection	117
Rationale for Geographical Delimitations and Historical Bracketing of Cases	121
The Bricolage Approach to the Production and Analysis of Case Studies	126
Documents and Image-Based Research for Case Studies	130
Overview of Images and their Rationale	130
The Arrangement of Images in Chapters 4, 5 and 6	133
Wider Pool of Images	134
Selection of the 12 Images	136
The Wider Pool of Texts	137
Principles for the Selection and Archiving of Texts	138
Contributions and Limitations of Document and Image-Based Research	141
Overview of Interviews and their Rationale	143
Rationale for the Selection of Interviewees	148
Interview Analysis and the Selection of Interview Data	153
Contributions and Limitations of Interviews	154
Logics-Based Nodal Framework Analysis	157

Evaluation and Reflexivity.....	162
<i>Conclusion.....</i>	<i>163</i>
4. Policy Analysis Bricolage: Logics of Funding and Envisioning of Services	165
<i>Introduction.....</i>	<i>165</i>
Format, Structure and Argument	165
<i>Part One: Funding Problematisations.....</i>	<i>168</i>
Images 1 and 2: Competing Problematisations of Youth Service Funding and Defunding	169
Two Video Still Captures: Shifting Problematisations.....	171
“What’s the Problem?”	177
Youth Service Defunding and NCS Funding	179
<i>Part Two: Policy Problems and Service Visions.....</i>	<i>180</i>
Images 3 and 4: Struggles over Policy Problems and Service Visions	181
Two Contrasting Documents: A Tale of Two Nations and Three Services	183
The NCS ‘Green Paper’	185
NCS and Devolution	189
YMCA’s ‘Out of Service’	195
<i>Discussion and Conclusion.....</i>	<i>206</i>
5. Services Analysis Bricolage: Logics of Provision and Distribution	216
<i>Introduction.....</i>	<i>216</i>
Format, Structure and Argument	216
<i>Part One: NCS Summer Camp Imagery</i>	<i>219</i>
NCS 2.0: Commissioning Strategy.....	220
Commissioning Away from ‘State Monopoly’ and Local Authority Provision.....	223
Service Distribution and Target Markets	231
<i>Part Two: Imagery of Local ‘Hoodies’</i>	<i>238</i>
Youth Service Policy Review in Wales.....	239

Youth Service Strategy and Partnerships	242
Funding Matters.....	247
Shifting Terminology	252
<i>Discussion and Conclusion</i>	254
6. Services Analysis Bricolage: Logics of Delivery and Governance	266
<i>Introduction</i>	266
Format, Structure and Argument	266
<i>Part One: Staffing and Service Delivery</i>	268
Images 7 and 8: Contrasting Models of Staffing and Labour.....	269
England: Service Delivery and Casualisation	270
Wales: Service Delivery and Professionalisation	285
<i>Part Two: Delivery Demands and Governance</i>	298
Images 9 and 10: Youth Transitions and Service Delivery	298
From Lost Generation to Generation COVID	299
Constraints vs. Openness.....	305
Images 11 and 12: Governance	308
Board Membership	309
Alternative Visions: National Bodies, Legislation and Evaluation	313
<i>Discussion and Conclusion</i>	320
7. Post(-)neoliberal Subjectivity, Alternatives and Counter-Logics	331
<i>Introduction</i>	331
Format, Structure and Argument	331
<i>Part One: Post(-)neoliberal Framework</i>	332
Building upon Insights of the Postneoliberal/Post-neoliberal.....	333
Conjecture of the Post(-)neoliberal Framework.....	337
Conjecture on a Post(-)neoliberal Typology	340

<i>Part Two: A Post(-)neoliberal Outlook and Platform</i>	343
Post(-)neoliberal Logics vs. Neoliberal Logics	343
Acts of Envisioning and Instances of Everyday Practice	347
A Post(-)neoliberal Outlook vs. Recalibrated Neoliberalisation	354
<i>Conclusion</i>	357
8. Conclusion	358
<i>Thesis Focus and Research Approach</i>	358
<i>Key Findings and Line of Argument</i>	359
Principal Argument	365
<i>Thesis Contributions</i>	366
<i>Final Reflections</i>	370
References	377
Appendices	392
<i>Appendix A: Characterisation of Literature Review</i>	392
<i>Appendix B: Wider Pool of Texts</i>	394
<i>Appendix C: Wider Pool of Images</i>	396
<i>Appendix D: Interview Analysis</i>	400
<i>Appendix E: Inner-Challenges of the Post(-)neoliberal</i>	401

List of Tables

Table 1: Thematic Concerns of Literature Review	29
Table 2: Traditions for Youth Work Practice	32
Table 3: Purposes of Youth Work Practice	33
Table 4: Shifting Terrains of Professional Practice	35
Table 5: Beyond Neoliberalism? Youth Work and Youth Service Envisioning	51
Table 6: Principles and Practices of Post-neoliberalism in Latin America	59
Table 7: Comparison of Youth Policy in England and Wales (New Labour Period)	83
Table 8: Research Question, Aim and Objectives	112
Table 9: Overview of the Two Cases (2007-2022)	114
Table 10: Overall Strategy for Producing the Case Studies	116
Table 11: Overview of Images	132
Table 12: Interviews and Interviewees	144
Table 13: Overview of Logics-Based Nodal Framework	158
Table 14: Comparison of English and Welsh Youth Policy (Post-2010 Age of Austerity)	207
Table 15: Comparison of Service Provision and Distribution	255
Table 16: Comparison of Delivery and Governance	321
Table 17: Post(-)neoliberal Typology	341
Table 18: Comparison of Neoliberal and Post(-)neoliberal Logics (within Nodal Framework)	344

List of Appendix Tables

Appendix Table 1: Literature for Review	392
Appendix Table 2: Key Documents for Understanding Cases	394
Appendix Table 3: Wider Pool of Images (List)	396
Appendix Table 4: List of Codes and Categories	400
Appendix Table 5: Psycho-Social Dimensions of Post(-)neoliberal Subjectivity	401

List of Images

Image 1: 'Chavez'	169
Image 2: Valleys Kids	170
Image 3: NCS 'Green Paper'	181
Image 4: YMCA Report	182
Image 5: Delivering NCS 2.0	219
Image 6: On the Streets	238
Image 7: NCS Team Leader Recruitment	269
Image 8: Registration of Youth Workers	270
Image 9: Social Mobility	298
Image 10: Skills and Employability	299
Image 11: NCS Board	308
Image 12: Board Recruitment in Wales	309

List of Acronyms

Acronyms from the youth services sector in England and Wales that are used in this thesis include the following:

CWVYS	Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services
CYPN	Children and Young People Now
CYWU	Community and Youth Workers Union
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
ETS	Education and Training Standards
EWC	Education Workforce Council
FDYW	Federation of Detached Youth Work
IDYW	In Defence of Youth Work
IYWB	Interim Youth Work Board
JNC	Joint Negotiating Committee (for Youth and Community Workers)
LGA	Local Government Association
MSC	Manpower Services Commission
NCS	National Citizen Service
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training
NYA	National Youth Agency
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WLGA	Welsh Local Government Association
WYA	Wales Youth Agency
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

1. Introduction

This chapter will introduce, contextualise and explain this study's focus in four ways.

Firstly, it will provide a broad overview of the overall thesis and its argument.

Secondly, it will provide a background narrative to the thesis, as a form of scene setting, with a brief autoethnographic account. *Thirdly*, there will be an overview of the research undertaken for this study, including its rationale, the research question, the aim and objectives, the research puzzle and its position within existing literature, and the research strategy adopted. *Fourthly*, it will provide an overview of each of the chapters and findings.

Overview of Thesis

Overall, this thesis contributes to our knowledge surrounding recent changes in the youth services sector in England and Wales, 2007-2022. Incorporating the age of austerity, this period saw significant policy, service and practice developments directly impacting the so-called *Lost and COVID Generations*. With this as backdrop, the thesis critically explores how a community of educators - youth workers - experience, navigate, contest and seek to go beyond the neoliberalising logics associated with these developments.

The thesis draws on Poststructuralist Discourse Theory (PDT) to develop a theoretical framework and case-based research strategy to critically compare the National Citizen Service (NCS) in England and the Youth Service in Wales. While the former is delivered to young people aged 15-17 through a competitively tendered programme, the latter's remit is young people aged 11-25 and its service is provided through a partnership of local authorities and voluntary sector. Drawing on the work

associated with the Essex School of Discourse Analysis, a logics-based nodal framework is then used to identify and analyse the contextual norms and rules that structure the provision, distribution, delivery and governance components of each service. These cases - and the nodes within them - are also analysed as the contextual settings for (a) subject formation and (b) the articulation of alternative norms and counter-practices to neoliberalisation.

Using this theoretical framework and research strategy, the thesis shows in considerable detail how the 'roll back' and 'roll out' phases of neoliberalisation have impacted these services and subjectivities in both nations, notably through austerity and marketisation. Similarities include the severe cutbacks for pre-established youth services of the local authority and voluntary sector in England and Wales, and commonalities to the emphasis on impact measurement within the youth services sector. Broadly, the contributory factors and conditions shaping these points for concurrence include: *a shared political programme of austerity* through the UK Government's policy choices from 2010 onwards; and, *a shared public management culture* of performance monitoring and impact measurement. However, stronger (yet incomplete) buffers - especially for the 'roll out' phase of neoliberalisation - have been evident in Wales, when compared to England, largely on account of Welsh Labour-led governments' involvement and collaboration with people and organisations in that nation's youth work field that contrasts to the Conservative Party's approach in England. Differences include the 'roll out' of the highly marketised NCS programme in England that privileged a private and voluntary sector partnership, whereas in Wales priority was given to maintaining a pre-established youth service of local authorities and the voluntary sector. Broadly, the contributory

factors and conditions shaping these points of divergence include: *institutional and governance differences* for overseeing youth service policy in each nation; *differences of political culture and political ideals* of the main governing parties overseeing youth service policy in each nation; and, *differences to the collaboration and engagement of professional youth work discourse and the youth work field* within national youth service policy developments and governance.

Furthermore, emerging from the English and Welsh youth services sector and rooted in the research findings, the thesis also identifies a set of alternative norms and counter-practices for more 'social collectivist' approaches to providing youth work services - these are characterised as nurturing a post(-)neoliberal outlook. In England, however, such alternative visions have been placed in a more oppositional - and marginalised - position than in Wales. Thus, the background conditions shaping divergent neoliberalisation processes, are also contributing to different forms and strategies of contestation in each nation. In England, the severe cutbacks and the 'roll out' of the NCS have shaped counter-hegemonic campaigns and envisioning for reviving pre-established youth services and open youth work practice, whereas in Wales the envisioning and advocacy for youth work and youth services - even if not fully realised - has been channelled into national policy frameworks that have more openly engaged the youth work field and pre-established youth services.

This thesis contributes to existing bodies of knowledge in various ways, including:

- *Substantively* - it contributes with a piece of systematic comparative work that provides analysis of the variegated neoliberalisation of national youth service programmes in England and Wales, analysing variations, commonalities,

contestations and spaces for agency across these services. This includes analysis of conditions for points of divergence and concurrence. In doing so, it is addressing: identified limitations and 'critical deficits' within existing accounts of neoliberalism and neoliberalisation (i.e. whereby these variations, commonalities, contestations and spaces of agency can be lacking); and, sector-specific research gaps in cross-national academic literature about the youth work field in England and Wales;

- *Methodologically* - it contributes with the bespoke deployment of the image-based bricolage in conjunction with logics-based nodal framework analysis, this provides a fruitful and enriching development to the body of work adopting a PDT logics approach. The bricolage approach incorporates an innovative 'editorial policy' to guide the situated judgement of the researcher in the selection and use of research materials and data (including for the creative repurposing and recombining of images), alongside side a broader evaluative framework to bolster the rigour of this bricolage approach. Meanwhile, the logics approach is used to further the comparative analysis of points of divergence and convergence across these services, and the conditions contributing to their respective outcomes; and,
- *Theoretically* - it contributes by introducing a post(-)neoliberal framework to identify and articulate alternative norms and counter-practices in the youth work field, and it does this in a way that extends, refines and reframes existing accounts within youth work and neoliberalism literatures. In particular, it develops this theoretical framework through analysis of the spaces of agency for local state and non-state actors in both England and Wales, as well as the devolved government in Wales. As such, this post(-)neoliberal framework is

premised upon extending analysis of neoliberalism and neoliberalisation into the varied national and sub-national conditions and spaces of agency (institutional and professional) that resist, envision beyond and construct alternatives to neoliberalised norms and practices.

Principal Argument

The thesis advances the claim that the introduction of a post(-)neoliberal framework is analytically productive in shedding light on - and characterising - various forms of negotiation, resistance and alternatives to neoliberalisation in the youth services sector. Such a post(-)neoliberal framework incorporates: (a) alternative reimagining and critical conduct from within the neoliberal present; and (b) organising for more leftist-type 'social-collectivist' breaks within and beyond neoliberalism.

Rooted in the research findings and analysis, the thesis identifies and foregrounds a set of alternative norms and counter-practices to those of neoliberalisation, and these emerge from within the youth services sector of England and Wales. These alternative norms and counter-practices are characterised as nurturing a post(-)neoliberal outlook and platform, as they pronounce a substantial challenge from within - and work towards a transformation beyond and outside - the neoliberalised norms and rules of the market. They are rooted in youth work discourse from the field, and they articulate a clear demand and vision for the remaking of policy, services, practice and subjectivities in this domain, in the present and for the future. This post(-)neoliberal strategic outlook is separate and distinct from neoliberal recalibrations that act to soften and embed neoliberalisation rather than move beyond its logics.

Examples of these alternative norms and counter-practices include:

- *For service provision* - sufficient re-investment and resourcing of youth work service infrastructure through local authorities and the voluntary sector, and premised upon stronger partnership between local authorities and the voluntary sector (rather than market competition, commercialised contracting and private sector partnerships).
- *For service distribution* - year-round local youth work services for engaging young people (with wider age ranges than currently through the NCS in England), and built upon community-based engagement with young people (rather than upon marketing and branding).
- *For service delivery* - open youth work as core, staffed with trained and qualified youth workers (drawing upon informal education pedagogies, including the relationship focused, community-rooted and liberatory traditions within youth work), and with the registration and professionalisation of practitioners (rather than the casualisation and deprofessionalisation of staff).
- *For service governance* - a renewal of dialogue, reflection and learning within evaluation, a new legislative base for youth work services in each nation, and new and permanent national youth work service boards with field expertise and lived youth work experience upon such boards (rather than private sector dominance upon them).

Background Narrative and Scene Setting: An Autoethnographic Account

In part, the seeds for this research topic were planted in the late noughties while I was a practicing youth and community worker at grassroots level and an active trade

unionist (with this grouping of education workers), both locally and nationally. At the time of the 2007-2008 financial crash and the unfolding of the wider economic crisis, I was employed - precariously - within a local authority's youth service. This was a distinct youth service located within a county council's Directorate of Lifelong Learning in north Wales. The county was a mix of post-industrial towns, mostly clustered along the banks of a river leading into the estuary, and a rural hinterland. Across the county, over 100 practitioners (a mix of full-time and part-time workers) engaged and worked with young people through: dozens of local neighbourhood youth centres, including conventional youth clubs; two youth information drop-in 'shops' based in town centres; a detached team with street based work and mobile provision; and various other projects and initiatives, including community development and regeneration programmes (and I worked on one of these).¹ At the time of the financial crash, there was a high reliance upon (insecure) short-term external funding at this youth service, including the funding for the project I worked on. Then 40% of local authority youth service budgets in Wales were dependent on external funding, and it was estimated that core funding (across Wales) needed an additional £100m to reach desired standards (King, 2016).

My position in the county youth service was to develop a *Wheels to Work* project in five former coalfield communities that were designated as amongst the 'most deprived' in Wales. The project was predominantly a motorbike-loan scheme for young people aged 16-25 years old, though one underpinned by an educative and participatory ethos. My role included working with young people to co-develop and

¹ For instance, other components of the county youth service included: school-based work; a drugs education team; a sex and relationships education initiative; outdoor education opportunities; international exchange and residential opportunities; and youth forum work.

co-run this project that would aid their access to employment and other opportunities. I was supported in this role by a multi-agency steering group that was also open for young people's co-involvement. To explain the rationale for this project, there were a raft of community consultations, needs assessments, local research and local service plans that all highlighted issues of isolation and social exclusion in the area, with transportation, and access to services, education, training and work opportunities as a key local concern, especially for many young people.

The project's base, shared with a community development team, was in a converted outbuilding at an old colliery site. This was at a location close to where the local estuary joins the Irish Sea, and near a host of beach-side caravan parks and amusement arcades. Unofficially, and semi-ironically, I temporarily applied a tag line to describe the project when it was first established: *fostering a Mediterranean-style scooter youth culture on the coastal strip of (the county)*. For this project there was a fleet of vehicles for hire, initially 50cc Yamaha Neos. There was a national network of similar *Wheels to Work* schemes through the UK, mostly in England, that offered guidance and information resources for establishing, running and diversifying such schemes. Drawing upon this pooled knowledge, the bikes were loaned on 6-monthly affordable hire agreements, with support for licensing, training and safety equipment.²

² Obviously, vehicle insurance, tax, vehicle servicing, breakdown cover, emergency procedures and other protocols (e.g. to address misuse) were also covered. Other dimensions of the project included public transport travel planners, subsidised driving and motorcycling lessons (i.e. for non-hirers of bikes), research for electric bike loans, safety workshops, youth information services and signposting, and individual and group meetings.

In this role, as well as matters of young people's safety on hired vehicles (and other practical matters of project development, funding eligibility and funder requirements), my questioning expanded to broader dilemmas of practice. For instance, I sought to navigate a range of different tensions, including:

- Supporting young people to access important work opportunities while promoting their rights (employment-related and others), without becoming simply an uncritical 'conveyor belt' for young people into (potentially poor quality and exploitative) employment.
- Aiming to build-in more holistic support and open-ended dialogue, while seeking to avoid a form of reductionism whereby relations with young people might be focused solely on them 'getting a job' and 'into paid-work'.
- Maintaining safety, promoting responsibility and welfare support, without turning into a state agent of youth surveillance.
- Creating spaces and opportunities for a voluntary and dialogical relationship, balanced alongside the realities of a legal contractual relationship (i.e. the hire agreement).

While in this role, I was also familiar with historic arguments - such as those of Davies (1979) - that were against youth workers and agencies adopting a narrow "social and life skills training" agenda of government policies and funders, with the problematisations and assumptions entailed within this approach (e.g. of the "personal inadequacy" of young people [rather than the inadequacy of an "economic system" that does not guarantee paid work], and the emphasis upon correcting deficits of the nation's young labour force through supply-side training to enhance market competitiveness). As an alternative, Davies (1979) reasserted a youth work

practice of critical social - and political - education that can contribute to individual and collective agency (of young people), including for “exercising power” within major social structures.

At that time, my youth work practice was also situated within a milieu of ever-increasing marketisation, target-led and outcome-based policy demands for youth support services across England and Wales, in conjunction with disproportionately high levels of ‘cut-backs’ (i.e. once the UK-wide ‘policy choice’ of austerity had been made).³ Conscious not only of this changing policy and funding environment, but also of process-led and politicised pedagogies (e.g. for informal, democratic and emancipatory education) that had a very different ‘pull’ on many practitioners, I would question the identity and labour of the youth worker as a ‘site of struggle’. In this context there were a range of competing principles and contrasting agendas that were being navigated, negotiated and contested - one way or other - by practitioners including myself, as well as by broader collectives of educators to which I was connected (see Community and Youth Workers Union [CYWU], 2005; In Defence of Youth Work [IDYW], 2009).

At that time, I was acutely aware of the contrasting policy frameworks in Wales and England, as well as the multiple and competing discourses that these services - as well as practitioners and young people - were situated within. I was aware, for

³ However, overarching Welsh youth policy is a devolved area and can be contrasted with youth policy developed in England. King (2016) provides an account of key differences during the New Labour years (1997-2010), with a more (neoliberal) “managerialist and target-driven culture” being pushed in England compared to Wales. Post-2010, while austerity has been a common feature in both nations, a more distinct local authority role has been maintained for youth services in Wales (as part of a partnership with the voluntary sector), and without the National Citizen Service (NCS) operating in Wales.

instance, of the different ways youth services and youth worker practice were being problematised by various social actors (such as governments, funders, employers, trade unions and other practitioner networks, and young people). After the financial crash, dominant Westminster-led and neoliberal-infused problematisations included: how best to make savings and cuts so youth services contributed to (perceived) financial efficiencies; and how to make these services - or new services for young people - effective and efficient at fixing the (perceived) problems and deficits of young people. Similarly, the neoliberal-infused problematisations of practice included: how to ensure workers in this field demonstrated their worth and the value (notably 'value for money') of their performance; and how to efficiently target their practice upon tackling the (perceived) problems and deficits of young people.

I was also aware of alternative problematisations that were connected to counter-discourses and counter-visions for services and practice, such as those rooted in traditions of democratic education, mutual aid and socialism as opposed to the market. Alternative problematisations - often marginalised by dominant government actors - have included a focus upon: the impact of the loss of many established youth services due to cuts, and the decline of their supportive social relations and interventions in the lives of young people; and, the contamination of democratic and open youth work practice by externally imposed targets, the targeting and commodification of provision, and the tracking (or surveillance) of young people.

Overview of Research

Firstly, there are 'insider' research roots and motivations for undertaking this study. For instance, my own experiences of working as a community-based practitioner -

and as a workforce educator - within this field, have prompted this research concern with the competing discursive agendas and 'pulls' upon subjects in this field, and ways of navigating them.⁴ *Secondly*, alongside the 'insider' perspective and the situated nature of these research interests, the rationale for undertaking this study is also informed by the wider public significance of youth policy and service provision for young people and society in general, as reflected in wider political scrutiny and debate surrounding services for young people in both England and Wales. Youth services are, as such, a public policy concern and an area of significant political contestation and struggle that warrant being researched and studied, while simultaneously a marginalised area. *Thirdly*, the rationale for this research includes a practical concern with analysing 'neoliberalisation' within this field (notably neoliberal logics of austerity and marketisation during the study's time period), the practical impacts of this upon services and subjects, and the range of responses to neoliberal logics. As the literature review demonstrates, the analysis of neoliberalism and its impacts is a shared practical concern by many within the youth work field, and in other domains of policy, service and practice.⁵

Research Question, Aim and Objectives

Rooted in concrete practice experiences (such as those outlined in the above autoethnographic account), the politicised questioning of structures and subjectivities for this specific field have contributed to the focus and direction of this study. The overarching focus of the research undertaken for this thesis is guided by the

⁴ This situated research position is discussed further within chapter 3.

⁵ The terms 'neoliberalism' and 'neoliberalisation' are also unpicked in more detail within chapter 2.

following question: *In what ways are youth workers experiencing, navigating and seeking to transgress the neoliberalisation of their services, practice and identities?*

This question has shaped the aim and objectives of the thesis. The overall aim is to produce a discourse analytic study of identity and practice struggles of youth workers in austerity-scarred and neoliberalised youth services of England and Wales. To achieve this aim, the objectives are to analyse:

- Discourses shaping and influencing publicly funded youth service provision and youth worker subjectivity in England and Wales, including neoliberal discourses as well as alternative discourses such as those rooted in practice traditions (i.e. *objective 1*).
- Young people's service regimes in England and Wales, including their respective models of service provision, distribution, delivery and governance (i.e. *objective 2*);
- Accounts and experiences of policy, service and practice developments from within each nation, including a specific focus upon practitioner relations with employability and Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) agendas (i.e. *objective 3*).
- Accounts and examples of individual and collective agency (involving youth workers with their allies), including negotiations, resistances and alternatives to neoliberalising logics in this field (i.e. *objective 4*).

In sum, there is a concern with how the contingent socio-political identities - of individuals and collectivities - are being formed, challenged and transformed within this field. Notably, this focuses upon the identities of youth workers, including the

range of identifications and attachments towards: various models and purposes of practice; differing roles and subject positions; historic traditions and forms of service infrastructure; and, forms of policy envisioning and developments. The concern with contingent identities runs in parallel to the associated analysis of conditions and discursive frameworks - and logics - impacting services and subject formation, including potential spaces for new and unfolding forms of identification and subjectivity (see Norval, 2000; Glynos & Howarth, 2007; Howarth, 2013).

Research Puzzle and Existing Literature

Within this research there is a concern with how youth workers - their subjectivity, their practice, and their field - are impacted by neoliberal discourse and neoliberalisation, and how this is happening, how it is driven forward and accepted, but also how it is problematised, navigated and challenged. While this thesis is driven - in a large part - by a research concern with neoliberalisation (and with further analysing neoliberal logics) within the youth services sector, there is an associated research concern, and puzzlement, surrounding if or how youth workers and youth services (as the specific focus of this study) can move away from the neoliberal and beyond the neoliberal, and what this might entail.

In summary, this research puzzle has concerned:

- (a) If, or how, a theoretical framework of postneoliberalism and/or post-neoliberalism (i.e. drawing upon existing literature on such matters) can be further refined, reframed and applied to the youth services sector - and subjectivities - within England and Wales, and

(b) Whether such a theoretical framework (once refined, reframed and applied) can be insightful - and analytically useful - for characterising and articulating resistance, alternative practices and visions to move beyond neoliberalism within this particular field.

Before expanding upon the research concerns, this puzzle and existing literature in more detail, a brief terminological clarification is in order: the term 'youth workers' is used in England and Wales to refer to those practitioners engaged in informal learning processes and structured programmes with young people (see Batsleer, 2008; Sapin, 2013). They may be working, for example, in local authority education services, youth charities or local community organisations (i.e. local authority and voluntary sector youth services).⁶ In such settings, the label of 'youth workers' has typically been used as an umbrella term to refer to professionally qualified practitioners, trained support workers and volunteers.⁷ Their practice typically aims to support the personal, social, and political education of young people, as well as their 'holistic' development and welfare (see National Youth Agency [NYA], 2022; Youth Work in Wales Review Group, 2022). While there is a shared system for collective bargaining and professional recognition for youth workers in many services across England and Wales (see Joint Negotiating Committee [JNC], 2016), there are separate policy frameworks for young people's services in these nations (for a comparison during the New Labour period, see King, 2016).

⁶ This is an initial list intending to be illustrative not exhaustive, as the range of organisational and employment settings are broader than this (e.g. on the range of youth work settings, see chapter 2 of Sapin, 2013).

⁷ Typologies of youth work and youth workers are discussed in more detail in chapter 2 of this thesis. Cooper (2018) also discusses the boundaries and diversity of defining youth work practice, with an added international dimension reaching beyond England and Wales.

This thesis explores literature from youth work and neoliberalism studies that are aligned with this study's key research concerns. Within existing literature there are various analyses of how the values, ideas and practices of the market are deployed and extend into various social domains over time, including the youth services sector. The merits and limits of analysing neoliberalism, and various frames for doing this are shared and debated in this literature. For example, when the specific term neoliberalisation is deployed, it is referring to neoliberal encroachment (as a verb). It is about how "market-based logics and practices... are dialectically internalized and generated in particular social regimes" (Phelan, 2014, p. 57). However, specific limitations and 'critical deficits' are identified within existing accounts of neoliberalism and neoliberalisation, including that: (1) totalising accounts of neoliberalism lack analysis of contextual detail and nuance (see Brenner et al., 2010); (2) localised accounts of neoliberalisation can lack analysis of wider conditions and patterns (see Brenner et al., 2010); (3) analysis of resistance and contestation can be lacking and underdeveloped in accounts of neoliberalisation (see Blanco et al., 2014); and, (4) spaces for agency within neoliberalisation processes - including at the local state level during phases of neoliberal austerity - can be lacking and underanalysed (see Barnett et al., 2021; Davies et al., 2023). Nevertheless, there are also threads within the literature of neoliberalism studies that incorporate the prefix of 'post' in varied ways, and this is to inform analysis of resistances, alternatives, searches and shifts beyond neoliberalism.

Furthermore, there are existing publications about how educators, including youth workers, have become 'neoliberal subjects' (see Ball, 2003; 2012a; 2012b; de St Croix, 2015). This strain of literature discusses how market logics and ideals can

take a hold - to varying degrees - upon practitioners and managers, though subjects are 'more-than-just-neoliberal'. Categorisations of the historical terrains of youth work also draw attention to the rise of the performative professional and 'value for money' demands over recent decades (see Bradford & Cullen, 2014; Bradford, 2015). The entrenchment of neoliberal discourse and the rise of the 'neoliberal subject' generates various responses that can include antagonism, both within individual subjects and within communities of practice too. Numerous examples exist of practical critique and alternative reimaginings beyond the neoliberal programme of austerity within the youth services sector of England and Wales (e.g. see Table 5 in chapter 2).

This existing youth work literature of England and Wales, however, is considered to be lacking in two key areas. *Firstly*, the youth work literature lacks a cross-national comparative academic study of neoliberal and other-than-neoliberal discourses across England and Wales, post-New Labour. *Secondly*, the youth work literature within England and Wales lacks a detailed exposition and application of postneoliberal and/or post-neoliberal theoretical frameworks to inform analysis of neoliberalism and alternative imaginaries within this sector, including potential applications of such frameworks to youth worker subjectivity and youth work typologies.

Within existing youth work literature, the frameworks of postneoliberalism and post-neoliberalism have had limited usage. Notably, the 'postneoliberal' term has been deployed, if briefly, as an envisioning device seeking to move away from the neoliberal present and towards an alternative imaginary - this has been done by

Kiely and Meade (2018) while discussing the Irish youth work context (rather than the contexts of England or Wales). Noticeably, within this thesis, the specific term post(-)neoliberal is hyphenated within brackets. This is intended to draw attention to the varied usages and meanings associated with this term (e.g. within the wider literature of neoliberalism studies), including whether, and in what form and to what extent, there is a break from the neoliberal.⁸ The post(-)neoliberal is utilised thus as a combination of both: (a) the unhyphenated postneoliberalism - typically depicting an ethos and a reimagining device in the neoliberal present that aids counter-conduct, and (b) the hyphenated post-neoliberalism - typically denoting a more-leftist 'social-collectivist' break (to some degree) from neoliberalisation in both the present and/or the future. The analytical usefulness and potential significance of such a post(-)neoliberal theoretical framework is a key concern - and puzzle - within this thesis. The puzzle expands to exploring the potential of applying a post(-)neoliberal framework, for example, as: a resistance and envisioning device; an organising and mobilising tool; a frame for characterising forms of subjectivity and historical terrains; an educative typology in professional formation programmes; and/or as a variation of 'alter-neoliberal' critique (see Soudias, 2021).

The Research Strategy and its Operationalisation

With a theoretical approach rooted in PDT, the research strategy involves the discourse analysis of youth policy, services and practice. When applied to empirical research, a PDT approach asks:

⁸ These varied usages and meanings of this terminology are discussed in more detail in chapters 2 and 7.

What are the origins of particular discourses and policies? How can they be characterized? How and why are they sustained? When and how are they changed? And... how can discourses be evaluated and criticized? (Glynos et al., 2009, p. 9)

The empirical focus here is on two case studies to facilitate comparative analysis across policy, services and practice in both England and Wales. By doing this, the thesis also addresses an identified gap for such cross-national analyses of the youth services sector in these nations, especially post-New Labour (see King, 2016). It also provides an opportunity to add to accounts of neoliberalism and neoliberalisation in a way that expands analysis of variations, commonalities, contestations and spaces for agency within different socio-spatial settings.

Case 1: NCS, England

The English case is the NCS and its surrounding policy framework. From when David Cameron first became Prime Minister in 2010, this has been a key youth policy initiative for successive Conservative-led governments. In summary, the NCS upon its establishment operated, principally, as a summer programme supporting personal and social development for 15-17 year olds (with additional service components added over time). It has involved residential experiences, outdoor learning, life skills activities and social action. It has run throughout regions of England (and in Northern Ireland) with competitive tendering for regional coordination and local delivery. It is “delivered by a network of quality assured youth and community organisations including charities, voluntary, community, social enterprise (VCSE) and private sector partnerships” (NCS, 2018).

Case 2: Youth Service, Wales

The Welsh case is the Youth Service in Wales and its (devolved) policy framework. This service is a historic partnership between local authorities and the voluntary sector, with youth workers providing all-year round informal learning opportunities and support to young people aged 11-25 years old. It involves centre-based work and youth clubs, outreach or detached (street-based) work, school-based provision, residential activities, and specialist project work and targeted initiatives. It includes, for example, the grant-maintained provision of 22 local authority youth services in Wales, and the provision of members of the Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services (CWVYS).

These two cases are selected and compared as, during this study's timeframe, they are the (contrasting) flagship programmes of youth service policy in England and Wales. These flagship programmes warrant further analysis and comparison as they have a dominant role in framing and structuring the youth services sector in each nation, including at regional and local levels. They are also key sites of neoliberalisation - and counter-struggle - within the youth services sector of each nation. Within each flagship programme, 'local sites' and 'regional actors' are also sampled and selected to develop and enrich the overarching case study comparison - this is through providing further information and contextual detail of each case.

The Bricolage Approach

To build and analyse the case studies, a methodological bricolage approach is adopted whereby data gathered through image-based and document research (with 12 images and their source texts) as well as through semi-structured interviews (with

8 participants from Welsh and English policy, service and practice contexts) is 'quilted together' and analysed. The type of data gathered - and the discourse approach adopted, notably a logics-based nodal framework analysis - contributes to helping this study achieve its objectives. The images, texts and interview data - with research decisions about these guided by an editorial policy and evaluative framework for the bricolage approach - provide insight into: discourses and logics shaping services and subjectivity (objective 1), service regimes and their models of service provision, distribution, delivery and governance (objective 2), accounts of developments and specific practices from within the field (objective 3), and political agency (objective 4).

Delimitations and Parameters of the Study

Historically, English and Welsh youth service policy frameworks have been the most closely aligned out of all the UK nations (see Williamson, 2010). From their shared history of having been the most closely aligned UK nations in terms of youth service policy, the selection of these nations as the spatial focus of the case study comparison enables further analysis of key points of divergence for youth service policy of each nation in the post-devolution period. During the period of this study, there has been a new intense shift towards greater divergence that make these two nations - and their youth service policy and flagship programmes - the focus for comparative analysis. In particular, this comparative analysis will explore the impact of neoliberalisation on each case, and the respective factors and conditions that contribute to - or constrain - neoliberalisation's impact upon these cases - thus the aim will be to generate further insight and critical explanation of the points of divergence and concurrence.

The timeframe for the historical bracketing of the cases for comparative policy analysis (2007-2022) includes: the final years of the New Labour Government in Westminster (following the 2007-2008 financial crash); the 'deficit reduction' and austerity programme of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition Government (2010-2015); and, the various Conservative governments that then followed (2015-2017; 2017-2019; 2019-). As youth service policy in Wales is a devolved area, this window also includes the following periods of Welsh Government: Welsh Labour-Plaid Cymru Coalition (2007-2011), Welsh Labour (2011-2016), Welsh Labour-Liberal Democrat Coalition (2016-2021), and the minority Welsh Labour Government (2021-).

For this research, its parameters are delimited to youth policy and youth service contexts of Wales and England; for example, the research will not extend further into the Scottish or Northern Irish policy contexts of the United Kingdom (UK), or of other countries beyond the UK. It is contended that each of the two national cases that are selected here - and their timeframe - are of intrinsic (and sufficiently focused) interest from a policy and practice perspective, and that they also warrant comparative analysis to help draw out more insights into the research problem. The timeframe for these cases (2007-2022) is selected as it incorporates significant policy developments and deviations in the two nations that are delimited; for example, 2007 was a year that the seeds were sown by the Conservative Party for the subsequent expansion and dominance of NCS in England, and 2007 is also when the devolved Welsh Government published its first national youth service strategy through its

bespoke unit for doing this, post-Wales Youth Agency (WYA).⁹ This timeframe is also 'book-ended' by the significant ruptures of: (i) the 2007-2008 financial crisis; and, (ii) the COVID-19 crisis from 2020 onwards and the subsequent 'cost of living' crisis of the early 2020s. Notwithstanding the common factors of the austerity measures that followed the 2007-2008 financial crisis (affecting both Wales and England) as well as the furlough and redeployment measures in early 2020s, within this timeframe there are notable differences - to unpick - in youth policy regimes, services and practices that are connected to the varied political contexts of Wales and England.

Overview of Chapters and Findings

Following on from this introductory chapter, the literature review (*chapter 2*) explores publications from the fields of youth work, youth studies and neoliberalism studies. It contextualises this study's key thematic concerns alongside existing publications on typologies of youth work, on the rise of the educator as a 'neoliberal subject', and on the analysis of neoliberalism, neoliberalisation and postneoliberalism/post-neoliberalism. In doing so, it identifies specific limitations and 'critical deficits' within existing accounts of neoliberalism and neoliberalisation. It also probes literature on the competing demands placed upon youth work practice and services, as well as publications on the varied approaches and methods for undertaking research within the field of youth work and youth services, including identified research gaps.

Chapter 3 further contextualises and explains the research undertaken for this thesis, including its poststructuralist-based theoretical framework. A rationale is

⁹ The WYA was an independent body overseeing support and development of youth services in Wales from 1992 until 2006 when it was disbanded to be replaced by a unit within the Welsh Assembly Government (see WYA, 2001; Children & Young People Now [CYPN], 2005a; 2005b).

provided for the various components of the research strategy including: the adoption of an 'insider' approach; the comparative analysis of two case studies; and the methodological bricolage (including: data gathering with images, documents, and semi-structured interviews; the editorial policy and evaluative framework to guide the situated judgement of the researcher; and, analysis through a logics-based nodal framework to further case comparisons).

Through the operationalisation of the research strategy, *chapters 4, 5 and 6* contribute to producing and analysing the case studies of the NCS in England and the Youth Service in Wales. Using images, documents and interview data, *chapter 4* focuses upon service funding and service envisioning for each case. It identifies the 'roll back' and the 'roll out' phases of neoliberalisation through (a) pre-established youth services in both England and Wales experiencing severe cuts and 'roll backs' as part of the programme of austerity, and (b) a new and more market-orientated service (i.e. the NCS) being envisioned and 'rolled out' across England, not Wales.

With a continuation of the methodological bricolage, *chapter 5* focuses upon the forms of service provision and distribution for each case. It compares the NCS approach to that of the Youth Service in Wales. The former is premised upon the commercial contracting of service providers and with a strong emphasis placed on branding and marketing to attract potential users - of school leaving age - to shorter-term programmes. The latter is based upon maintaining a pre-existing partnership of local authority and voluntary sector providers, and with various forms of community engagement and localised services for a wider age range of young people, often on a year-round basis.

Chapter 6 also continues with the approach of the methodological bricoleur, and it focuses on service delivery and governance for each case. With the NCS it is identified how there is an emphasis upon the casualisation of delivery staff, and there is a very significant representation of private sector actors in key governance roles. Meanwhile for the Youth Service in Wales, there has been a norm established for the registration and professionalisation of youth work staff, and a norm of involving actors with youth work expertise and/or lived experience in national governance. This chapter also provides accounts and specific examples, from each case, of the benefits for young people of the services that are delivered.

Overall *chapters 4, 5 and 6* characterise and foreground the dominant norms, rules and patterns that are shaping these services, and these are presented as the 'dominant social logics' that operate within each case. These chapters also identify areas of neoliberal contestation with counter-practices and alternative visions for service provision, distribution, delivery and governance within each of these two cases. These contestations and visions are characterised and foregrounded as 'political counter-logics' and/or 'projected social logics' depending on case circumstances. Fantasmatic logics are also identified as those ideas and practices operating to cloak the contingency of the dominant social logics that are more highly neoliberalised. These chapters also use the respective logics that are identified to aid analysis of: points of concurrence and divergence across the cases with regards neoliberalisation and its contestation; the background conditions contributing to these outcomes; and, the respective strategies and spaces for agency that emerge in the resulting situations.

Chapter 7 moves on to further analyse the negotiations, resistances, alternatives and counter-practices to neoliberalisation within these cases. The alternative norms and counter-practices - and the associated struggles of subjectivity - are characterised as components of an unfolding post(-)neoliberal platform and strategic outlook. This analysis is premised upon an exploration of spaces for agency (institutional and professional) to resist, envision beyond and construct everyday alternatives to neoliberalised norms and practices. The contributions of such a post(-)neoliberal framework are identified, and a distinction is drawn between (a) those developments characterised as post(-)neoliberal, and (b) those developments that act to embed and recalibrate neoliberalisation, rather than move beyond it. Overall, chapter 7 foregrounds a set of alternative norms and counter-practices to neoliberalisation within the youth services sector of England and Wales, with potential for the remaking of policy, services, practice and subjectivities in this domain. Finally, *chapter 8* concludes the thesis with an overall review of its line of argument, contributions and potential avenues for further research.

Conclusion

This introductory chapter has set out to provide an overview of the thesis and its principal argument, the research undertaken, the resulting chapters, as well as a background narrative as context. This chapter now leads into the literature review, which will help contextualise this thesis alongside existing published work, while also identifying the distinctive contributions that this thesis - and its theoretical and methodological approach - can provide to the existing body of literature on youth work practice and youth services. The literature review will demonstrate, for

example, that there are gaps in the youth work literature for comparative analysis, especially post-New Labour, of the divergent youth policy, service and practice contexts of England and Wales. It will also identify how this study adds to existing accounts of neoliberalism and neoliberalisation through its analysis of variations, commonalities, contestations and spaces for agency within these policy frameworks and their national contexts.

2. Literature Review

Introduction

As outlined by the overarching research question in chapter 1, this thesis has set out to enquire into how youth workers have experienced - and responded to - the expansion of neoliberal ideas and practices within their services, everyday work and identities. This inquiry has been bracketed, historically, to 2007-2022 and delimited, geographically, to England and Wales. There are two key themes that are entwined within the concerns of the research question, these are: the services, practices and subjectivities of youth workers; and neoliberalism - how it unfolds, its contextualised impacts, experiences of it, and responses to it. There is an associated research interest and puzzlement surrounding if or how - and to what extent - youth workers and their services (as the specific focus of this study) might move beyond the 'neoliberal', and what this might entail and whether a post(-)neoliberal theoretical framework could be insightful on such matters.

The Literature Review: Structure, Themes and Bodies of Knowledge

Building upon this initial recap of the focus and key thematic concerns of this thesis, this chapter will review existing bodies of knowledge relating to youth work, youth studies and neoliberalism. This chapter is organised into four main parts to reflect and demonstrate how this thesis' key thematic concerns are situated within, and relate to, these existing bodies of knowledge. This chapter will review literature about: typologies of youth work (in part one); understandings and analyses of neoliberalism (in part two); agendas for youth work practice (in part three); and research into youth work and youth services (in part four). This chapter will also identify English and Welsh dimensions within the literature, including similarities and

differences with respective policy frameworks, as well as previous studies undertaken and gaps remaining in national and cross-national research.

This chapter's alignment with the research question, and the thematic concerns and scope of this literature review, are set out in Table 1.

Table 1: Thematic Concerns of Literature Review

Thematic Concerns of Literature Review		
<i>Alignment of literature review themes with research question and its component themes</i>		
Research question	Thematic components of research question	Key themes within literature review
"In what ways are youth workers experiencing, navigating, and seeking to transgress the neoliberalisation of their services, practice and identities?"	Youth workers - their services, practices and identities Neoliberalism - its unfolding, contextualised impacts, experiences of it and responses to it	Typologies of youth work and youth workers (1) Understandings and analyses of neoliberalism (2) Agendas for youth work (3) Research into youth work and youth services (4)

The thematic threads of this literature review are thus aligned to the overarching research question and its component themes. Furthermore, there has been an *information-orientated and iterative approach* to the search and review of the literature. The literatures of youth work and youth studies - as well as neoliberalism studies - have been selected based upon the expected information they will provide about the key thematic concerns of the research. The literature search has been a rolling process with initial iterations added to and updated as the overall research has progressed and unfolded, including before and after data collection and analysis stages. This iterative process has included and sought to take account of seminal texts and collections, established authors and field-specific journals, library and journal archive searches, works cited in reference lists, and the emergence of new

publications (academic and professional) as well as policy developments and circumstances unfolding during the course of the research (such as the 'levelling up' agenda and the pandemic). Appendix Table 1 (in Appendix A) provides a more detailed characterisation of this literature and the search process adopted, as well as the thematic rationale that frames this review.

Overall, this chapter will contextualise and situate this thesis and its research concerns alongside these relevant bodies of existing knowledge. Additionally, it will seek to identify and highlight the original contributions that the thesis can add, not only to the literature of youth work and youth studies, but also to broader literature on neoliberalism.

Part One: Typologies of Youth Work and Youth Workers

When the various traditions and drives of youth work practice are probed in more detail, there is a thread of youth work literature to be encountered that produces and analyses differing classifications and models of youth work. Existing literature in this field has investigated the problem of how to understand and classify youth work and youth workers in meaningful ways.¹⁰ The organisational and institutional settings, traditions, purposes and historical terrains have all been questioned as to how they shape youth work practice, as well as the role and identity of the youth worker. In turn specific typologies and categories have been problematised, such as whether one form of youth work (e.g. that of the volunteer youth worker) is marginalised or downplayed at the expense of another (e.g. that of the professional youth worker),

¹⁰ A brief terminological clarification is provided in chapter 1 of how the term 'youth workers' is typically used in England and Wales.

but also whether stronger boundaries are needed, (e.g. with types of practice, values and methods to be excluded or foregrounded in the formation of workers).

While these typologies have their limits (e.g. concerning the oversimplifications of 'ideal-types'), Cooper (2012) stresses their usefulness for theory development, boundary analysis, and as an educative tool within practitioner formation.

Additionally, while these typologies also vary in their primary focus and layers of complexity, they provide accounts that are insightful as to various subject positions and roles for youth workers. One further point to note is their incompleteness - these typologies are open, unfolding and in an ongoing state of contestation and becoming. They are there to be learnt from, but also to be discussed, refined and added to - if or as needed. Bradford and Cullen (2014), for example, comment upon the unknown future of the terrain of youth work, and Nicholls (2012) asserts the politicised struggles surrounding the future role of the youth worker. These typologies are incomplete sites of struggle - they are not simply abstract paper exercises, but they are building upon existing ideas, practices, conditions and they have educative uses.

Turning now to the first strand of 'typological literatures', here we encounter various models that lay emphasis upon historic traditions - often with distinctive and separate settings for youth work - that frame the practitioner's role and practice in diverse ways. One such model is Smith's (1988) delineation of movement-based youth work traditions alongside professional youth work;¹¹ this makes the case for many 'youth

¹¹ Moreover, there are a range of views on professionalism in youth work, including: the 'anti-professionalisation' in the vein of Illich (1971) and the community activist tradition (see Cooper, 2013); 'de-professionalisation' as a Thatcherite assault on organised and skilled labour; the trade unionist perspective of 'protecting a marginalised profession' as a response to Thatcherite-type attacks (see

works', though with boundary-setting occurring for youth work too (see Table 2).

Smith's model responds to an earlier model (Butters & Newell, 1978), that he argues is flawed due to its lack of emphasis upon 'popular youth work' and youth workers' own concerns and frames of practice.

Table 2: Traditions for Youth Work Practice

Traditions for Youth Work Practice (abridged version of Smith, 1988)	
Movement-based Youth Worker	Professional Youth Worker
<p><i>Youth worker role can include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Politicising</i>, e.g. through Cooperative Youth Movement, Clarion Scouts, Woodcraft Folk, Women's and Black Consciousness movements (and - <i>controversially</i> - even fascistic movements)¹² • <i>Character building</i>, e.g. through uniformed youth groups • <i>Rescuing</i>, e.g. through moral crusades • <i>Religious formation</i>, e.g. through faith-based groups 	<p><i>Youth worker role can include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Personal and Social Development</i>, e.g. through professionalised practice • <i>Welfareing</i>, e.g. through casework and counselling with 'at risk' young people
<p><i>Youth worker role can include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of safe spaces for <i>social and leisure activities</i> 	

Diverse youth work traditions and settings are further analysed in terms of other criteria, including their levels of informality and openness, democratic participation and empowerment (each with implications for the practitioner's role). Relevant practice-related models here include: those depicting a single spectrum of formality-informality as well as those displaying a mixer-board of multiple continuums (see Zürcher, 2010); and, those emphasising open youth work in contrast to outcome-based youth work (see Lowe, 2013; de St Croix & Doherty, 2022), and open youth

Nicholls, 2012); and broader notions such as 'democratic professionalism' (see Anderson & Cohen, 2018) or professionalism built upon an ethical commitment to a constituent group (see Sercombe, 2010).

¹² Though such a broad inclusion of fascistic youth movements within the naming of 'youth work' are rebuffed through the boundary formations of professional youth workers (see Nicholls, 2012; Choose Youth, 2018), with efforts for 'protection of title', registration of practitioners, and a code of ethics necessarily excluding fascists from any claims to this naming process.

work spaces in contrast to places of home, work or school (see de St Croix & Doherty, 2023). Additionally, there are: those conceiving participatory practice as a 'ladder' (see Arnstein, 1969; Hart, 1992) and an alternative representation of 'degrees of participation' (see Treseder, 1997); and, those presenting empowerment as a form of change theory at individual, group and social levels (Bamber et al., 2014).

Secondly, typological frameworks have been constructed that reflect the diversity of purposes that guide youth work practice (see Table 3). A famous - and debated (see Smith, 1988; Bamber & Murphy, 1999) - model is that of Butters and Newell (1978). It was originally developed to aid the education and training of youth work practitioners (Cooper, 2012).

Table 3: Purposes of Youth Work Practice

Purposes of Youth Work Practice (adaptation of Butters & Newell, 1978, as cited in Bamber & Murphy, 1999)				
Conservative Paradigm	Social Education Repertoire			Radical Paradigm
<i>Character building</i>	<i>Cultural adjustment</i>	<i>Community development</i>	<i>Institutional reform</i>	<i>Self-emancipation</i>
Youth worker as role model	Youth worker as teacher	Youth worker as facilitator	Youth worker as activist	Youth worker as social critic
Young person as follower	Young person to role fitting	Young person to self-realization	Young person to group solidarity	Young person as change agent

Other typological variations include models by Hurley and Treacy (1993) and Cooper and White (1994), characterised by a spectrum of purposes for practice, ranging from conservative and liberal, to reformist and to more radical. Such paradigms identify a range of (simplified and) contested subject positions, including: a youth worker as an agent of social control and population management; or, the youth worker as an agent for social change and democratic practice (see IDYW, 2009;

Batsleer, 2013). In turn the young person is positioned as either: a 'problem', in deficit and so requiring surveillance by the youth worker (see Jeffs & Smith, 1999); or, in contrast as an 'educand-educator' within an alternative frame of democratic practice (see Freire, 1970; Batsleer, 2013).¹³ Additionally, locations along this spectrum are addressed in extra detail, for example, the 'radical paradigm' is considered by Bamber and Murphy (1999) with an emphasis upon creating possibilities for critical practice "as an unfolding, unfinished process" (p. 241), with critical practitioners needed for this to occur.¹⁴

Thirdly, categorisations have also been developed that reflect historical changes to the 'terrains of professional youth work' as a distinct form of education and welfare provision (Bradford & Cullen, 2014). These broad historical shifts of youth worker practice (see Table 4) are expounded upon by Bradford (2015). Additionally, Bradford and Cullen (2014) expand upon the neoliberalised terrain of practice in the 1990s and early 21st century. There has been the neoliberal demand for 'value for money' and "instrumentalised practices" - this has been shaped by "managerialist worldviews" and "youth policy... concerned to govern youth transitions" (p. 98). Furthermore, austerity policy discourses from 2010 have prevailed, and put the "ambiguous professional identity" of youth work in an even more "vulnerable" position (p. 102).

¹³ In the Freirean tradition, this approach is contrasted to the 'banking model' of education whereby the teacher deposits knowledge into the minds of passive students. Instead, teachers and students (or youth workers and young people) engage in dialogue and learn with and from each other - both are educators and both are educands.

¹⁴ Within democratic and liberatory traditions of youth work, there will be a range of positions and influences including 'progressive education', critical pedagogy as well as wider social and political movements (see Jeffs & Smith, 1999b; Tiffany, 2008; Batsleer, 2008; 2012; 2013; Belton, 2009; Purcell & Beck, 2010; Nicholls, 2012; Sapin, 2013; de St Croix, 2016; Sallah et al., 2018; Ledwith, 2020; Clennon, 2022).

Table 4: Shifting Terrains of Professional Practice

Shifting Terrains of Professional Practice (abridged version of Bradford, 2015)		
<i>The Incipient Professional (during World War Two)</i>	<i>The Welfare Professional (during post-war period)</i>	<i>The Performative Professional (during and after Thatcherism)</i>
<p>The emergence of a transformative and reflective professional identity (i.e. alongside pre-existing youth worker roles that shaped by mutual aid, philanthropy and voluntarism).</p> <p>This emergence linked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutionalised and state-backed service by Board of Education in 1939, and • Full-time youth work training courses at universities, supported by Board of Education in 1942. 	<p>Growth of full-time professional workforce (alongside a large no. of volunteers and part-time workers) with a growing body of professional knowledge and pedagogic repertoires.</p> <p>This growth linked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion of state-supported and professionalised youth service by Ministry of Education in 1960, • Investment in professional training and career structures, and service infrastructure, and • Development of collective bargaining for the profession's terms and conditions, and a nationally recognised professional qualification. 	<p>Professional identities connected to performativity with increasing mechanisms of accountability and measurement.</p> <p>This shift linked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neoliberal critique of the public professions, • Growth of targets, performance indicators and managerialism within youth work, and • A shift to <i>competency-based</i> professional training in 1980s and 1990s.

The Neoliberal Subject and the Performative Professional

In conjunction with the rise of performativity, depicted in Table 4, there has been an expansion of market-based logics into the bidding, commissioning, and monitoring of youth provision. As a result, there is a growing literature on youth workers becoming performative professionals in national policy frameworks, in local authority and voluntary sector settings, and in social enterprises too (see Mackie & McGinley, 2012; Buchroth & Husband, 2015; de St Croix, 2015; 2018a; Norris & Pugh, 2015; Sercombe, 2015). Such accounts of the performative professional in youth work overlaps with, and draws upon, wider bodies of literature about neoliberalisation and the rise of performativity in other educational professions.

For instance, building upon arguments of Ball (2012a), de St Croix (2015) positions youth workers (and the young people they work with) as 'neoliberal subjects'. As Ball (2003, 2012b) has highlighted, these 'market-based social relations' are creeping into the souls of educators (even though many actually hold onto a different set of values to frame practice, and this is described as producing a "kind of *values schizophrenia*" [2003, p. 221]). Not only are logics of the market shaping organisational structures, they are also affecting the subjectivities of educators. Neoliberalism is 'within us' as educators, it "gets into our minds, our souls, into the way we think about what we do, and into our social relations with others" (2012b, p. 18). For Ball, educators become 'neoliberal subjects' whether they oppose and critique it, or whether they like and benefit from it. This includes the performance of being accountable - in a marketised way - as practitioners.

Ball (2003; 2012b) and Collini (2017), for example, have analysed this matter in the teaching profession and in Higher Education (HE). Performativity is connected to New Public Management's (NPM) application of market-based ideals (such as 'value for money') and business mechanisms (such as metrics) to the public sector and publicly funded services (see Collini, 2017; Broucker et al., 2018). It is argued that, for educators, this increasingly produces a performance of worth and of being accountable to marketised systems of surveillance and metrics. Collini (2017) critiques the reductionism and counterproductivity of such metrics with, for example, the aphorism of 'Campbell's Law', whereby "The more any quantitative social indicator is used for social decision-making, the more subject it will be to corruption

processes and the more apt it will be to distort and corrupt the social processes it is intended to monitor” (p. 38).

While there are these critical threads of literature related to performativity, there is also a more pragmatic response to ‘measurement’ and ‘accountability’ requirements within the youth work field. This is illustrated by Noble’s (2017) discussion of impact measurement that emphasises the contribution and meaningfulness of ‘impact’. Noble (2018) also asserts that the “methodological challenges” for evaluating and evidencing ‘impact’ are what should be focused upon, rather than wider political critiques of a “neoliberal worldview” (as put forward by de St Croix [2018b]). This pragmatic approach is also advanced by McNeil’s (2018) tempering of the quest for ultimate ‘proof’ of impact, alongside McKaskill and McNeil’s (2019) “functional” take on ‘outcomes’. As further contribution to research and debates on this matter, de St Croix (2018a) investigates the shift to measurable outcomes, maintaining that they are framed by the market and they result in the marginalisation of “collective, qualitative and contextual forms of evaluation” that are more democratic and deliberative forms of accountability (p. 433). Additionally, a critique of the “neoliberal logic” for measurable outcomes is put forward by de St Croix and Doherty (2022), with an alternative emphasis placed upon more open, dialogic and reflective approaches.

As illustrated by the exchange between Noble (2018) and de St Croix (2018b), there are contrasting responses to the use of the term ‘neoliberal’ in connection with matters of outcomes measurement and practitioner experiences. Indeed, whereas de St Croix (2018b) problematises the impact of ‘neoliberalism’ on youth work

practice with incongruous measurement demands, Noble (2018) effectively problematises the use of the term 'neoliberal' as a distraction from methodological questions for how to do evaluation. These contrasting problematisations illustrate the tensions and complexities associated with the term 'neoliberalism', and the following section of this review will further explore literature on this term, including positions adopted on its usefulness and limitations.

Summary of Part One

In summation, part one's review of typological literature has explored various problems and questions about how youth work and the youth worker might be categorised. Over recent decades, there have been uncertainties, criticisms and gaps identified with existing typologies of youth work, nevertheless the literature asserts their usefulness, not only for reflecting a spectrum of (debated) roles and positions within the youth work field, but also for providing a knowledge base to support the formation of current and future youth workers. This literature also accounts for - within a diachronic typology - the rise of the contemporary youth worker as a neoliberal subject, with neoliberal logics impacting practice and subjectivities within this domain. Overall, this review has identified the theoretical and practical significance of literature on youth work typologies - including the impact of neoliberalisation upon the historical terrain of youth services and the youth worker - and the unfolding nature and incompleteness of such youth work typologies.

Part Two: Understanding and Analysing Neoliberalism

This thesis' research interest with neoliberal processes, their impacts, and responses to neoliberalism, is an interest shared across a wide range of publications and social domains. Neoliberalism is a thematic concern within many academic disciplines, theoretical and research traditions, and fields of work, as part two of this chapter will highlight. Through the literature on neoliberalism, it can be discerned that there are complexities to the term, differing aspects to it, spatial and temporal enactments and variations associated with it, various critiques of it, and diverse political and theoretical positions on it. To illustrate all these complexities and controversies, Peck introduces neoliberalism as a "rascal signifier" (2018, p. xxii). Nevertheless, within their broader overview of this term, Springer et al. (2016) provide an initial outline that neoliberalism is about "market-relations" and "re-tasking the role of the state", with general agreement in academic literature that it also referring to the expansion of "competitive markets" into more and more domains and "all areas of life" (p. 2). As a focus of analysis, the processes and impacts of neoliberalism can thus be perceived as those connected to "governments (that are) *actively intervening to marketise as many social domains as possible in order to promote competition under the banner of maximising efficiencies*" (Glynos, Klimecki et al., 2015, p. 411). This is a useful starting point - or building block - from which to explore this wider literature.

To begin with there is the political and economic literature of historical figures typically viewed as key early actors within the neoliberal project (e.g. Hayek, 1944; Friedman, 1962), and that of various organisations such as the Adam Smith Institute (and other think tanks) that include more contemporary and self-proclaimed "free market 'neoliberals'" (Bowman, 2016). Another strain of literature is one - with

ideational and historical-lineage concerns - that enquires into and traces the spread of such neoliberal belief systems and ideas. For instance, George (1999) charts the role of these thinkers and think tanks throughout the 20th century in spreading and globalising neoliberal ideas into the politics and policies within, for example, Thatcher's UK and international economic institutions such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Mirowski (2013) draws attention to bodies such as the neoliberal Mont Pèlerin Society (founded in Switzerland in 1947), the Austrian, Chicago and Freiburg/Ordoliberal schools of economics, as well as corporate foundations, think tanks and various keynote texts that all contribute - in their differing ways - to the 'Russian Doll' that is the Neoliberal Thought Collective (NTC) (also see the volume edited by Mirowski & Plehwe, 2015). This all feeds into the "the living, mutating entity" of neoliberalism, argues Mirowski (2013, p. 45). Cahill and Humphrys (2019), however, identify a risk of "ideational determinism" with the NTC thesis (p. 949), and although such ideas are influential in spreading neoliberalism, they do not tell the whole story in national settings, as contextualised relations and institutional factors need to be explored as well.

As well as ideational and historical analyses of economic and political thought, there are a range of other approaches to investigating neoliberalism, each with their own frames of analysis and insights, but also their own respective limitations. For instance, there are Marxist class analyses applied to neoliberalism that provide insights into capital accumulation and elite networks (e.g. Harvey, 2006; 2007; Carroll & Sapinski, 2016), and Foucauldian governmentality studies with related insights - and debates - concerning neoliberal subjectivity (e.g. Peters, 2007; Dean, 2018). Birch (2015; 2017) provides an account of such different approaches towards

understanding and analysing neoliberalism.¹⁵ He argues that a possible limit to a Marxist approach is that neoliberalism's role and significance as a "legitimizing ideology" (e.g. for class exploitation and domination) is unclear when compared to other ideologies (2015, p. 576). While a governmentality approach, he argues, could lack clarity on how "the (neoliberal) governing of conduct actually changes over time", including how changes occur to governing rationalities and technologies of power (p. 575). Meanwhile, according to Birch (2015), other approaches such as state and institutional analyses do provide important insights into how neoliberalism unfolds in relation to such bodies;¹⁶ though there are risks that a focus on the state could side-line the role of other non-state actors, while with institutional studies there are tensions surrounding how institutions themselves are conceived. Birch (2015) concludes that awareness of the different approaches is highly significant for research on neoliberalism, not least as an approach adopted "informs the definition of neoliberalism" that is being operationalised (p. 581).

Birch's (2015) categorisation is not intended as an all-encompassing or complete account of all analytical perspectives, and a degree of caution is needed with categorisations and 'ideal-types' as there can be oversimplifications and there can also be commonalities, overlaps and syntheses across analytical approaches (as well as internal divisions). Other analytical approaches towards neoliberalism can be identified - such as feminism (see Scharff, 2016), decolonialism (see Kidman, 2020)

¹⁵ Birch's (2015) categorisation is of the following approaches: Foucault and governmentality, Marxism and ideological hegemony, ideational analysis, history and philosophy of economics, institutional analysis, state theory and regulation school, and geographical analysis of neoliberalisation processes.

¹⁶ For example, see Jessop (2016) on the role of the austerity state in extending the neoliberal project. For different approaches within institutional analysis, see the edited collection by Campbell and Pederson (2001).

or discourse analysis - that are not explicitly listed by Birch (2015). For instance, there are different schools of discourse analysis, including poststructuralist and critical realist varieties (see Glynos et al., 2009). As highlighted by Bacchi and Goodwin (2016), poststructuralist discourse approaches provide a lens for analysing hegemonic neoliberal policy discourse alongside counter-hegemonic alternatives.¹⁷ A PDT logics approach can, for instance, be applied to analyse how neoliberal discourse shapes logics (contextualised rules) in specific fields (see Phelan, 2014), and it can also be applied to the analysis of how these logics are embedded within nodes (separate segments) along public service chains (see Glynos, Speed et al., 2015). As well as having a focus upon the ideological and fantasmatic 'grips' that neoliberal logics might have on subjects, a poststructuralist focus on multiplicity, contingency and non-fixity can also draw attention to spaces of potential change and resistance. There are, however, questions raised about how effectively this logics approach can be operationalised and applied to empirical phenomena (see Martilla, 2015a; Glynos et al., 2021).

Other discourse analyses of neoliberalism include Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approaches. For instance, such an approach is adopted by Fergusson and Yeates (2013; 2014) in their analyses of neoliberal, social democratic and hybrid discourses within youth unemployment policies and global institutions. Additionally, Muntigl et al. (2000) have used a discourse historical approach to analyse the (conflicting)

¹⁷ For Bacchi (2000), a poststructuralist and discursive approach moves beyond traditional policy analysis - including traditions of comprehensive and political rationalism (see Cairney, 2019) - as it focuses not just on arguments for or against a specific policy, but it also considers the composing of the issues to be considered. Alongside analysis of the framing of policy problems, a poststructuralist approach also draws attention to non-fixity of policy discourses, dominant and counter-discourses and spaces for change (see Bacchi, 2000; Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016).

discourses - for example, Keynesian versus neoliberal, union versus management - being weaved into employment policy measures of the European Union's (EU) governing institutions. Such forms of discourse analysis provide important insights into the hegemonic struggle between, for example, social democratic and neoliberal discourses. However, it could be argued that such studies are lacking with their analysis of how neoliberal discourses impact upon the formation of subjects and their identifications, including at a more local, grounded level.

The Process of Neoliberalisation

There are problematisations of neoliberalism when it is oversimplified and totalised as a "monolithic and complete project" (Springer et al., 2016, p. 3), and when it is viewed "purely in ideal-typical terms" (Peck et al., 2018, p. 7). Neoliberalism conceived in such static terms, for example, undermines analyses of the varied concrete situations in which it occurs. To navigate such problems another approach that has developed, especially within the field of critical and human geography, is that of studying neoliberalisation(s). The term neoliberalisation can thus be applied, understood and analysed as an unfolding "always-incomplete process" of "market-orientated restructuring" that involves localised hybridisation in socio-spatial situations (Peck et al., 2018, p. 7). Indeed, actual neoliberal transformations - and the state's facilitation of this - may not align completely with perceptions of fundamental neoliberal ideals or doctrines (Peck et al., 2018). Additionally, the neoliberal co-exists alongside other discourses, traditions and practices, and while it may dominate over others - and it may become hegemonic - it is not existing in total purity and isolation (Peck et al., 2018, pp. 9-10). Thus, when the specific term neoliberalisation is deployed, it is referring to neoliberal encroachment and

entrenchment that can occur within many domains. This is succinctly defined by Phelan (2014) as:

The process where market-based logics and practices, especially logics of market determinism, commodification, individualization, competitive ritual and self-interest, are dialectically internalized and generated in particular social regimes. (p. 57)

As noted in part one of this chapter, the field of youth work has been classified as increasingly neoliberal, with youth workers - and young people - being identified and categorised as 'neoliberal subjects'. Nevertheless, the neoliberalisation of subjectivity is incomplete (and not totalised) in such social domains, as it coexists with the non-neoliberal. Subjectivity can be more-than-neoliberal - though, when it becomes hegemonic, "we might call neoliberalism the master antagonist" in subjectivity (Phelan, 2018, p. 539). Furthermore, McGimpsey (2017) adds another layer to neoliberal subjectivity by emphasising various phases of neoliberalism and so draws attention to their changing implications for subject becoming and regulation. Rowe et al. (2019) also unpick the neoliberal theoretical frame as a 'totality', and in doing so they focus on assemblage (as does McGimpsey) to highlight the various "mutations and contra configurations" of neoliberalism, with contextualised enactments (p. 156).

Critiques and Defences of Neoliberalism Analysis

In addition to problematisations of understanding neoliberalism as a totality (that have, in turn, contributed to the process-based understandings of

neoliberalisation),¹⁸ there are other ways in which neoliberalism has been critiqued and problematised as a focus of analysis. There is also a thread of literature that expresses scepticism to neoliberalism studies. Even those writing about researching neoliberalism, express their doubts and frustrations. For instance, Birch (2017) is “increasingly ambivalent about the usefulness of neoliberalism as a concept in my analytical toolkit”, not least due to limited commonalities across perspectives (p. 2).

There is certainly scepticism - and also outright opposition - to the concept and terminology of neoliberalism. To illustrate this, Rowe et al. (2019) highlight how it has become a term with “ubiquitous and taken-for-granted use”, and this has frequently been driven by academic motivations to articulate resistance (p. 158). Barnett (2010) also questions the excessive moralism (and narrow frames of - oppositional - criticality) in literature that analyses neoliberalism as a problem. Meanwhile, Dunn (2017) critiques it as a ‘catch all term’, that is too ‘slippery’ to be politically or analytically useful, including for the political left. Also, Purcell (2018) urges readers to break free from the shackles of ‘negating’ neoliberalism, and to focus instead on putting their intellectual energies into creating and building the future world that is wanted.

While there are such critiques, there are also defences of the term for its usefulness and for its relevance for ongoing analysis. For instance, Springer et al. (2016) concede that “lack of specificity” in the use of the term can undermine understanding, but this is precisely why the term is “in need of unpacking” to ensure

¹⁸ Neoliberalisation, itself, has been problematised - and critically engaged with - in the literature, e.g. see Castree (2006) on a risk of neoliberalisation studies potentially diluting and losing focus in the wider analysis of neoliberalism.

it has analytical usefulness (p. 2). Additionally, Cahill et al. (2018) maintain it is “a useful descriptor of real-world phenomena”, for instance, they argue it is helpful in describing - and making “at least partially legible” - those ideas and the restructuring processes within specific institutions over recent decades (p. xxix). Peck et al. (2018) also defend its usefulness as a “least-bad formulation” to articulate the overarching market forces in operation (p. 14).

While the diversity of neoliberal enactments and its many particularities might appear bewildering for some sceptics, there are also “recurring features and family resemblances” of neoliberalism that can be drawn out (Peck et al., 2018, p. 7). For instance, analysis of common features within neoliberalisation can include the “destructive (or roll back)” and “creative (or roll out) phases” (Peck et al., 2018, p. 14).¹⁹ The former concerns “the active destruction and discreditation of Keynesian-welfarist and social-collectivist institutions (broadly defined)” and the latter refers to “the purposeful construction and consolidation of neoliberalised state forms, modes of governance, and regulatory relations” (Peck & Tickell, 2002, p. 384). Additionally, neoliberal logics impacting in and across human - and non-human - worlds can also be identified to build understanding of such phases (see Castree, 2008).

Furthermore, within recent literature on the study of neoliberalisation, a need has been asserted for situated and cross-contextual analyses - i.e. “of specific hybrid formations in relation both to one another and to broader tendencies and patterns” - as well as a need to take account of “spatial differentiation and temporal evolution” (Peck et al., 2018, p. 10).

¹⁹ Also see Jessop (2016) on the politics and policies of austerity (with its associated ‘roll backs’) as an extension of neoliberalism, and the austerity state that embeds such politics and policies.

It is within this wider body of literature about neoliberalism - and such background debates - that this thesis is situated. While acknowledging there is scepticism with - and opposition to - neoliberal terminology and its framing for analysis, this thesis adopts neoliberal terminology and framing for three key reasons. *Firstly*, through this thesis, there is a recognition of the need to unpack the term neoliberalism, and a commitment to add specificity and detail when articulating the process of neoliberalisation within socio-spatial contexts and how it unfolds over a period of time. *Secondly*, for this thesis the term is deemed useful and insightful for characterising those marketised aspects of policy discourse that shape logics (e.g. rules) within specific domains - and in turn impact subjectivities - that are being analysed. *Thirdly*, rather than simply negating neoliberalism, this thesis will also be analysing aspects of political subjectivity and alternative discourses that look beyond neoliberal hegemony. Nevertheless, it will also be acknowledging that neoliberal policy discourse and neoliberal logics warrant analysis, not least, due to the antagonism and tensions generated in collective bodies, social structures, concrete situations and within subjectivities. As such, this thesis can contribute to this existing body of knowledge - and to relevant literature - on neoliberalism, neoliberalisation within social domains, and implications for political subjectivity, alternative imaginaries and practices.

Beyond Neoliberalism? Resistances, Disruptions and Alternatives

While there is scepticism, and objections are made, to neoliberalism as a frame of analysis (and as a focus of political struggle), there is also a significant thread within neoliberalism literature that directly explores resistance, political opposition and alternatives to neoliberal policies, practices, and subjectivities. Resistance is deemed

a relevant and warranted focus of analysis within those studies, as they intentionally explore how neoliberal politics and policies - having been problematised by social actors - generate antagonisms and various responses.

Within the field of education, for instance, Roberts-Holmes and Moss (2021) highlight a role for “minor engagements” (and smaller events and actions) - not simply major events and large-scale mobilisations - in resisting neoliberalism’s grasp (p. 153). They highlight the role of: educators and practitioners becoming critical thinkers; the intentional remaking of subjectivity away from a neoliberal subjectivity; the micro-politics of minor transgressions when situations enable this (as well as a role for macro-politics); the use of alternative non-neoliberal language; making a space for storytelling to allow for alternative narratives; and building towards non-neoliberal alternatives and possibilities (pp. 153-165). Within the youth work literature, there are also examples of such selective engagements - and transgressions - in resisting neoliberal hegemony. de St Croix and Doherty (2022), for instance, highlight the role for non-neoliberal alternatives in the evaluation of youth work practice. Nicholls’ (2012) discussion of youth workers and neoliberalism points out that within the “occupation area the (key) forms of resistance will lie in the quality of the face-to-face relationship (with young people) and the quality of the mind of the youth worker as educator” (p. 69). Additionally, as well as such matters of consciousness raising with young people and youth workers, Nicholls (2012) also highlights the role of “collective self-organisation” in resistance (p. 83).

The literature on resistance, includes a specific focus on the subjectivity of educators. Notable examples are the analyses of subjectivity as a site of struggle

and resistance by Ball and Olmedo (2013) and Ball (2016). In a Foucauldian manner, this is intended as a response to neoliberal governmentalities and neoliberal technologies of power that educators encounter within their workplaces and within themselves. The emphasis of Ball (2016) is not simply resistance - but refusal - of neoliberal subjectivity; the refusal is an act of self-government using technologies of the self. This is emphasised as a beginning of other such refusals:

The point is that in neoliberal economies, sites of government and points of contact are also sites for the possibility of refusal. However, the starting point for a politics of refusal is the site of subjectivity. It is a struggle over and against what it is we have become, what it is that we do not want to be. (p. 1143)

Meanwhile, Youdell and McGimpsey's (2015) assemblage ethnography focuses on youth service reconfigurations in a major English city, and limits to the youth service worker as a "resistant political subject" in Austerity Britain (p. 116). This primarily focuses on youth services as assemblage, and it provides observations on constraints on practitioner resistance such as "immediate exigencies" of working within "mandated funding, accountability and performance frames" that produces "quietly conservative" workers (p. 128). de St Croix's (2016) practitioner ethnography also explores responses and resistances of English youth project workers in a "neoliberal policy context" of managerialism, marketisation, performativity, surveillance and precarity (p. 175). It includes an insightful and reflexive account of the counter-hegemonic ideals and resistances of co-operative workers within a wider landscape, as well as accounts of youth workers as neoliberal subjects.

Within the youth work field, another recent strain of literature on resistance to neoliberalism is that involving collective bodies and networks (such as the Choose

Youth coalition of over 30 youth organisations and trade unions, the Young Men's Christian Association [YMCA], and the IDYW collective). Such bodies have been involved with putting forward non-neoliberal prototypes and alternative imaginaries (see Table 5). Choose Youth (2013), for instance, in response to the neoliberal politics and policies of austerity produced a manifesto for universal open access youth services. YMCA (2020a) has also called-out to governments to move away from the austerity politics impacting youth services in both England and Wales. The practice network, IDYW (2018), also produced an initial "reviving" and "reimagining" paper that weaves a number of differing visions together. Its "starting points" include matters of both practice and institutional structures of youth work. Thus, such collective bodies have been proposing alternative interim-visions (provisional and incomplete) to those of neoliberal hegemony within this social domain.

Table 5: Beyond Neoliberalism? Youth Work and Youth Service Envisioning

Beyond Neoliberalism? Youth Work and Youth Service Envisioning (adapted from Choose Youth, 2013; IDYW, 2018; YMCA, 2020)		
<i>Choose Youth Envisioning</i>	<i>YMCA Envisioning</i>	<i>IDYW Envisioning</i>
<p>A vision of a new legislative and political commitment for quality universal, open access youth services and youth work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>New statutory basis (for England)</i> - to secure a permanent service with standards for the 'youth offer'. • <i>Dedicated ring fenced funding</i> - to be protected in statute and managed by national and local bodies. • <i>National Youth Service Advisory Board</i> - to oversee funding and professional developments on a national level.²⁰ • <i>Local Youth Service Partnerships</i> - to lead and plan on local service developments with young people's participation. • <i>Minimum levels of core qualified staffing for the youth population</i> - to include funding for professional training to be on a par with teaching and social work. 	<p>A call on the Government to meet the following three tests in England:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinstatement and ring-fence youth services funding to pre-austerity real terms levels. • Provide universal youth services for all young people and targeted support for those who need it. • Create a national youth services strategy. <p>In addition, a call on the Welsh Government to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinstatement and ring-fence youth services funding to pre-austerity real terms levels. • Include minimum standards for universal and targeted youth services in statutory guidance. • Develop a real partnership approach driven by the Welsh Assembly that puts third sector organisations at the heart of youth service provision. • Develop a longer term 10-year vision for youth services in Wales. 	<p>Starting points for reviving youth work and reimagining a youth service to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth work as an educational and political practice. • Key role for open access provision with voluntary relationships and practice in the 'here and now'. • Commitment to critical dialogue with associational, conversational and anti-oppressive practice. • Evaluation and accountability of practice, but not distorted by drive for data or prescribed outcomes. • Democratic funding bodies including young people and workers, as well as managers and politicians. • State-supported partnerships between local authorities and voluntary sector (with professional training and conditions for staff). • Youth work to be within a 'from cradle to grave' education service. • Breaking from the competitive market and self-centred individualisation of neoliberalism. • Retention of a youth work practice identity.

²⁰ In Wales, a recent review by Jervis (2018) also makes a similar recommendation for a National Body, as such a body has been absent since the demise of the WYA in 2006. In Wales, in contrast to England, the youth service is for young people aged 11-25, and a need for hypothecated - and sufficient - funding has been identified as an ongoing issue in Wales as well as in England.

As well as the above examples of counter conduct and collective envisioning - and mobilising - as resistance (especially within education and youth work), the neoliberalism literature also identifies that there are opponents to neoliberalism across the world and from across the political spectrum/compass.²¹ For instance, Cahill et al. (2018) notes that after the 2007-2008 financial crash there was a “renewal of diverse forms of resistance to neoliberalism - from socialist, anarchist, feminist, environmentalist and anti-racist organizations to far-right nationalist and populist movements” (p. xxxi). As further illustration of the range of oppositional lenses to neoliberalism, there is a focus by White and Williams (2016) on “anti-capitalist anarchic economic spaces” as a mode of everyday resistance. Meanwhile, from a Marxist perspective, Harvey (2006) draws attention to class struggle and the role for oppositional class movements to build alternatives.

Analysing Neoliberalisation, Agency and Resistance

So far, part two of this chapter has reviewed: frames for the analysis of neoliberalism; the shift to analysing neoliberalisation as incomplete processes; and, perspectives on the foregrounding of the neoliberal and resistance as foci of analysis. However, limitations and flaws identifiable within existing accounts of neoliberalism and neoliberalisation include:

²¹ This literature (e.g. see George, 1999; Harvey, 2006; 2007; Peck et al., 2010; Springer, 2015; Brand, 2016; Cahill et al., 2018) also draws attention to the various levels - local, national, and international - and geographical spread of resistance across different time periods, such as: opposition movements to Thatcherism in UK, Reagonomics in USA and Pinochet’s dictatorship in Chile, especially during the 1980s; the texts of Subcomandante Marcos and actions of the Zapatistas in Chiapas, Mexico in 1990s; the wider alter-globalisation movement’s challenge towards structural adjustment and other neoliberal policies of the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Trade Organisation (WTO), especially from the 1990s into the 21st century; the Occupy movement’s international protests and occupations after the 2007-2008 crash; and the Syntagma and Syriza resistance efforts to imposed austerity in Greece in the 2010s. This is a non-exhaustive list and is purely illustrative, and it is noted that the literature also highlights far-right not simply leftist opposition to neoliberalism (see Bello, 2020, on the rise of far-right opposition in both the Global North and the Global South).

- 1) There are totalising and more abstract accounts of neoliberalism (globalised or national) that lack contextual detail and nuance for how neoliberalisation processes embed and hybridise in differing socio-spatial settings;
- 2) There are localised accounts of neoliberalised sites that neglect wider patterns, wider conditions and commonalities across contexts (of neoliberalism);
- 3) There are accounts of neoliberalisation that marginalise and underestimate the analysis of contestations and resistances; and,
- 4) There are accounts of neoliberalisation that neglect and underexplore practices and spaces of individual, collective and institutional agency.

Brenner et al. (2010), for example, provide a critical analysis of limitations 1 and 2. They identify problems with (a) accounts of global forces and national regimes of neoliberalism (e.g. through the approaches of historical materialism and varieties of capitalism), and (b) accounts of local sites of neoliberalisation (e.g. through a governmentality approach). In particular, these approaches construct a “binary frame of inexorable convergence versus unpatterned heterogeneity” (p. 217). While they bring insights, these approaches have pitfalls with their analyses framed around either excessive “fixity” of “structuralist overgeneralizations” (of the national or the global), or, excessive “flux” of unique, separate localised ‘ecosystems’ (pp. 204-206). Rather Brenner et al. (2010) make the case for variegated neoliberalisation that identifies the wider patterns and “family resemblances” (such as neoliberal restructuring phases or waves) alongside the contextual and “polymorphic character” of the local experiences (p. 217). Furthermore, a need is identified for cross-

contextual studies of neoliberalisation processes to occur that take account of both local settings and wider patterns (see Peck et al., 2010).

In relation to limitation 3, Geddes and Sullivan (2012) argue for extending analysis beyond “‘variegated’ neoliberalisms” to the “contested *process of neoliberalization*”. In doing so, they open their analysis to local as well as national and global forces involved with producing neoliberalism, as well as where it has - or has not - become dominant. Additionally, Blanco et al. (2014) identify “a critical deficit in how accounts of regimes of neoliberalisation” are analysing and engaging with various contestations, including at the local level (p. 3130). Thus, their argument goes, the explanations and understanding of neoliberalisation - and neoliberal regimes - will be enhanced through incorporating accounts of the political dimensions and contestations of local spaces. This can include the analysis of “local outcomes and the local conditions that can facilitate different forms of contestation and resistance” (p. 3139). Furthermore, Leitner et al. (2007) have also emphasised the significance of analysing contestation within accounts of neoliberalism and of outcomes reached. This includes the analysis of “contestations within and beyond the state” that shape the “conditions of possibility” (p. 8), and this overlaps with analysis of the “social and historical geographical conditions that facilitate a particular outcome” whether it is of neoliberal dominance, further hybridisation or an alternative arrangement (p. 10).

With limitation 4, for instance, Blanco et al. (2014) have argued that - due to limitations of existing accounts of neoliberalisation - there has been a need for further analysis of local practices and spaces for agency within the local state. For instance, they highlight a ‘deficit’ to accounts of “the role of the local state and local

government in fostering or resisting neoliberal strategies” (p. 3131). They also refer to “insufficient attention” to the characterisation and “mapping of variation across local regimes” in terms of local governance (p. 3142). Nevertheless, Geddes and Sullivan (2011) provide an initial contribution on such matters. They develop a typology of local leadership responses to neoliberalisation, with a spectrum that includes aggressive, consolidating, and adaptive types of pro-neoliberalisation leadership, but also resistance and contestation of neoliberalisation as leadership types as well. There have also been various studies, notably of urban governance within cities, that furnish accounts of how neoliberalisation becomes embedded or resisted through local state institutions and other local actors. For example, Davies et al. (2020) focus upon ‘austrian realism’ as a governing culture - or a “pragmatic governing disposition” (p. 59) - that has facilitated the embedding of austerity within the city of Leicester. As part of a wider case study with analysis of cities in Spain and the UK, Davies and Blanco (2017) contend that the UK cities studied (Cardiff and Leicester) “had stable ‘austrian realist’ regimes, political cultures in which national government sets the rules, no mainstream social actor refuses austerity and resistance has little direct impact” (p. 1529). While in Cardiff, and Wales more widely, there were some collectivist policies of Welsh Labour, but cuts were “implemented in a spirit of realpolitik due to statutory constraints and for lack of any perceived political alternative” (p. 1522). Through these case studies, Davies and Blanco (2017) identify ‘austrian realism’ as a driver of variegated neoliberalisation (p. 1529). This austrian disposition provided local actors with a “common sense view that no alternative to cuts and ‘prudent’ budgeting was feasible” (Davies et al, 2023, p. 127).

As well as a focus on austere realism, Davies et al. (2023) analyse mechanisms and practices of state-led collaborative governance across 8 cities from Europe, North America and Australia. They identify a “spectrum of collaborations” including: various “elite coalitions” (e.g. with local state and corporate partners) that can contribute to embedding and entrenching neoliberalisation, including austerity; and, various grassroots civil society coalitions and movements (whether “with.. against or without” the local state) that can resist austerity and neoliberalisation (pp. 136-137). Thus, there are certain spaces for local state and grassroots agency, rather than the lack of options as depicted by austere realism, and there are “many ways of subverting it [austerity] and turning it against its sponsors” (p. 135). Another study of local state agency during austerity (Barnett et al., 2021) also sought to identify the spectrum of positions towards practices of municipal entrepreneurialism - and income generation for local authorities - in the UK. While there are the more neoliberalised and commercial approaches, there is also nuance with more progressive framings and interventions possible. While identifying such spaces for local state agency including progressive alternatives, Barnett et al. (2021) also cautioned against reductionist accounts of local agency under neoliberal austerity (p. 907).

It is in the context of these limitations and ‘deficits’ to existing accounts of neoliberalism and neoliberalisation that this study is situated. It is intended that this study will contribute to understanding of neoliberalism and neoliberalisation by:

- *Analysing neoliberal variegation without structuralist overgeneralisations obscuring neoliberal variations*: It will do this by providing a nuanced account of neoliberalisation, its localised variations and their hybridisations within

these two cases. It will also identify the points of divergence and concurrence across these cases, and the conditions for their respective outcomes.

- *Analysing neoliberal variegation without heterogeneity obscuring neoliberal commonalities:* It will do this by providing an account of neoliberalisation that identifies and analyses ‘family resemblances’ and wider patterns and phases of neoliberalism across these cases, as well as the broader conditions for these commonalities.
- *Analysing neoliberalisation without neoliberal dominance obscuring contestations:* It will do this by providing an account of how neoliberalisation processes have unfolded and further extended or been constrained by state and non-state contestations, and the conditions shaping the respective outcomes and contestations. This will include accounts of how contestations can shape neoliberal, hybridised or alternative outcomes, and how in turn these outcomes shape further contestations.
- *Analysing neoliberalisation without neoliberal practices obscuring spaces for agency:* It will do this by providing an account of how neoliberalisation practices have been furthered by state and non-state actors, yet wider spaces for state and non-state agency will also be identified (and the conditions and outcomes shaping forms of agency). The wider spaces include available practices and strategies that facilitate resistance and alternatives to neoliberalisation, not simply mitigate aspects of it.

Post-neoliberalism/Postneoliberalism?

Another related strain of neoliberalism literature to be noted is that concerning the terminology and conceptualisation of post-neoliberalism/postneoliberalism. As with

neoliberalism, it is a term for which there are different ways it is used, differing aspects, complexities and variations of it, critiques of its usefulness, and contrasting political implications and associations with its varied applications. Springer (2015), for instance, discusses the significance of hyphenated and unhyphenated versions. *Firstly*, there is the hyphenated post-neoliberalism that generally and typically - but not exclusively - is used to imply a break (to some degree) from neoliberalism, and it has also been used to refer to a condition after neoliberal hegemony has ended. *Secondly*, there is the unhyphenated postneoliberalism that generally and typically - but not exclusively - is used to stress neoliberal continuation, but from within an ongoing neoliberal present there is critique and alternatives that are sought or envisaged. Overall, both versions contribute and extend analysis of resistance, disruptions and alternatives to neoliberalism.

To begin with, from the 1990s into the 21st century the term post-neoliberalism has been applied to 'new left' governments and their policies and programmes in Latin America including, for example, the governments led by Chavez in Venezuela, Morales in Bolivia and Correa in Ecuador (see Ruckert et al., 2017; Yates & Bakker, 2014). In this context post-neoliberalism has been articulated as an "anti-neoliberal" shift away from neoliberalism, though it has also been problematised and critiqued as nothing more than "reconstituted neoliberalism" (Ruckert et al., 2017, pp. 1583-1584). Questions are raised: is the post-neoliberal simply a new period - or hybridisation - of neoliberalism, a significant break from it, or a more modest shift away from it? Overall, in this context, Ruckert et al. (2016) claim that on balance:

the notion of post-neoliberalism remains useful if we understand it not as a complete break with neoliberalism, but rather as a tendency to break with certain aspects of neoliberal policy

prescriptions, without representing a set of strict policies or a clearly identifiable policy regime (p. 1584).

Meanwhile Yates and Bakker's (2014) assessment, including whether 'counter-neoliberalisation' might be a better term, concluded that the term post-neoliberalism has its qualities despite the various problematisations and alternative terms. They also identify key principles and practices of post-neoliberalism (p. 71) to indicate its analytical usefulness - these are summarised in Table 6.

Table 6: Principles and Practices of Post-neoliberalism in Latin America

Principles and Practices of Post-neoliberalism in Latin America (abridged version of Yates & Bakker, 2014)		
Principles		Practices
Re-socialization	Re-founding the state (around the social sphere)	Nationalization
	(Re-)Socialization of the market economy	Regulation of Big Business
Deepened democracy	Re-politicization of civil society (autogestion)	Building a solidarity economy (cooperatives, associations, community organizations)
	Regional integration (new regional political economy)	Strengthened labour relations
		Participatory budgeting
		Institutionalization of participatory decision-making mechanisms
		Social mobilization as politics as usual

Arguably, from reviewing Table 6, parallels could be drawn to the UK context with Berry's (2017) contention that a post-neoliberal project was emerging through Corbynism.²²

²² Despite a lack of policy development resources, according to Berry (2017), a post-neoliberal vision was gradually being put forward through Corbyn's Labour Party including: an industrial strategy influenced by "heterodox economists"; local economic development through the 'Preston model' for ensuring local procurement of goods and services by key local employers (see Sheffield, 2017); alternative models of ownership (e.g. cooperative, municipal and locally-led, and national - see Labour Party, 2017a); and, new grassroots links to policy-making, as seen with Platform's influence on energy democracy and the Robin Hood Tax campaign's influence on Stamp Duty Reserve Tax in the 2017 manifesto (see Labour Party, 2017b). Choose Youth's influence can also be identified within Corbyn's youth service policy (see Labour Party, 2019).

Additionally, post-neoliberalism has also been used as a term connected to the planning for life after the (supposedly) imminent 'death of neoliberalism' due to crises such as the 2007-2008 financial crisis (see Peck et al., 2010; Springer, 2015). However, a problem identified with the anticipated demise of neoliberalism (e.g. due to a crisis) is that 'neoliberalism' typically adapts and reinvents 'itself' in these situations (e.g. with rapid-fire new policies - see Klein, 2007). While post-neoliberalism has been applied to more leftist alternatives to neoliberal hegemony, that is not the only political usage. The term has also been applied to far-right and reactionary developments and aspirations to secure a different post-neoliberal future (see Means & Slater, 2019; Bello, 2020; Davies & Gane, 2021). Bello (2020), for instance, views this rise of the far-right as a problem and a challenge in both the Global North and the Global South, and argues that - amongst other things - a strong leftist counter-vision is required to win popular support for the present and the future.

One further usage, that can be discerned in the literature, is that of post-neoliberalism (or the 'post-neo-liberal'), not as a break or an end to neoliberalism, but as just another phase of neoliberalism whereby the market's advance continues and deepens in social domains such as education (see Ball, 2012c; McGimpsey, 2013). Arguably, 'late neoliberalism' is a more apt term for such purposes, and it is one used in McGimpsey's later work (2017).²³

²³ Also, 'soft neoliberalism' is another way to characterise, for example, neoliberal approaches such as the Blairite 'Third Way' (see Quiggin, 2018). Other characterisations of softer variations have included 'progressive' (Fraser, 2017) and 'recalibrated' neoliberalism (Garrett, 2019).

While it might also be used for other purposes, the unhyphenated postneoliberalism tends to imply that there is continuation of neoliberalism, not a clear break from it, though there is a search for alternatives. Brand (2016) sets out how this search can be used to refer to a “political-strategic” search for alternatives to neoliberalism, as such it is an “epistemic terrain” with different versions available of postneoliberalism (pp. 569-570). It can be viewed as a theoretical position to critique neoliberalism from within, a seed for resistance, and a place to share alternative visions (Springer, 2015). Meanwhile from within social domains that are neoliberalised - such as youth work - the postneoliberal can be an envisioning device to move away from the neoliberal present and towards an alternative imaginary. For example, within the Irish youth work context, Kiely and Meade (2018) advocate a postneoliberal reimagining for a “postevidence practice world”, and as a way of moving beyond neoliberalised austerity and governmental rationalities (p. 36). In this context, there are also resemblances and parallels to the terminology of alter-neoliberal critique: acknowledging the constraints of neoliberal realities, while also being ‘against and beyond neoliberalism’ (Soudias, 2021; 2023).²⁴

Summary of Part Two

In summation, following part one’s review of relevant literature on youth work typologies and the rise of neoliberal subjectivity, *part two* has been digging further into the literature of neoliberalism. It has highlighted various problems and questions

²⁴It is pertinent to note that - while Soudias (2021; 2023) draws upon Hage’s (2015) account of alter-politics - the prefix ‘alter’ can be applied in various ways resulting in different meanings and producing varied results. The use of alter within ‘alter-neoliberal’ differs, for example, to that within ‘alter-globalisation’. The former is seeking *alternatives beyond* neoliberalism, whereas the latter is seeking *an alternative form of* globalisation (e.g. ‘globalisation from below’ instead of corporate-led globalisation - see Steger & Wilson, 2012). Meanwhile other connotations arise when the modifier ‘alt’ is applied, such as ‘alt-right’ and ‘alt-left’ - with Moffitt (2023) contending that it then becomes - in part - about a “style” of doing politics.

that have arisen - and continue to emerge - in connection with the term neoliberalism. It has considered particular strands within this literature: *firstly*, what are ways of understanding neoliberalism and neoliberalisation, how are these terms used, and what support and criticisms do they have; and, *secondly*, what are ways of adopting, navigating or resisting neoliberalism and neoliberalisation, and how has this occurred in geographical locations such as nations or states as well as in more specific fields such as education, youth work and youth policy. It also includes details of literature outlining, debating and critiquing the related term of post-neoliberalism/postneoliberalism. Overall, from this review it is contended that theorisation of neoliberalism - despite its limitations - is useful and insightful, including for the analysis of neoliberalisation processes and neoliberalised logics within specific social domains. It is also significant for informing the analysis of critique of and alternatives to - and beyond - neoliberalism. However, this section has also identified specific limitations and 'critical deficits' to existing accounts of neoliberalism and neoliberalisation, notably that they can lack analysis of either variations or commonalities, as well as contestations and agency. As a result, this study will seek to provide an account of variegated neoliberalisation that contributes to knowledge by analysing neoliberal variations *and* commonalities across the case studies, as well as dominant neoliberal practices *and* contestations including spaces for agency.

Part Three: Agendas for Youth Work

Having outlined literature relating to typologies of youth work - including the rise of the youth worker as a neoliberal subject - and a wider body of literature about studying neoliberalism, part three of this chapter now moves on to consider literature

on competing agendas for youth work (including those agendas shaped by neoliberal policy discourse and by policies to govern youth transitions). Within youth work literature there are problematisations of the demands often placed upon youth work by government policies and funding bodies. For instance, overly targeted and prescriptive practice based upon deficit models are, typically, viewed as a problem in this literature, not least as this - too frequently - comes at the expense of more open and critical forms of practice. However, there are also more pragmatic approaches too that emphasise accommodation and adaptation to these external demands.

Youth Work Discourse vs. External Demands: Historic Tensions

An example of this problematisation of external agendas is provided by Davies (1999a; 1999b) in the history of the youth service's development in England throughout the 20th century (including a partial account for Wales too). This service had developed from charitable beginnings into a partnership of local and national government, voluntary organisations, and young people - with the state as a dominant actor and funder (Davies, 1999b, p. 188). Davies summarises the youth service's distinctive approach for working with young people as being characterised by a commitment to the voluntary engagement and freely chosen association of young people (p. 171), and an emphasis upon the 'potentiality' and capacities of the 'whole' young people to be further developed through their participation and empowerment (p. 176). It included a youth work approach focusing upon the 'demands', direct interests and concerns of young people themselves, as well as wider 'issue-based' work with personal, social and political education, and addressing issues of inequalities, discrimination and oppression that affect young people's lives (p. 178-179).

For Davies (1999b), these core principles and this youth work approach came into tension with the external policy demands for targeting groups of young people - deemed a 'problem' in policy - and working with them in prescribed ways. This targeting was evident in the 1970s and 1980s with Manpower Services Commission (MSC) initiatives, and since the late 1990s with the social inclusion agenda of New Labour. He views this targeting of provision as having 'inbuilt flaws' from a youth work perspective: instead of young people's voluntary engagement, there have been governmental expectations of fixed audiences (pp. 171-176); rather than their potentiality, young people's inadequacies and deficiencies are emphasised (pp. 176-180); and an analysis of the structural inequalities that ensure society produces and reproduces 'winners' and 'losers' is absent, and the 'losers' are simply seen as problems in need of rectifying or rescue (p. 180).

A 1979 publication by Davies is viewed as 'seminal' in this specific area of youth service and youth worker responses to external policy demands (see Smith, 2005). Davies was writing in the 1970s when the MSC youth training programmes were being 'rolled out', and youth workers and youth services were increasingly involved due to MSC resources. According to Davies (1979), this brought not only a change of language but also a change of philosophy that would alter youth work practice through 'specialist programmes' with the unemployed and 'at risk' young people, and through universal youth programmes too (p. 1). He feared a shift away from the youth service's tradition of person-centred social education, and towards a narrower 'social and life skills training' agenda. Rather than passively accept such an imposed agenda, Davies asks a series of critical questions about the targeting of unemployed

young people including: *Is their unemployed state sufficient evidence they need training? Is unemployment for the vast majority really a result of the economic system and not personal deficiency?* (p. 5). In this piece, Davies argues for social educators to: “regain their nerve” for their methods, goals and convictions; and develop their analysis and articulation of their practice, its meaning and its content (pp. 10-11).

Youth Work Discourse vs. External Demands: Targeting and the Deficit-Model

There is a thread of practice-related literature that has developed - over the decades since Davies' (1979) paper - that has analysed subsequent policy demands being placed upon youth work and youth services. Much of this literature seeks to defend 'youth work' values and methods for engaging and working with young people. Typically, it depicts youth work practice as being marginalised and undermined by external demands, such as agendas to tackle 'youth unemployment' or 'anti-social behaviour' (see Davies, 1979; 1999a; 1999b; 2005; 2015; 2021; IDYW, 2009; Hughes et al., 2014; Taylor et al., 2018). As explained by Batsleer (2008), external policy demands filter through to youth work agencies and to youth worker practice with young people on the ground. For example, external policy discourses

are linked directly with funding, job descriptions, targets and measurement of outcomes.

Targets and outcomes both prescribe job descriptions and circumscribe and limit practice. Staff with the ability to subject these aspects of their work to analysis are able to see what is being closed down and what is being opened up as a result of such policy frameworks. (Batsleer, 2008, p. 27)

As such, there is a problematisation in youth work literature of the ever increasing 'surveillance' of both young people and practitioners to fit in with the policy

requirements for the targeting of selected groups and to meet the associated targets and predetermined outcomes (see Jeffs & Smith, 2001; Taylor, 2009; Smith, 2014). During its lifespan, from 2009 to 2022, the IDYW network, for example, sought to defend a distinctive educational practice with young people, i.e. democratic and emancipatory youth work, and it articulated a particular critique of dominant neoliberal youth policy. IDYW (2009) criticised a shift to an “instrumental” form of managerialised practice that looked to micro-manage “problematic, often demonised youth”, with an emphasis on “centrally defined targets and indicators”, the “potentially deviant or dysfunctional young person” becomes the focus of attention, and workers are roped into the “surveillance of young people”.

While there are a diversity of practitioner perspectives, beyond those articulated by the IDYW campaign, common practitioner debates about external policy demands and practice have frequently included: the respective role of open and universal services alongside closed and targeted provision; the space for more informal learning versus more formalised learning; the space for voluntary participation versus more compulsory involvement of young people; the negotiated needs of young people versus the pre-set objectives of external agencies; and the space for greater autonomy of practice versus narrowing demands and targets of government, managerialism and funders. Additionally, practitioners have also advocated for active - and pragmatic - engagement within the external policy frameworks in order to modify them and to provide support and opportunities for young people, including for those young people who are in marginalised situations such as, for example, unemployment (see Williamson, 1988, 2001). Thus, there are also pragmatic strains within this literature which emphasise the ‘duty to explain’ - and work with - the

present system of opportunities when working young people (see Williamson, 1988, 2001).

Another stance within this literature is that of Jeffs and Smith (1999) who critique the conceptualisation of 'youth-as a problem' and as being in 'deficit', and the construction of policy and practice in response to such a deficit model. For example, Jeffs and Smith (2001) provided a critique of the Connexions Strategy in England - that combined Careers and Youth Services into a (now defunct) form of provision that was established in 2000. They viewed it as running "counter to the key characteristics of youth work"; for example, there was "a shift from voluntary participation to more coercive forms; from association to individualized activity; from education to case management (and not even casework); and from informal to bureaucratic relationships." Another contribution to this debate - by Hughes et al. (2014) - also advocates for a counter-discourse to the deficit model of young people. In this context, the category of youth work itself is also problematised as to whether it has lost its ('original') meaning and if it now needs to be replaced by another ('better') categorisation of practice - or not. Due to the negative use of the term 'youth' and the dilution of the 'youth work' approach through targeting, Jeffs and Smith (1999) argue that the notion of youth work (as a unique educational practice) is no longer useful and they advocate for informal education as an alternative terminology for framing a progressive educational approach (see: <http://www.infed.org/>). They say: 'youth work' has become so eroded and undermined by other state agendas that it is best abandoned, 'youth work' is no longer a useful term or activity, instead other forms of voluntary engagement and democratic educational practice should be focused upon such as informal education

(Jeffs & Smith, 1999). However, Jeffs (2017) also emphasises common ground between informal education and youth work, notably dialogic practice.

A 2003 position paper from the WYA counters Jeffs and Smith's (1999) emphasis on informal education as opposed to youth work, by contending that while informal education is valuable, youth work is still relevant including both targeted as well as open approaches. It adds that targeting is not entirely new anyway in youth work as there is a history of social rescue work (e.g. see Table 2) - though the WYA paper views the employability agenda, in particular, as problematic especially if youth workers are expected to reinforce the rules of schooling and training. Furthermore, in an article specifically about Wales, Rose (2008) contends that the traditional youth work approach - as in youth service programmes that are negotiated by young people and free from "the influence of either government-led employment agendas or... quantifiable outcomes" - remain as "marginalized" as ever (pp. 58-59). It is the informal and non-formal strengths of traditional youth work, in contrast, that can be viewed as "enabling young people to successfully navigate their routes to adult life, to take more control over their lives, and to achieve their aspirations" - but this approach for working with young people is subservient to, and undermined by, other agendas (p. 59).

The Agenda of Youth Transitions

The role of youth services within policy frameworks about youth transitions is a particular focus of analysis and problematisation within youth work and wider youth

studies.²⁵ Existing literature in the broad field of youth studies investigates - amongst other matters - the problem of how to conceptualise and respond to youth transitions, for example of 'school leavers' as well as young people more generally. As an example, one key focus in youth studies has been - and still is - school to work transitions (see Cieslik & Simpson, 2013). However, in the early 1970s "the problem of young people getting 'lost' in the transition from school to work was not an issue" (Williamson, 1997, p. 72). Then there were 'traditional transitions' with the vast majority of young people getting jobs straight from school:

(T)he school-to-work transition was easy to achieve and was taken-for-granted as an age-related *rite de passage*. The big issue of the day was certainly not about employment or unemployment but about the social inequalities involved in entry to the labour market... It was not about whether school leavers got jobs, but whether their responses to schooling meant they destined themselves for working class jobs. (Coles, 2008, p. 119)

Such perspectives are part of a thread of literature (see Ashton & Field, 1976; Furlong & Cartmel, 2007; Bradley & Devadason, 2008; Gayle et al., 2009; Murray & Gayle, 2012) that investigate (changing) youth transitions from formal education into the labour market. The acknowledgement amongst (many) sociologists of the big changes to these transitions in the later decades of the 20th century are described as the 'changing times consensus' (Gayle et al., 2009). Goodwin and O'Connor (2005), however, contend that the pre-1970s period was not such a 'golden age' of

²⁵ As clarification, the broad field of youth studies overlaps with - and incorporates - research into youth policy and youth services, including, for example, publications on youth work practices, "processes and its positive influence upon young people" (Spence & Wood, 2011, p. 3). Additionally, youth studies has also included research and analysis in areas such as: the condition and problems of 'youth', including transitions, changes with the labour market and social welfare, sub-cultures, identities, and issues of participation and inclusion (see Spence & Wood, 2011; Cieslik & Simpson, 2013).

one-step and linear transitions, and that for the 1960s the level of complexity of transitions is underestimated.

The literature in this area emphasises diversity of transition experiences, including those shaped by class, gender, ethnicity and locality factors (see Coles, 2008). Bradley and Devadason (2008), for example, highlight the lengthened transition and how this process is differentiated and individualised. Furlong and Cartmel (2007) highlight that for some transition is short, for others it is extended. The theorising of - and emphasis placed upon - youth transitions is also problematised and criticised within the literature as constructing “an imagined mainstream... [going] forward in a uni-directional way towards some magical moment when adulthood is conferred” (Jefferies & Smith, 1999). Mixed combinations of work and study are simply a feature of life for people of all ages, they say. Cohen and Ainley (2000) also critique the youth transitions approach as denoting “a linear teleological model of psychosocial development” and “the availability of waged labour as the `ultimate goal” (p. 80), while neglecting “discontinuous life patterns” (p. 84).

The Rise of the ‘NEET’ and ‘Employability’ Agendas

A notable concern of youth policy over recent years has been the transitions of young people who are - and who are at risk of becoming - not in employment, education or training (NEET). During the 2010s and early 2020s this youth policy concern can be observed in, for example, literature about the post-crash Lost Generation (see Bivand, 2012) and the pandemic’s Generation COVID (see Hutton, 2020).

Historically, it was from the 1970s onwards that youth unemployment became a significant policy concern in the UK (see Furnham, 1985; Solomos, 1985; Willis, 1986; McFarland & Cole, 1988; Williamson, 1988; Mizen, 1995; Coles, 2000; 2008); this was at the same time that full employment was diminishing as a dominant policy priority of governments (see White, 1991; Harvey, 2007). According to Coles (2008), it was the “infamous Holland report of 1978... (b)ased upon a notoriously flawed survey of employers” that blamed high youth unemployment during the 1970s on a lack of basic skills of young people (p. 121). This report (MSC, 1977) labelled young people as deficient and in need of remedying through “warehousing” on training programmes (p. 121). Initiatives that followed - such as the Youth Training Scheme (YTS) - focused on the supply rather than the demand for labour, remedying the victims rather than addressing structural issues of unemployment (Coles, 2008, p. 121).

By the 1990s the term ‘status zero’ referring to young people not in education, training or employment was developed from sociological studies in South Wales (see Rees et al., 1996). It was “a technical term derived from Careers Service statistics” - with young people in education as status 1, those in training as status 2, and those in employment as status 3 (Coles, 2000, p. 28). Williamson (1997) views this term ‘status zero’ as a “powerful metaphor” (p. 78). Policy-makers in the late 1990s “recoiled, however, at the term ‘status zero’ and replaced it with NEET, not in employment, education or training”, and incorporated it as part of the broader social inclusion agenda (Coles, 2000, p. 30). Coles (2014) emphasises the value of the term NEET as it includes various categories of young people (such as “young carers; teen mothers; young people with SEN [Special Educational Needs] or disabilities;

care leavers; young offenders; young travellers etc”). Such young people might not be the focus of attention or support if an alternative narrower term such as “youth unemployment” was used, as technically they might not be unemployed in terms of actively seeking and being available for work (Coles, 2014). While the term NEET has its policy advantages (in terms of it not side-lining vulnerable groups), there are also disadvantages such as the aggregation of many diverse groups which obfuscates the differing factors associated with disadvantage, and it risks drawing attention away from the young unemployed and the precariousness in employment relations (Furlong, 2006, pp. 554-555).

During the New Labour years (1997-2010), the New Deal for unemployed 18-24 year olds was ‘rolled out’ as a national welfare-to-work programme (in 1999); it included the threat of significant benefit sanctions for claimants not following allocated pathways such as a work placement, or training, volunteering or environmental schemes (see Coles, 2000; Jessop, 2002; Hirsch & Miller, 2004). Various youth services were involved with this programme in various ways including, for example, offering placements, training or volunteering opportunities to 18-24 year olds. The New Deal was later expanded to other groups such as lone parents and the long-term unemployed aged over 25 years old. Jessop (2002) describes this welfare-to-work approach, especially under New Labour, as “the shift from the Keynesian Welfare National State (or KWNS) to the Schumpeterian Workfare Post-National Regime (or SWPR)” (p. 2).²⁶ He also describes such occurrences as the “routinization of neoliberalism” (p. 8).

²⁶ A Schumpeterian approach is typically characterised by an emphasis upon: strengthening the supply-side of labour, rather than the demand for it; seeking to improve systematic competitiveness, rather than securing full employment; making social policy service the needs of labour market flexibility, and prioritising the rights of businesses over those of citizens; producing through the state’s

Following the formation of the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Coalition Government in 2010, unemployment, especially youth unemployment, was rising after the economic crisis and it was a stated policy concern of government (see Prime Minister's Office, 2011; Bell & Blanchflower, 2010a; 2010b). Wiggan (2012), however, contended that the Coalition's version of a workfare policy framework individualised blame. For example, by using the term 'worklessness' it "delinks the availability of job opportunities from the business cycle and economic demand" (p. 400). Rather than framing unemployment as "market failure", it becomes "state and personal failure" thus allowing neoliberalising policies to continue (p. 401). It is within this wider youth policy context - and political discourse - that youth services have operated, especially with demands and expectations for the targeting of provision upon young people at risk of becoming 'NEET'.

Youth Services and the NEET Agenda: England

In terms of English youth policy, it was out of the emerging policy concern with NEETs that came the Connexions Strategy in 2000, a targeted youth support service in England aiming to ease the transition from school to work for young people (see Coles, 2000, pp. 33-36; Smith, 2014). It partly merged universal youth services and careers services in England, and much critical debate was focused on its original design as well as its implementation (see Smith, 2014). For example, from their study of school to work transition services, Chadderton and Coley (2012) argued that the micro-practices of the services increasingly represented the surveillance and

interventions individual subjects who are 'partners' in the flexible economy; and increasingly delivering social policies through non-state mechanisms and public-private networks (Jessop, 2002, pp. 9-10).

disciplining powers of the state (more so than embodying the inclusionary strands of policy), and this generated resistance from some professionals, “not from narrow professional interest, but from a real concern with the needs of young people” (p. 10).

Since 2010, programmes directly concerned with NEETs, such as Connexions in England, have had their national public funding withdrawn, and the NEET agenda was placed with local authorities (see Chadderton & Coley, 2012; Hutchinson et al., 2016). However, the local authority youth services in England have been devastated by austerity measures, and in certain counties they have been completely axed (see House of Commons, 2011; Unison, 2016; Davies, 2019; YMCA, 2020a; 2022). Additionally, newer Conservative-led initiatives such as the NCS have the NEET agenda added as a bolt-on (Wrigley, 2017). Nevertheless, just as New Labour’s employability agenda represented a shift away from full employment goals to a supply side approach (see Finn, 2000), Hutchinson et al. (2016) have argued there were a number of similarities between New Labour and the Coalition’s policies towards NEETs with an emphasis upon “supply side deficiencies” and “employability” as part of an active labour market agenda (p. 721). In England, programmes such as the NCS (emphasising life skills and social mobility) have been increasingly run by private companies and large voluntary sector organisations, while local youth services have been contracted-out - thus further routinising neoliberalism (see de St Croix, 2016). From analysis of this situation, a strand of literature has also developed that has questioned the form of citizenship (including the pre-packaged ‘employability’) being promoted through the NCS and how it is underpinned by neoliberal economics (see de St Croix, 2017; Mills & Waite, 2017; Murphy, 2017).

Youth Services and the NEET Agenda: Wales

In Wales, following devolution, there was a separate rights-based policy framework for young people's services, and local youth services and careers services were kept as distinct and separate provisions (see National Assembly for Wales, 2000).

Furthermore, in contrast to England, a distinctive youth service in Wales had developed with a statutory basis (i.e. Section 123 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000). In 2006, the youth service in Wales came under strategic direction of the Assembly following the 'bonfire of the quangos' (see Children & Young People Now [CYPN], 2005a). At the time, fears were raised by youth service practitioners about, for example, the potential dilution of professional practice principles with the closure of the previous body, the WYA (see CYPN, 2005b). During the 2000s, Rose (2008) describes the Welsh Assembly Government - and the policy framework for the youth service in Wales - as reflecting New Labour's 'social integration' agenda

with its emphasis on paid work and the education/training qualifications necessary to gain access to the labour market. Those working class young people outside of this framework were stigmatised and the emphasis for those working with them became a social inclusion agenda to bring all young people into the education, employment or training framework. (pp. 57-58)

In 2014 the Welsh Government published a second national strategy for youth services in Wales, and this was designed to fit in further with the NEET-focused youth engagement and progression framework (see Welsh Government, 2013).

While this youth service strategy acknowledged the informal and non-formal educational approaches of working with young people, there was also a very strong emphasis upon reducing the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training with "a robust evidence base" of outcomes and impact

(Welsh Government, 2014, pp. 2-3). As part of this strategic framework, youth workers in Wales were identified as 'lead workers' for unemployed 16 and 17 year olds, young people at risk of dropping out, those at risk of disengagement, and young people unknown to Careers Wales (p. 10).

Summary of Part Three

In summation, *parts one and two* of this review have focused upon youth work typologies and the understanding and analysis of neoliberalism, *part three* has now highlighted literature that has explored external policy agendas that have impacted upon youth work practice in England and Wales. Although these nations have developed separate and distinctive youth policy frameworks, this review has identified a thread of practice-focused literature - running across both nations - that problematises and debates the impact of external policy agendas upon youth work practice, including those agendas relating to youth transitions and those with deficit models of problematic young people. Overall, it is argued that antagonisms can occur when services, managers and practitioners - rooted in youth work traditions - are navigating such external policy demands, especially if an agenda is furthering the instrumentalisation, commodification and atomisation of youth work practice.

Part Four: Researching Youth Work and Youth Services

So far this chapter has provided a review of literature about (i) youth work typologies, (ii) the analysis of neoliberalism, and (iii) external policy agendas for youth work practice. Part four of this chapter will now provide a brief review of literature on youth work research. *Firstly*, it will consider literature that problematises - in differing ways - the theoretical frameworks and data gathering methods that are applied to the study

of youth work services and practice. It will also illustrate how different research approaches have been utilised and advocated within existing studies of youth work. *Secondly*, it will include an elucidation upon potential gaps in youth work research, including a lack of comparative analyses across the youth policies and services of England and Wales. It will also outline a space and a role for a PDT logics approach within youth work research.

Problematizing Research Studies of Youth Work and Youth Services

While there is a growth in - and fluctuating status for - mixed methods research (see Cieslik & Simpson, 2013), influential theoretical and methodological approaches used in many studies of youth work and youth services can be broadly sketched along the lines of: (a) positivist, neo-positivist and typically - but not exclusively - quantitative, and (b) interpretive, critical and typically - but not exclusively - qualitative (see Spence & Wood, 2011). Additionally, there are problematisations of these approaches - their theoretical assumptions and research methodologies - within policy, organisational, practitioner and academic publications.

On the one hand, there is a strain of literature that problematises a perceived lack of 'objective evidence' in more qualitative forms of research and data gathering that is - typically - informed by more interpretivist assumptions. In turn, it is argued, that this lack of 'objective evidence' undermines the reporting and advocacy of the impacts and benefits of youth work (see House of Commons, 2011). As detailed by Spence and Wood (2011), there is an 'evidence-based practice' drive through governmental and managerial channels, with 'evidence' required of outcomes, impact and effectiveness. This approach problematises an apparent lack of youth work

'evidence'. For instance, a report from the House of Commons (2011) refers to the "lack of a common measurement framework" in England (p. 4), the lack of a 'dataset' (p. 20), the lack of academic research studies, and a lack of more recent national evaluations into youth work (p. 20).²⁷ It also stated that there is a need for a "meta-analysis of studies relating to the impact and effectiveness of youth services" (p. 22). Similar points about the evidence-base for youth work being "not particularly strong" are echoed in another publication in Wales (see Marshal et al., 2021, p. 17).

On the other hand, there is a strain of literature that problematises 'technocratic' or 'scientific' (and positivistic) assumptions that - typically - shape more quantitative methodologies. It is argued these theoretical and methodological frameworks may often lack sufficient sensitivity or understanding of youth work approaches and stories. In turn, it is argued, that the governmental and managerial drive for technocratic forms of data can lead towards an undermining of the quality of youth work by not valuing more open-ended and informal aspects of practice, as it is insufficiently 'measurable' (see Spence & Wood, 2011). There is a problematisation of the quest for 'objective evidence', and how this is frequently conceived. For instance, while the House of Commons (2011) report noted a "huge amount of persuasive anecdotal and personal evidence" and "passionate advocacy by young people themselves" (p. 18), Spence and Wood (2011) question why the "collective weight" of such testimonies was not classed as 'objective evidence' (p. 4). The reason for this exclusion, they argue, is that research for 'objective evidence', often undertaken with technocratic and standardised measurement approaches, is

²⁷ One explanation given for the lack of academic research in this area concerns the absence of "large scale grants for independent research" and the "intense competition for funding from the research councils" (Spence & Wood, 2011, p. 2).

connected to positivist and neo-positivist paradigms and forms of knowledge (Spence & Wood, 2011). Furthermore, it is also contended that this growth of evidence-based practice frequently operates to replace universalism (and more open youth work) with targeting and individualising of provision, and it also frames much research in this area (Spence & Wood, 2011).²⁸

There are many questions raised and numerous debates about the strengths and limits of various research methods and data, whether qualitative or quantitative. One specific debate has related to a politically influential - though contested - study (Feinstein et al., 2006) that used logistic regression modelling of a set of age-16 data to analyse both positive and 'social exclusion' outcomes of youth club participation. This study with its recommendation for more structured provision (and its linking of youth club attendance with an increased chances of social exclusion outcomes) was extremely controversial within the practice field, as it was argued that its statistical methods neglected in-depth contextualised stories and it misunderstood practice concepts (see Williamson, 2005; House of Commons, 2011; Spence & Wood, 2011). Was it that open youth clubs effectively engaged disadvantaged young people who were at risk (perhaps those who other services could not reach as well), or was it that these clubs lacked sufficiently structured activities to improve outcomes? Furthermore, what about the roles, skills and judgements of the practitioners, and the resourcing of the provision? The lack of contextualised interpretation and detail on these matters was a particular critique of this study. However, in a later interview (with Bennett, 2007), Feinstein clarified, "My argument is that youth workers, youth

²⁸ The data of various outcomes and indicators have also been characterised as feeding into a "social investment machine" (de St Croix et al., 2020).

work and provision of space and buildings for young people outside of school are important but under-funded.”

In youth work literature there is also a questioning of the applicability of impact measurement approaches to the informal, fluid and open-ended dimensions of youth work practice and youth work relations, that turn “the searching for impact measures” into a “Holy Grail” (Williamson’s testimony to House of Commons, 2011, as cited by Spence & Wood, 2011, p. 4). When there are such measurement demands, other problems identified with evidence-based approaches also include: *What counts as evidence and how is it to be used? When does an outcome manifest itself and are longer-term non-monitored outcomes missed? What happens when a practice or service is not there, and - conversely - how is the outcome or impact of a lack of provision to be taken into account?* (see Spence & Wood, 2011; Thomas, 2011).

Another contribution to this debate is McNeil’s (2017) problematisation of (a) ‘proof’ - essentially, as a contested term, and (b) the search for the ‘Holy Grail’ of “definitive proof that ‘youth work works’” through impact measurement - essentially, as a fantasy. Instead, a greater emphasis is placed by McNeil (2017) upon evaluation to help “generate meaningful and actionable insights”, and to distinguish more between research questions about learning and accountability.

The Roles of Qualitative and Quantitative Research

Largely as a counter-response to the policy culture of measuring narrow outcomes, there has also been a movement to more open-ended qualitative research in the practice field (Spence & Wood, 2011). An example is Ritchie and Ord’s (2017) interpretivist study of young people’s voices and their perspectives of youth work -

earlier studies too will have also focused on everyday practices and experiences of youth workers and young people (see Spence et al., 2006). There has also been an emphasis upon exploring the ‘voices’ and ‘stories’ of practices through narrative approaches and oral histories (see Davies, 2011; IDYW, 2011). Such qualitative studies provide contextualised insight - and critique - through individual and collective interpretations. Furthermore, there are research studies about data gathering and evaluation that advocate methodologies in keeping with certain youth work practice traditions (see de St Croix & Doherty, 2022).

Youth work literature in this area also sets out a role for quantitative studies (with rigour) alongside qualitative research and mixed methods. For instance, this is advocated in practitioner literature for understanding young people’s lives and wider social, organisational and practice issues (see Spence & Wood, 2011; Bradford & Cullen, 2012; Clark & Bell, 2012). There is, for example, a case put forward for the real practical role “for managers and practitioners to be able to undertake and draw on good research (whatever the method) to provide evidence for success in their work” (Bradford & Cullen, 2012, p. 1). As such a role is also set out for practitioner-research and ‘insider’ research from within youth work cultures - though such ‘insider’ research has both its strengths and limits (see Costley et al., 2010; Cullen et al., 2012; Holmes, 2020).²⁹

Highlighted Gaps in Research

As noted above, the House of Commons (2011) put forward a case for more academic research and more evaluation studies of youth services, including the

²⁹ The strengths and limits of ‘insider’ research is discussed more in chapter 3 of this thesis.

need for a meta-analysis of existing studies to be undertaken. As a result, bodies such as the Centre for Youth Impact (see <https://www.youthimpact.uk/>) were established in England. To address gaps in research (relating to the evidence-base, especially for medium to long term benefits), Marshall et al. (2021) have also proposed a need for research in Wales that might include, for example, more longitudinal studies to explore “longer-term outcomes” as well as research with “experimental and quasi-experimental designs” to investigate specific impacts of youth work approaches (p. 19).

As highlighted already, research agendas and approaches in youth work are a broad - and contested - arena. This thesis, however, is not adopting a quantitative approach (or positivist framework) and this research has not been designed to address gaps in literature that might relate to the ‘evidence-base’ of youth work for its outcome or impact measurement.³⁰ Rather, this thesis is seeking to make a different set of contributions to youth work research in England and Wales, and there are different gaps within the existing research that it will be seeking to address. Nevertheless, it is recognised that there is a significant and pragmatic role for monitoring, evaluation and research - using a mix of methods - within youth work practice, projects and services, including for learning, advocacy and accountability purposes.

Firstly, in terms of substantive content, a gap has been identified by King (2015) about a lack of academic literature making youth policy comparisons across the

³⁰ As such this thesis is not contributing with a meta-analysis of existing studies, nor is it providing a longitudinal study into longer term outcomes for young people, nor is it providing an experimental method into the effectiveness of varied youth work methods.

countries of the UK. King (2015) partly addresses this gap with a “cross-national comparison of policy developments” in England and Wales. King’s study was delimited to the New Labour period until 2010, and it provided a “theoretical account of commonalities and divergence between the two countries” (p. 339). A qualitative approach was adopted with the analysis of policy documentation that provided “complexity, detail and context” (p. 339). The commonalities and differences are summarised in Table 7.

Table 7: Comparison of Youth Policy in England and Wales (New Labour Period)

Comparison of Youth Policy in England and Wales in New Labour Period (source: King, 2015)	
<i>England</i>	<i>Wales</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progressive universalism • Individualised deficit model • Social exclusion • Accreditation and outcome driven • Age fragmentation - 13-19 focus, but 15-19 in practice • Sub-regional structure • Imposed top-down notions of multi-agency working and partnership • Compact with third sector • Competitive merging of Youth and Careers Services - replacement with Youth Support Services • New profession and training • Formation of Children’s Trusts - imposed structural merger of education and children’s social services departments • Young people’s voice - some involvement • Re-focusing on children (and young people) - prevention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progressive universalism • Rights based • Social inclusion • Process and distance travelled driven • Integrated services, ages 11-25, including integrated 14-19 strategy • Local Authority structure • Consultative partnership approach to multi-agency working • Voluntary sector as equal partners - 1998 Government of Wales Act • Continued role for Youth and Careers Services • Enhanced support for existing professions, e.g. youth work training • No imposition of structural change. • Some local authorities chose to form children’s departments, voluntarily joining up education and children’s social services departments • Young people’s voices prioritised (Funky Dragon etc.) • Partnership of children and young people

While King (2015) makes an important contribution, it does not extend into the post-New Labour decades. YMCA (2020a; 2022), however, provides insightful reports on post-2010 expenditure on youth services by local authorities in both England and Wales. This thesis will contribute to these existing publications, and address gaps in the academic literature (post-New Labour) by providing a new comparative analysis

of English and Welsh youth policy and youth services for the 2007-2022 period, thus it extends beyond the period of King's (2015) study. Significant changes have happened since 2010 that warrant further analysis, including austerity measures with significant youth service cuts in both nations, the NCS growth and development in England but not in Wales, a pandemic and shifting agendas of government.³¹

Arguably, this thesis is also contributing to literature on the geographies of youth work, including to literature that has a concern with the impacts of policy upon youth work spaces (see de St Croix & Doherty, 2023). This thesis, for instance, is especially concerned with investigating the neoliberalisations occurring in specific socio-spatial domains.

Secondly, this thesis with its PDT logics approach - as applied to the cross-national comparison of two case studies - will be making a new contribution (theoretical and methodological) to the critical and qualitative tradition within youth work research. While a rich tradition of critical and qualitative research within the youth work field exists - which already includes poststructuralist approaches adopted, such as Youdell and McGimpsey's (2015) Deleuzian-inspired youth service assemblage analysis - there remains a gap for the application of PDT-framed research into this field. For instance, literature and research using the Essex School of Discourse Analysis' logics approach has occurred in fields such as media (Phelan, 2014), health policy (Glynos & Speed, 2012), health and social care (Glynos, Speed et al.,

³¹ Youth projects and initiatives funded through the European Union (EU) will have been impacted by Brexit; however, during the 2010s, the most significant financial impacts to youth provision - at local and national levels - came through the politics of austerity and the 'Big Society' agenda, more so than Brexit (see YMCA, 2020a; 2022). Additionally, the 'levelling up' agenda might function - in part - as a post-Brexit funding source, and this is debated and monitored (see Liddle et al., 2022; Ord & Davies, 2022). Nevertheless, the 'levelling up' agenda is evident of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's (DCMS) (2022) youth review for England, as here it is being used to frame and explain the allocation decisions of the English youth budget in early 2020s.

2015), and banking reform (Glynos, Klimecki et al., 2015). However, there has not been an empirical study of youth work explicitly using the logics approach of the Essex School of Discourse Analysis (see chapter 3 for further detail), including whereby the 'service chain' is broken down into separate nodes (or segments) within which its logics (or rules) are further analysed. Furthermore, as well as contributing a new theoretical and methodological approach to youth work research, this thesis will also add a new field of study (i.e. youth work) into the body of empirical work conducted with the PDT logics approach. In turn this will broaden the reach and application of the PDT logics approach within concrete research settings, and as such it will add to literature addressing the methodological applicability of the PDT logics approach to empirical studies in different fields (see Glynos et al., 2021).

Summary of Part Four

Part four of this review has focused on literature about the study of youth work and youth services, with questions discerned about the respective strengths and limits of differing theoretical approaches, research methodologies and methods deployed in this field. It has also assessed whether there are any noticeable - and relevant - gaps in areas of study or research approaches within the youth work field. In part this helps to lay the ground for setting out the theoretical and research approach adopted for this thesis, and its rationale. Overall, it is argued that research approaches and research agendas within youth work are a broad - and contested - area. Additionally, gaps are also identified for: a post-New Labour cross-national analysis of English and Welsh youth policy and youth services; and, the application of a PDT logics approach within the critical and qualitative tradition of research into youth work and youth services.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a review of literature from youth work, youth studies and neoliberalism studies. This review has followed four key thematic threads aligned with this thesis' overarching research question. It is within these bodies of knowledge - and the historic and ongoing struggles that are identified therein - that this thesis' research interests are situated, and to which it will contribute.

Firstly, the review has identified how typologies of youth work and youth workers hold both theoretical and practical significance within this field, and these typologies are unfolding and incomplete. Recently the rise of the contemporary youth worker as a performative and neoliberal subject has been highlighted. This thesis will add to this typological literature - it will contribute to analyses surrounding the neoliberal subject and the possibilities for moving beyond this categorisation, including with a post(-)neoliberal framework.

Secondly, it has been identified that the analysis - and politics - of neoliberalism is extensive, multifaceted and contested. Nevertheless, the analysis of neoliberalisation can provide insight into the politics and ideals of the market and competition as they spread into more and more spheres of life, including youth work. This thesis will add to such literature with a detailed and contextualised analysis of two case studies, with critical inquiry into neoliberal discourse and logics - and alternatives to the neoliberal - within the two services under analysis. It will add to - and enrich - existing accounts with its analysis of variations, commonalities, contestations, and spaces of agency within the neoliberalisation processes of these two cases.

Thirdly, the review has explored historic tensions between external policy agendas (such as the NEET agenda) and traditions of youth work practice. This thesis will add to such literature with the case studies including field accounts of policy and funder demands, their implications for practice, and navigations.

Fourthly, various debates have been identified surrounding the uses of research and data within the youth work field, and a gap has also been identified for cross-national analyses of English and Welsh youth policy and service contexts. A space and role is also identified for adding a PDT logics approach to research into youth work and youth services. This thesis will address these research gaps by adding a new cross-national academic study in this area, and it will do so by adopting a PDT logics approach.

The following chapter will further detail the theoretical and methodological approaches of this thesis and their rationale. In summary, a PDT logics approach is adopted for this thesis with a cross-national comparative analysis of the youth policy, services and practice contexts in England and Wales, including the neoliberalisation processes unfolding within two services. In particular, the PDT logics approach is designed to generate analysis and insight into how the spread of neoliberal discourse shapes norms and rules (logics) within segments (nodes) of the respective services, while also providing insight into how alternative discourses shape service logics too (while also calling forth alternative non-neoliberal forms of subjectivity). In adopting this approach for this study, this thesis will be building upon and contributing to the bodies of knowledge and literatures on youth work, youth studies and neoliberalism studies.

3. Theoretical Approach and Research Strategy

Introduction

The overarching research question framing the inquiry of this thesis is: *In what ways are youth workers experiencing, navigating, and seeking to transgress the neoliberalisation of their services, practice and identities?* This question is delimited to youth workers in England and Wales, including the - similar yet different - neoliberal formations, hybridisations and antagonisms that result from neoliberalisation within their respective service and national policy contexts.

To investigate and analyse the research question and associated concerns, this thesis draws upon PDT - also known as the Essex School of Discourse Analysis - to inform and shape the theoretical approach and research strategy. To operationalise research into the above question, a PDT-influenced research strategy is developed with case studies of services in England and Wales, and comparative analysis of them (see Glynos & Howarth, 2007). To theorise and frame key categories of explanation that are deployed, a PDT logics approach is used as it is deemed insightful for theorising and explaining - through careful analysis of empirical phenomena - the contextual rules (or logics) that structure specific service components (or nodes) within the cases being studied (see Glynos et al., 2021).

Structure and Argument

This chapter will explain the theoretical approach and research strategy of this thesis in more detail. *Part one* of this chapter will begin with contextualisation for the overall PDT approach that is adopted. It will contextualise the research question and provide a rationale for the research approach that is adopted, including the suitability and

applicability of the PDT approach when compared to other theoretical, methodological and explanatory approaches that are available. *Part two* of this chapter will provide a more general account of poststructuralism and the PDT approach within that tradition. This will include PDT's philosophical assumptions, its approach to discourse analysis, and the key terms of poststructuralism, discourse and subjectivity. *Part three* will explain how the research has been operationalised through its research strategy. It will explain how the case studies are produced with the approach of a methodological bricoleur using document and image-based research and semi-structured interviews. It will also explain the logics-based nodal framework that is applied to these cases and their comparative analysis. Overall, this chapter will not only explain the approach that is adopted, but also clarify the rationale and suitability of this approach for this study.

Part One: Contextualising the Research and its PDT Approach

Part one of this chapter begins with an initial contextualisation of the research - and research approach - of this thesis with reference to existing literature on youth work and neoliberalism. It then further contextualises the PDT research strategy and logics framework that is adopted for this study, and it explains its rationale. It does this by situating the research approach - and the contributions of this thesis - within a range of analytical, theoretical and methodological approaches, including 'insider' research.

Contextualisation: Literature on Youth Work and Neoliberalism

In the literature review, youth workers - their services, their labour and their subjectivity - are presented as sites of ongoing hegemonic and counter-hegemonic

struggle, notably between neoliberal and counter-neoliberal discourses. This is reflective of struggles of other educators across the UK and elsewhere, from within the more informal early childhood education domain to the more formal higher education sector. Like other educators, youth workers are becoming 'neoliberal subjects', and this includes acting as performative professionals compelled to demonstrate the worth and value of their work against increasing external demands (such as the ever more efficient targeting of provision and the measurement of outcomes). However, a multiplicity of discourses impact upon the positions, roles and identifications of youth workers, these are illustrated by the range of typological framings of youth work as well as by the various counter-visions for the development of services and practice, such as those rooted in traditions of democratic education, mutual aid and socialism as opposed to the market.

While neoliberal discourse is co-existing and hybridising with other discourses and traditions in the youth work domain, it is also a dominant antagonist, and it is being contested with multiple discourses and traditions struggling alongside it. For instance, intense critiques of the neoliberal politics and policies of austerity - that have devastated youth services - are identified, as are wider debates relating to neoliberal discourse - and neo-positivist thinking - that frequently frame demands being placed upon the use of research and data within the youth work field. While there are publications that identify gaps in literature for a type of 'evidence-base' for youth work, another gap identified is of a lack of literature providing comparative analysis of the divergent youth policy and service contexts of England and Wales, especially post-New Labour.

As well as publications on youth work and youth studies, the literature review has also drawn upon texts from wider studies of neoliberalism. The analytical and political usefulness, as well as various aspects, of the term neoliberalism are all debated within this literature. There are a range of analytical approaches that have been applied to study different aspects of neoliberalism, including geographical, historical, ideational, Marxist, feminist, decolonialist, Foucauldian, as well as state, institutional and discourse analytical approaches. For instance, the study of neoliberalisation focuses on the processes of embedding and internalising the rules of the market within more and more social-spatial settings and domains (including nations and services). However, existing accounts of neoliberalism and neoliberalisation - while insightful - have identifiable limitations, notably there are explanations that lack analysis of variations, commonalities, contestations and/or spaces of agency.

For this thesis, the use of the term neoliberalism is retained as useful - for example, as an umbrella framework - for theorising the ideas and rules of the market, and how they are neoliberalised in multiple local social domains (including youth policy and youth services). In turn this term can also be applied to analysis of how subjectivity is a site of struggle (e.g. for youth workers), with the neoliberal co-existing alongside the non-neoliberal. Furthermore, this literature also draws attention to how the post-neoliberal can be analysed as a break - to some degree, if partial and incomplete - from neoliberalism, and the postneoliberal as a critical framework for envisioning alternatives from within neoliberalism. An Irish youth work text (Kiely & Meade, 2018) raises the role of 'postneoliberal' re-imaginings for this field, though more detailed and direct discussion (and application) of this terminology for the English and Welsh

youth work fields is lacking - though there is a rich tradition of youth work literature discussing, and critiquing, neoliberal impacts upon the field and envisioning alternatives.

Thus far this literature review recap has illustrated the youth work and neoliberalism context in which this research is framed, the research question has been formulated, and to which this thesis will contribute. This research will add to - and extend - the body of knowledge relating to the youth worker as a 'neoliberal subject'. It will address ongoing gaps in the cross-national analysis of the English and Welsh contexts, and in doing so it will provide a cross-national analysis of neoliberalisation within this domain of youth policy and youth services. This account of neoliberalism and neoliberalisation will add to - and enrich - understanding of variations, commonalities, contestations and spaces of agency within and across these specific sites of neoliberalisation. Literature directly addressing the post-neoliberal/postneoliberal imaginary is also lacking for the English and Welsh youth work contexts, and this thesis will address that gap.

To facilitate and generate its various contributions to these existing bodies of knowledge, the theoretical and methodological approach that this thesis adopts is one rooted in PDT. Attention now turns to the PDT-rooted approach, the rationale and suitability of its use, and how its application - including when compared to other theoretical and methodological approaches - contributes to youth work and neoliberalism literature.

Contextualisation: Theoretical and Methodological Approaches

In the literature review a range of approaches are identified for researching and analysing neoliberalism and/or youth work. For example, practice-based youth work studies - especially interpretivist and frequently (but not exclusively) qualitative - provide insight into grassroots-level self-interpretations and contextualised practice debates, as well as wider discussion and critique of neoliberalism. More positivistic studies in this field - frequently (but not exclusively) using quantitative methodologies - may assert more hierarchical truth claims (though such claims may be contested and debated), and governments and youth organisations may want to use such evidence to demonstrate outcomes, especially within neoliberalised accountability frameworks. Additionally, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) studies provide insight into the hegemonic struggle between social democratic and neoliberal discourses in (youth) policy settings of international institutions. These three approaches are broadly illustrative of the philosophical traditions of hermeneutics, positivism and critical realism that frame explanations of empirical phenomena as - respectively - contextualised interpretations, causal laws and causal mechanisms (see Glynos & Howarth, 2007; Glynos et al., 2021).

By adopting a PDT logics approach for this study, however, there is an attempt to avoid problems identified with *subjectivism* (e.g. thick descriptions of interpretivism that can reduce explanations to subjective viewpoints without wider theorisation of critical explanation), *scientism* (such as law-like explanations and 'true knowledge' assertions of positivism that lack contextualised understanding), and *causal mechanisms* (such as the abstraction of an explanation by critical realism to a place beyond the historical context and radical contingency) (Glynos & Howarth, 2007).

Poststructuralist explanations, in contrast, are framed as 'logics' - with theorising of the 'logics' that are in play in a specific context, and following careful observation of empirical phenomena and taking account of contingency (Glynos et al., 2021).

The literature has also identified other approaches - or lenses and frameworks - that are applied to the study of neoliberalism and/or youth work. For example, as this thesis shares common concerns, it draws upon non-totalising, geographical analyses of neoliberalisation as a socio-spatial process, as well as Foucauldian concerns with subjectivity. Such styles of thinking interweave, overlap and are compatible with a PDT approach, and have long standing roots within poststructuralist literature (for an account of this poststructuralist tradition see Howarth, 2013). While acknowledging and drawing upon important insights and analyses of neoliberalism from Marxist, historical, ideational, state and institutional approaches, this study also attempts to avoid potential problems of totalising or reifying neoliberalism and potential risks of ideational, state or institutional determinism. As well as the advantages of its 'logics' framework for providing contextualised theorisation and explanation (that avoids subjectivism, scientism and causal mechanisms), a PDT approach also offers a pertinent framework for analysing and comparing case studies. For example, this logics approach will facilitate comparative analysis of points of divergence and convergence, and conditions shaping the respective outcomes across the case studies. While the PDT approach is not one that emphasises a set research method or methodology, the role and suitability of case studies and comparative analysis is emphasised for PDT empirical research (see Glynos & Howarth, 2007). Thus, this thesis adopts such a PDT-framed research strategy and applies this approach to the

production and analysis of two case studies of neoliberalisation, and with this contextualised form of theorisation and explanation it identifies the logics therein.

Contextualisation: ‘Insider’ Research and Self-Problematisation

Having contextualised the research focus and research approach of this thesis within wider bodies of knowledge, there will now be a (first person) reflection upon the background of the researcher for this research. While the research concerns of this thesis may well have resonance beyond youth work - perhaps to comparable experiences in other educational domains, other fields of work or other encounters with neoliberal ideas, policies and practices - it does have ‘insider’ roots and motivations from within the field of youth work and informal education. As detailed in the autoethnographic account (see chapter 1), my own experiences of working as a youth and community worker - and as an educator on professional training programmes for youth workers - have prompted this research concern with the competing discursive agendas and ‘pulls’ upon subjects in this field, and ways of navigating antagonistic agendas. The purpose of the autoethnographic account was to add thick description of a specific policy and practice context to further illustrate these concerns.³² Overall, it was intended that the narrative would contribute extra insight into concrete practice experiences and dilemmas, and the broader policy, organisational and discursive contexts that are the concern of this research. It would also illustrate the contextualised position of myself as a researcher.

³² The narrative was drawn from one of my own practice experiences. In part, it could be viewed as a “counter-narrative” to “faceless, decontextualized” scholarly writing (Witherall, 2004, p.vii). For this retrospective narrative, I drew upon Nash’s (2004) tips for producing a Scholarly Personal Narrative (SPN). These tips include: have a theme or hook to focus the narrative on; move back and forth from the particular to the general and back again; draw out the larger implications from the personal story; draw on formal background knowledge; try to tell a good story; show some passion; be open-ended; and use citations (pp. 57-67).

As that narrative illustrated, through my youth worker qualifications and my employment background, I am an 'insider' to the youth work field that is being researched. Within social research literature, however, there are complexities identified with the term 'insider'. Holmes (2020) problematises the 'insider-outsider' positions for the researcher, and how these positions are fluid, shifting, contextual and how they can be viewed as a continuum (or even multiple continuums with multiple positions on them) rather than as straightforward opposites. So, for example, during the 2007-2022 period that this whole study focuses upon, my positionality has shifted from being a community practitioner to a workforce educator to a sessional worker and to a youth work researcher - my positioning, and the extent of my 'insider-ness', has shifted within the field and culture of youth work.

Arguably, the 'insider-outsider' positionality of myself could also be viewed in relation to the nations, services and organisations of this study.³³ Based upon my personal history, I would be more of an 'outsider' to the English context, but more of an 'insider' to the Welsh context. With NCS in England - although my background has been broadly in the youth services sector - I would be more of an 'outsider' there (having never worked within that service), than when compared to a local authority service or the voluntary youth sector in Wales (where, although my actual positioning has shifted over time, I would be more of an 'insider' based upon my employment and national backgrounds). Nevertheless, despite these complexities, it is my 'insider' experience from within the youth work field, as outlined in the

³³ Insider-outsider positionality of the researcher can also be analysed in many other ways too, such as in relation to gender, ethnicity and language, and employment role or job titles of research participants (see Holmes, 2020).

autoethnographic account, that has shaped this research interest and the research question that feeds into - and has shaped - the overall research process.

Within social research literature there are further discussions of the merits and limits of 'insider' research. For instance, Costley et al. (2010) highlight how - typically from a positivistic perspective - there can be critique of 'insider' research as insufficiently objective, due to its "subjective nature", "lack of impartiality" and potential biases with the risk of a "vested interest" (p. 6). However, a defence they provide - as to the value of 'insider' research - is that it is research informed by underpinning knowledge and first-hand experiences that, ultimately, can add richness and depth to the research process. They also discuss how 'insider' researchers might guard against accusations of bias including, for example, through "triangulation in the methods of data gathering" (p. 6).³⁴ Holmes (2020) also identifies the advantages and disadvantages of 'insider' research, and highlights how both the 'insider' and 'outsider' positions (although there is a risk of oversimplifying these as purely opposite positions, as they can be more fluid and changing) can be a source of reflection.³⁵

While there are insights that my 'insider' position brings to this research, there are also challenges. For instance, my background knowledge and experiences are from within the youth work tradition, and they are principally from within the Welsh

³⁴ See the discussion in part three of this chapter on the use of triangulation and the methodological bricolage within this study, i.e. as a way to add depth to the research, and to review similarities and differences across the data.

³⁵ Advantages identified by Holmes (2020) include "easier access to the culture being studied", awareness of "meaningful or insightful questions", increased "trust" levels, lack of "culture shock" and understanding of the culture's language (p. 6). Disadvantages include excessive "sympathy" or "bias" for the culture, too close to ask "provocative" or "dumb" questions, "obvious" information might not be unpacked, a lack of an "external perspective" and participants might be more open to "an outsider who they will have no future contact with" (p. 6).

national context. On these matters, I have been conscious of not providing an overly-idealised account of the Welsh youth policy context or an overly-sceptical account of the English youth policy context. However, this does not prevent - through careful research and analysis of relevant data - an identification of policies, services and practices (in each context) that are more in-keeping with youth work traditions, or that are more contested or critiqued within youth work traditions. Indeed, such concerns and struggles are what this research is fundamentally about.

Furthermore, within social research literature, there is a wider argument for an acknowledgement of the role of biography in shaping research decisions (May, 2001, p. 21). This is the argument that all researchers have a perspective and context that influences and affects what they research, and how. A researcher's background will have influenced their choice of research topic and angle of approach - and feminist researchers, for example, might say that it is about acknowledging how this history and biography is fundamental to the research, it should not be silenced as being 'un-objective', instead, it is a source of insight (May, 2001, p. 21).

Feminist standpoint research, for instance, has shared situated experiences and knowledges that otherwise are "marginalized or ignored" (Costley et al., 2010, p. 30). However, Bacchi (2018) further explores certain feminist claims (such as from Haraway, 1988) that "situated knowledges" from 'the oppressed' are to be privileged, as well as Harding's (1992) claim that "'subjugated' standpoints" bring epistemological advantages through their insights that are lacking in more dominant positions. From within a poststructuralist tradition, such claims implying an epistemological 'hierarchy' are questioned by Bacchi. Rather Bacchi (2018) makes a

case for the foregrounding of “subjugated knowledges” (in a Foucauldian tradition), not because of their epistemological ‘truth’ claims, but because of their political usefulness.³⁶ Thus, Bacchi (2018) refers to “the insurrection of knowledges” whereby more marginalised knowledges can be identified that counter - and struggle against - the effects of more powerful knowledge. Furthermore, Glynos and Howarth (2007) draw attention to the role - within the poststructuralist tradition - for ethico-political investigations that do not conceal contingency and non-fixity of the status quo, but that investigate how dominant discourses are challenged by counter-discourses (including analysis of how these counter-discourses might be downplayed and hidden, or evident and active). Thus, especially for this research that is undertaken with a poststructuralist vein, there are ethico-political arguments for the foregrounding and analysis of ‘subjugated knowledges’ and how they relate with dominant knowledge, rather than silence them as a form of ‘bias’.

More broadly the challenges of positionality - including from, but not exclusive to, a more ‘anti-positivist’ perspective - can be viewed as concerns for any type of research, not simply ‘insider’ research. With a lineage that includes 20th century critiques of ‘traditional’ and positivist perspectives, it has been argued that it is neither possible nor desirable to be a completely detached and ‘neutral’ researcher who theorises from a position outside of the social world (see Horkheimer, 1975; Foucault, 2002; Giddens, 1993). As such, my ‘insider’ positionality is - from the very start - acknowledged and incorporated into this thesis; this position is not suppressed or avoided. Nevertheless, a process of reflection, problematisation and self-problematisation also occurs in relation to this contextualised position of myself as a

³⁶ This is elaborating upon earlier arguments of Bacchi and Goodwin (2016).

researcher, and potential opportunities and limitations that this brings to the research process.

Part Two: The PDT Approach

Following on from part one's contextualisation - and rationale - of the research question and the PDT-infused research approach that is adopted, part two now provides a more detailed account of the philosophical approach of PDT and its version of discourse analysis. Key and recurring terms for this tradition are also expanded upon, notably poststructuralism, discourse, and subjectivity.

Preliminary Clarifications: Poststructuralism, Discourse and Subjectivity

To begin, a brief explanation will be provided of a key word - poststructuralism - that is highly relevant to the PDT title itself. Initially an informal 'non-academic' account of poststructuralist theory will be highlighted, and this will lead into further elaboration and explanation on this and other terms.

Poststructuralism

In 2014, in two postings on a popular website, Rodley makes a comic effort at explaining poststructuralism with reference to hipster beards. *Firstly*, starting with the structuralism of linguist Saussure (see Saussure, 2011), Rodley (2014a) asks how does the sign of a beard produce the meaning of hipster (i.e. to mean a person who is a member of a predominantly 21st century subculture of 'alternative' fashions)? The signifier (beard) and the signified (hipster) are two parts of the sign. This meaning is not within the signifier itself, rather the meaning is made through the difference to other signifiers in a system (e.g. a beard differs to a freshly shaven

appearance within a wider system of facial hair varieties). It is in such a vein that, during the 20th century, structuralism was applied to the analysis of the structures that frame and construct meaning for cultures (e.g. see Levi-Strauss, 1971; Barthes, 2013). *Secondly*, Rodley's (2014b) "uber-simplified" explanation, then discusses the shift beyond structuralism. So, for instance, one problem with structuralism is that the signs within a system, do not have single fixed meanings (e.g. a beard does not just signify hipster, it may also signify certain film characters or homelessness or another person, trend or circumstance). Additionally, meanings change over time and place, and meanings are entwined within power relations (e.g. how was the category of the bearded hipster constructed, how is this category used, and for what purpose or whose benefit). Thus, the tradition of poststructuralism developed by addressing problems of structuralism, and the gaps in its analysis of the non-fixity and multiplicity of meanings, and the role of power.

Meanwhile Howarth's (2013) account of the poststructuralist tradition states that it "constitutes a particular *style of theorizing*, and a specific *way* of doing social and political theory, which is informed by a distinctive ethos" (p. 6). *Firstly*, ontologically it is an approach that emphasises the "structural incompleteness of all identities, objects and systems" and that recognises the "contingency and historicity of social relations" (pp. 12-13). Thus, it builds upon structuralism and its relational ontology. For Howarth, the 'post' in poststructuralism is neither a rejection nor endorsement of structuralism, rather "it is a 'both/and' strategy" releasing its useful components from their problematic framing (p. 10). *Secondly*, three generations are mapped-out of poststructuralist thought, notably these are: the thinkers of 1960s and 1970s who identified problems with structuralist thinking, including Deleuze, Guattari, Derrida,

Kristeva, Lacan and Foucault; then from the late 1970s, the 1980s and 1990s came the likes of Laclau, Mouffe, Said, Zizek, Butler and Connolly who extended this poststructuralist style of thinking into the social and political sciences; and subsequently there are researchers applying this style and ethos to more empirical studies (pp. 13-16). PDT, or the Essex School of Discourse Analysis, is thus one sub-grouping within this wider poststructuralist tradition, and - in terms of this particular study that is adopting a PDT approach - it would be located within the third generation of the poststructuralist tradition.

Discourse

Having briefly explained the key term of poststructuralism - and outlined the poststructuralist tradition within which this thesis and its research approach is situated - attention will now be turned to another key term, discourse. The term discourse can be applied in a range of ways: from a reference to a single statement or a conversation, to an “entire social system” (Howarth, 2000, p. 2). Within a PDT approach, discourse refers to the (incomplete) “symbolic systems and social orders” that construct meanings, and “all the practices and meanings shaping a particular community of social actors” (p. 5).

For this study there is a concern with such discourse and the discursive, and these are to be subject to discourse analysis (including, for example, youth policy discourse, the discursive practices developed in response to such policy, and the formation of subjectivity in connection with the discourse and discursive practices). Within this poststructuralist tradition, the practice of producing a discourse is

articulation (see Howarth, 1995). Meanings and identities are constructed and partially fixed through discourse. Objects, subjects, institutions, and practices are thus discursive. Discourse analysis includes examining “how the discourses which structure the activities of social agents are *produced*, how they *function*, and how they are *changed*” (Howarth, 1995, p. 115).

Within the PDT approach there is a recognition of the ‘primacy of politics’ in the construction of discourses, discursive meanings and identifications (including, for example, the political framing of specific youth policies, organisational practices, and social and political identities in this field that are open to contestation and hegemonic struggles). For example, discourses are “intrinsically *political*” – involving the “construction of antagonisms and the drawing of political frontiers between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’” of ‘us’ and ‘them’, and this “involves the exercise of power” in the “structuring of relations between social agents” (Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000, p. 4). For example, alliances can be built through chains (or logics) of equivalence between different groups working together with a frontier developed against an opposition camp, such as the ‘oppressed us’ versus the ‘oppressor them’ (p. 11). Meanwhile, a logic of difference operates to “weaken and displace sharp antagonistic polarity”, potentially as a form of divide and rule that could weaken chains of equivalence (p. 11). When one group’s articulation of a discourse comes into dominance there is a hegemonic formation, with a discourse and its set of meanings becoming ‘common sense’ for a social order. This also involves efforts to incorporate “different identities and subjectivities into a common project” (p. 14). However, no identity is completely fixed and a discourse is not “completely

hegemonizing a field” (p. 15), as there are counter discourses.³⁷

More broadly, within PDT literature there can also be a concern with the role of nodal points as well as dislocations, myths, imaginaries, and floating and empty signifiers. Networks of meaning are structured around ‘nodal’ points - these can be compared to upholstery buttons or ‘points de capiton’ (in Lacan’s [1993] terminology) that act as a quilting or anchoring point to (partially fix) the fabric of meanings: “Nodal points are thus privileged signifiers or reference points... in a discourse that bind together a particular system of meaning or ‘chain of signification’” (Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000, p. 8). So, for example, the ‘market’ could be a nodal point for neoliberalised service provision, with notions such as ‘value for money’, ‘customer satisfaction’ and ‘efficiency’ being ordered around that point. A dislocation, however, “refers to the process by which the contingency of discursive structures is made visible... such as the extension of capitalist relations to new spheres of social relations shatters already existing identities and literally induces an identity crisis for the subject” (p. 13). In this field, for instance, the extension of neoliberalised logics into youth services, can be seen as shifting the context for practice from post-war “welfare professionalism” to neoliberal “performative professionalism” (Bradford, 2015, pp. 26-33). Dislocations not only disrupt, they also prompt new forms of subjectivity within new discourses with alternative nodal points (Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000, p. 13-14). When a dislocation occurs, myths (not as a false or fantastical story, but as a new representation of a promised future that offers more fullness) take on a hegemonic function seeking to settle the dislocation, and when a myth succeeds at

³⁷ Contrary to critiques of the relevance of hegemonic theory today - such as Beasley-Murray’s (2010) focus upon posthegemony in order to incorporate affect - the notion of hegemony itself has developed to already include an affective dimension (see Stavrakakis, 2014).

this it could become a collective social imaginary that also encapsulates a range of social demands (pp. 15-16). Meanwhile the empty signifier is a reference to something lacking (e.g. 'order' missing in a time of disorder) with political attempts to 'fill' this void (p. 8), and a floating signifier is a contested area of meaning between different discourses (Howarth, 2013, p. 243).

Subjectivity

Another key word within the PDT lexicon is subjectivity. Indeed, for this study there is a concern with subjects and subjectivity, including the role of ideology and ideological fantasy. Subject positions refer to a person's - or people's - placement within discourses and discursive structures, for example within discourses of class, 'race', gender, religion, and with multiple and intersecting subject positions possible (see Howarth, 1995; Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000). Meanwhile, political subjectivity refers to the agency, acts and decisions of subjects in "novel forms" (Howarth, 1995, p. 123); the discursive structures are not completely fixed, so a certain degree of political agency is possible (Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000, pp. 12-14). Ideological practices also impact upon subjects. Ideology here, however, is not presented as a form of false consciousness whereby subjects simply accept an untrue account of reality by a ruling class, rather ideology seeks to close-off and "hide the political processes by which a social order is made to seem normal or unchallengeable" (Rear, 2013, p. 9). As a result, this can constrain and neuter political subjectivity. As Howarth (2013) further clarifies, "The role of fantasy in this context is not to set up an illusion that provides a subject with a false picture of the world but to ensure that the radical contingency of social reality remains firmly in the background" (p. 205). This includes "many management and government techniques" that "seek to displace and

deflect potential difficulties or ‘troubleshoot’ before problems become the source of agonistic constructions” (p. 205). In particular, such management and government techniques are relevant to this study, as they play a role in securing hegemonic dominance and complicity within policy discourses and organisational frameworks. However, while ideology refers more to the complicity of subjects in concealing radical contingency and lack, ethics - within a PDT approach - is more about the way subjects are attentive and open to the radical contingency of social relations (Glynos & Howarth, 2007, p. 197).

The Theoretical Approach of PDT

Having provided a brief account of three key terms - poststructuralism, discourse and subjectivity - within the PDT approach, further elaboration will be provided of its philosophical and theoretical assumptions. According to PDT, as well as language being discursive, so too are all objects, institutions and practices - they acquire meaning in discourse. In response to critiques such as those from Geras (1987) that the discursive approach is idealism, Laclau and Mouffe (1987) reply that objects are not simply given their being by discourse - they exist, but their classification depends on discourse, as is the case with a football, stone or diamond (pp. 82-83). Howarth (1995) also addresses such a critique by stating that discourse theory rejects idealism as reducing reality to thought and ideas, and it affirms a (minimal) realism as in “a reality independent of our ideas and conceptions” - it does not deny “reality outside our heads and external to our thoughts” (p. 127). For discourse theory, however, “there is no ‘extra-discursive’ realm of meaningful objects”, and it rejects the view that “an independent realm determines the meaning of those objects... for

objects to be meaningful they must be part of a wider discursive framework” (pp. 127-128).

For PDT, while meanings are constituted through discourse - meanings are not (permanently) fixed, essences of objects are not captured or determined by language, and identities are incomplete, contingent and contestable - it is power that naturalises or challenges the stabilisation of a particular social order (Howarth, 2013). Thus poststructuralist thought is able to move beyond the constraints of Saussure’s structuralism: while the meanings within a wider discursive totality are relational and differential (not referential), these meanings and structures are not permanently fixed, but incomplete, changing and interconnected with power (Howarth, 2013). To summarise, with this PDT approach there is a relational and differential ontology - with an emphasis on radical contingency and anti-essentialism - and this is consistent with a minimal realism and a radical materiality (see Howarth, 2013).

Just as there are critiques of idealism, there are critiques of relativism within PDT (see Geras, 1987). Torfing (2005) addresses such a criticism that with a discursive approach “it is impossible to defend any particular set of claims about what is true, right or good” (pp. 18-19). Indeed, from the PDT perspective there is not “an extra-discursive truth, morality or ethics”, but it is discourse that provides the meaningful frameworks for judging the merits and limits of various claims (p. 19). It is “logically self-contradictory” to attempt “to escape and conceptualise the world from an extra-discursive perspective” (Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000, p. 3). Discourses are not all equally valid, as they are open to critique and amendment (Howarth, 1995). Torfing

(2005) also responds to the “liar’s paradox” or performative contradiction critique of PDT (p. 21). Such a critique is that PDT’s anti-essentialist position is claiming an anti-essentialist essence (of sort) for the world, but Torfing (2005) responds that “the rejection of an essentialist grounding of the social world cannot fulfil the role of a new essentialist ground” (p. 21).

PDT’s Approach to Discourse Analysis

There are different traditions and schools of discourse analysis, and thus there are discourse analytic alternatives to the PDT approach, such as discursive psychology and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (see Glynos et al., 2009). There is some overlap and the potential - “in principle” - for combining approaches “in some respects” (p. 36). Nevertheless, PDT is identified as the primary theoretical influence for this proposed study, notwithstanding an ethos of “presumptive generosity” towards different approaches (Connolly, 2002, cited in Glynos et al., 2009, p. 6). The ontological presuppositions for this research are aligned with those of PDT, and incorporate a minimal realism rather than the “strong realist tendencies” of CDA (Glynos et al., 2009, p. 35). Additionally, for PDT the discursive includes the linguistic and non-linguistic, not just the linguistic as with CDA (p. 32). The PDT approach with “(d)iscourse as (o)ntological (h)orizon” is especially attuned to empirical research focusing upon the “(c)hange & (s)tabilization of (d)iscursive (p)ractices” (p. 32). Within this ontological framework, when applied to empirical research, a discourse analytic approach asks:

What are the origins of particular discourses and policies? How can they be characterized?
 How and why are they sustained? When and how are they changed? And... how can
 discourses be evaluated and criticized? (p. 9)

Furthermore, in order to undertake such enquiries, Glynos and Howarth (2007) highlight the role of “archaeological bracketing that seeks to identify a domain of objects and practices in need of analysis and critique”, and the role of “genealogical accounting that explains their political and ideological emergence” (p. 171). As Marttila (2015a) observes, the synchronic and diachronic forms of analysis each bring their own insights to empirical research practices:

While the synchronic analysis focuses on the structural organization and material prerequisites of a relatively stable discourse, diachronic analysis is aimed at studying historical processes of sedimentation and reactivation, which together determine the formation and transformation of discourses.

While there have been a range of philosophical critiques - and defences - of PDT concerning matters such as idealism and relativism (see Geras, 1987; Laclau & Mouffe, 1987; Howarth 1995; 2013), there have also been concerns with methodological and normative deficits (see Torfing, 2005; Glynos & Howarth, 2007; Marttila, 2015a; 2015b). For example, Torfing (2005) acknowledges that, as PDT is still young, it is not yet “a fully-fledged paradigm with a distinctive set of theoretical concepts, research strategies, and methods” (p. 3), and as a result there is a “dearth of books” and empirical studies addressing theory, methods and methodological issues (p. 2). However, since then Howarth (2013) has identified the “third generation” of poststructuralist thought - from the 1990s onwards - as focusing upon the “epistemological, methodological and critical” components that are relevant for applying PDT through empirical research (p. 16). Indeed, it is this generation of PDT that will be especially informative for this research (for example, see Glynos &

Howarth, 2007; Marttila, 2015a; 2015b; Glynos, Speed et al., 2015; Howarth et al., 2016; Glynos et al., 2021).

In terms of the critique that PDT has a normative deficit, this includes Critchley's (2004) questioning of PDT's capacity to move beyond describing and theorising (cited in Glynos & Howarth, 2007, pp. 6-7). Marttila and Gengenal (2015) also question the pursuance of normative critique for the advancement of radical democracy by PDT, as they argue that PDT's post-foundational framework does not provide sufficient groundings or "epistemological authority" in order to do this (p. 65). Instead, they advise that epistemological authority is provided by PDT for a critique that unmask its own discursiveness (p. 66). Nevertheless, according to Glynos and Howarth (2007), there is still room for normative enquiry and critique within a PDT approach. This, however, is not about advancing a universal and "comprehensive normative framework" (p. 7). The logics approach, for example, can facilitate "the ethical critique and normative evaluation of practices and regimes" (p. 16). For instance, a PDT approach involves: identifying norms and logics "worthy of public contestation"; identifying and projecting "alternative values and ideals", i.e. counter-norms and counter-logics (p. 193); and, acknowledging the significance of naming and the potential for re-naming through counter-logics (pp. 192-195). Radical democracy is one such alternative to draw upon to analyse concrete circumstances within the present-day context through the situated-ness of inquiry; this can help to "reactivate" alternative options that have been "excluded and foreclosed" within a social order (for example, by dominant neoliberal logics and practices in the present-day context of this study) (Howarth et al., 2016, pp. 102-103).

Overall, the PDT approach - as summarised by Howarth (2013) - is as follows: ontologically, it stresses “radical contingency and historicity of all identities and social structures”; epistemologically, it recognises “contestability” - and defences - of perspectives; methodologically, it utilises a “pluralistic set of... techniques and research strategies”; and finally, it is an approach that is situated, engaged and critical (p. 267).

Part Three: Research Strategy

Part one of this chapter summarised key literature (from youth work, youth studies and neoliberalism studies) to contextualise the research and research approach that is adopted, and part two of the chapter set out the philosophical and theoretical assumptions (of poststructuralism and PDT) that inform this study and its research strategy. Part three now elaborates upon how the research has been operationalised through its research strategy. This will include further discussion of the research aim and objectives, the case studies, delimitations, as well as data gathering and analysis.

Research Aim and Objectives

To reiterate the overarching focus of the research undertaken for this thesis, Table 8 sets out the research question as well as the aim and objectives that it has shaped. In order to achieve the aim and meet the objectives - and to produce an overall ‘response’ to the question in the form of this thesis - the research has been: (a) delimited to English and Welsh youth policy and youth service contexts of 2007-2022; and, (b) operationalised through the production of two case studies - with the approach of a methodological bricoleur using document and image-based research

and semi-structured interviews - which are analysed and compared using logics-based nodal framework analysis. Each of these strategic decisions are further explained in this chapter.

Table 8: Research Question, Aim and Objectives

Research Question, Aim and Objectives	
<i>Research Question</i>	
“In what ways are youth workers experiencing, navigating, and seeking to transgress the neoliberalisation of their services, practice and identities?”	
<i>Aim</i>	<i>Objectives</i>
To produce a discourse analytic research study of identity and practice struggles of youth workers in austerity-scarred and neoliberalised youth services of England and Wales.	In order to achieve this aim, the objectives are to analyse: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discourses shaping and influencing public youth service provision and youth worker subjectivity in England and Wales, including neoliberal discourses as well as alternative discourses such as those rooted in practice traditions. • Young people’s service regimes in England and Wales, including their respective models of service provision, distribution, delivery, practice, and governance. • Accounts and experiences of policy, service, and practice developments from within each nation, including a specific focus upon practitioner relations with employability and Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) agendas. • Accounts and examples of individual and collective agency (involving youth workers with their allies), including negotiations, resistances and alternatives to neoliberalisation processes in this field.

The English and Welsh Case Studies

The empirical focus is on two case studies to facilitate analysis within and across the policy, service and practice contexts of England and Wales, including the respective processes of neoliberalisation within each case. For this study the cases - as ‘units of analysis’ or ‘bounded contexts’ (see Harrison et al., 2017) - are two national youth service programmes for young people from 2007-2022. Case one is the NCS programme in England, and case two is the Youth Service programme in Wales. An overview of these two programmes is provided in Table 9.

In line with this study's research question, aim and objectives (as per Table 8), these youth service programmes (NCS in England and the Youth Service in Wales) are the focus of this case study comparison for the following two key reasons.

Firstly, during this study's timeframe, they are the (contrasting) flagship programmes of youth service policy in England and Wales. These flagship programmes warrant further analysis and comparison as they have a dominant role in framing and structuring the youth services sector in each nation, including at regional and local levels. Each programme's policy framework oversees the respective formation of dominant service partnerships in each national context, and how these service partnerships operate at regional and local levels. This includes overseeing: the development of the respective models of service provision, distribution, delivery, and governance within these partnerships; and, the respective framing and positionality of subjects within these service models, including youth workers (for the purposes of this study), their practice and roles.

Secondly, these flagship programmes of youth service policy are key sites of neoliberalisation and counter-struggle within the youth services sector of each nation. These programmes warrant further analysis and comparison as they are significant sites of neoliberalisation - including 'roll-back' (austerity) and/or 'roll-out' (marketisation) phases - impacting service partnerships and the workforce at national, regional and local levels. Simultaneously, these are key sites for analysis of the negotiations, resistances and alternatives to neoliberalisation within the youth services sector - and workforce - of each nation.

It is anticipated that the focus on these two programmes for analysis and comparison will draw out variations between them (e.g. with regards to the respective direction of policy, service and practice developments, the extent and forms of neoliberalisation, and challenges and constraints to neoliberalisation), and the conditions of these variations. In particular, the case study comparison of these programmes will explore: how neoliberalisation unfolds and is dialectically internalised within each case context in differing ways, and how neoliberalisation encounters differing blocks and resistances within each case context too. As such it is intended that comparative analysis of these cases will shed light on how - within these respective contexts - the shared traditions and pre-existing professional discourse of youth work is: challenged or threatened by recent phases of neoliberalisation; hybridised or modified by this neoliberalisation; and, defended or advanced despite the neoliberalisation. Additionally, the comparison will explore and analyse the contextual factors and conditions (e.g. institutional, political and cultural) contributing to these variations, while similarities as well as differences are to be drawn out across the cases too.

Table 9: Overview of the Two Cases (2007-2022)

	<i>Case 1: NCS, England</i>	<i>Case 2: Youth Service, Wales</i>
<i>Service History/ Origins</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In late 2000s, Conservative-led proposals and a pilot. • Since 2010, flagship youth initiative under Conservative-led governments for England. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pre-existing partnership between local authorities and the voluntary sector in Wales. • Roots in post-war state youth provision and voluntary youth provision since 19th century.
<i>Type of provision</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initially operated as a summer personal and social development programme. • Typically involving residential experiences, outdoor learning, life skills activities, and social action. • Additional components added over time, including an autumn programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typically, year-round informal and non-formal learning opportunities and support. • It involves centre-based work and youth clubs, outreach or detached (street-based) work, school-based provision, residential activities, and specialist project work and targeted initiatives.

<i>Age Range of Users</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15-17 year olds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11-25 years olds
<i>Key Service Providers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCS is “delivered by a network of quality assured youth and community organisations including charities, voluntary, community, social enterprise (VCSE) and private sector partnerships” (NCS, 2018). • Provision overseen by NCS Trust - a Community Interest Company until a Royal Charter Body in 2017. • Competitive tendering for regional coordination and local delivery. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth service provision across all of Wales, including through the grant-maintained provision of 22 local authority youth services in Wales, and the voluntary sector provision of members of CWVYS. • Strategic oversight by a unit within Welsh Government, initially titled Youth Work Strategy Branch.
<i>Key Legislation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCS Act 2017 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning and Skills Act 2000
<i>Ministerial Responsibility</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minister for Civil Society (2010-2016) • Minister for Culture, Media and Sport (2016-2022) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welsh Minister for Education (a devolved area)

The two cases have been selected primarily due to the variations between them, and to undertake further investigation and analysis of these variations.³⁸ The case studies have sought to provide information and insights as to the contexts and circumstances that contribute to the variations between them, as well as similarities despite the variations. The production of these case studies, and the information gathered has aligned with the research objectives. Information gathered has been on: *key themes of policy discourse* (e.g. policy problems, policy visions and problematisations of policy); *key segments - or nodes - of the public service chain* (i.e. service provision, distribution, delivery and governance); and *social actor accounts and experiences* (e.g. of practice, service and policy contexts, and of

³⁸ From viewing Table 9 a number of variations can be quickly identified between these services, for example, there are differences concerning the history (e.g. relatively new versus pre-established), type of provision (e.g. initially only summer time versus year round), age range of users (e.g. 15-17 versus 11-25), service providers (e.g. respective roles for private sector and/or local authorities), legislation (NCS Act versus Learning and Skills Act), and ministerial responsibility (e.g. ministers in Cabinet Office and DCMS versus devolved education minister). Additionally, the significant variation between English and Welsh youth policy contexts has previously been highlighted by King (2016), though then with a focus upon the New Labour period (see Table 7).

individual and collective agency). The overall strategy of producing the case studies is summarised in Table 10.

Table 10: Overall Strategy for Producing the Case Studies

<i>Research objectives</i>	<i>Relevant case information to be gathered (for analysis as per research objectives)</i>	<i>Methods of data collection and analysis</i>
Analysis of policy and practice discourses impacting services and subjectivity (objective 1)	Gather information of policy and practice discourses for analysis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy problems • Problematisations of policy • Policy, service and practice visions 	<i>Case studies with methodological bricolage of:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document and image-based research • Semi-structured interviews • Logics-based nodal framework analysis
Analysis of models of national service provision (objective 2)	Gather information on components (or nodes) of the public service chain for analysis: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service provision and distribution • Delivery • Governance 	
Analysis of accounts of policy, service and practice developments, incl. employability and NEET agenda (objective 3)	Gather information and social actor accounts of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good practices and/or good policy developments, as well as problems or tensions encountered • Nodes of service provision and distribution, practice delivery (incl. NEET agenda), and governance 	
Analysis of social and political agency (objective 4)	Gather information and social actor accounts of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice traditions and negotiations with external agendas • Envisioning and reimagining, organising and building • Individual and collective agency 	

As well as the programme-based focus of these cases, there are geographical nation-based boundaries of these cases, and there are historical parameters too (these are explored in more detail below). In summary, the timeframe for the historical bracketing of the cases for comparative policy analysis includes: the final years of the New Labour Government in Westminster (following the 2007-2008 financial crash); the ‘deficit reduction’ and austerity programme of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition Government (2010-2015); and, the various Conservative governments that then followed (2015-2017; 2017-2019; 2019-). As youth service policy in Wales is a devolved area, this window also includes the following periods of Welsh Government: Welsh Labour-Plaid Cymru Coalition (2007-2011), Welsh Labour

(2011-2016), Welsh Labour-Liberal Democrat Coalition (2016-2021), and the minority Welsh Labour Government (2021-).

Rationale for Case Studies and Case Study Selection

Social research literature illustrates how case studies are adaptable for use within different philosophical and theoretical approaches (see Harrison et al., 2017). This literature on case study production also discusses the purposes of case selection and relates this to the classification of different types of cases. For example, cases are frequently selected based upon the purposes and questions of the research, and the understanding, illumination and insight they are expected to provide on the topic of interest (Harrison et al., 2017). Furthermore, Seawright and Gerring (2008) acknowledge there can be “pragmatic considerations such as time, money, expertise, and access” for case selection (p. 295), but they also highlight more substantive criteria for selection processes that focus upon “typical, diverse, extreme, deviant, influential, most similar, and most different cases” (p. 294).

Although case studies are used - and critiqued - within many different philosophical and theoretical traditions, Glynos and Howarth (2007) discuss the strategic use of case studies within a PDT approach to research. In contrast to a positivist critique of their limited knowledge production and in contrast to interpretivist reverence for their stand-alone self-sufficiency, within a PDT approach case studies provide the “context and detail” necessary for critical explanation (pp. 201-202). For this study, for instance, theorising and proto-explanations develop through careful analysis of the cases and their contextualised empirical phenomena (including the explanations of the logics in operation within these cases, and the extent to which these logics are

shaped by - or are challenging - neoliberal discourse). It is the contextual detail that is provided by case studies that can be used for developing such proto-explanations and theoretical understanding (i.e. based on a PDT re-reading of Flyvbjerg's, 2006, typology of cases by Glynos & Howarth, 2007, pp. 202-203).³⁹

The two cases selected for this research, as per Flyvbjerg's (2011) typology, represent "information-orientated selection" as they "are selected on the basis of expectations about their information content" (p. 307).⁴⁰ Additionally, the rationale for their selection fits closely with that of "(m)aximum variation cases", as the research into them is seeking to "obtain information about the significance of various circumstances for case process and outcome" (p. 307). For instance, the two cases are selected as they are sufficiently *diverse* in terms of the variations between the two services, as well as their differing contexts - national and geographical, governmental and political (see Table 9 above). It is anticipated that these case studies will generate relevant information that can be subject to comparative analysis, and thus provide insight on the variations - and similarities - between them. Thus, within a PDT research strategy, case studies - and the use of comparative method for comparing (multiple) cases - are "important methodological device(s)" (Glynos & Howarth, 2007, p. 204). Within a PDT approach, for example, the comparison of more than one case can render a problematised "phenomena more intelligible", for instance, not only making the "unfamiliar familiar" but also

³⁹ Thus, this rationale for the use of case studies, largely echoes Flyvbjerg's (2011) further justification and defence of case studies with an emphasis upon: the role for context-dependent knowledge production through case studies, in contrast to a prioritisation of context-independent knowledge; and the potential for generalising, theory building and testing through cases studies.

⁴⁰ Flyvbjerg's (2011) typology is of four types of information-orientated case selections: the extreme the critical, the maximum variation, and the paradigmatic (pp. 306-307).

“defamiliarizing the familiar” (pp. 205-8). Thus familiarisation or defamiliarisation could occur for the English and/or Welsh cases, depending upon a reader’s prior knowledge or awareness of these services.

Sampling and Selection of ‘Sub-Cases’ (or ‘Cases within each Case’)

Within each flagship programme, ‘local sites’ and ‘regional actors’ are also sampled and selected to develop and enrich the overarching case study comparison - this is through providing further information and contextual detail of each case. The selection of these ‘local sites’ and ‘regional actors’ - as ‘sub-cases’ or ‘cases within each case’ - can also be characterised as a form of purposive sampling. As per the rationale of the overarching case studies, there is an emphasis upon *information-orientated* selection (Flyvberg, 2011) with ‘local sites’ and ‘regional actors’ selected to provide further information on the diverse contexts and circumstances of each (overarching) case, thus shedding light on the *variations* between the cases (and the similarities, despite their differences).

The strategic plan was to develop a sample of ‘sub-cases’ that included:

- local and/or regional partners in the NCS programme, and of the Youth Service in Wales;
- delivery and management partners of the NCS, and voluntary sector and local authority partners of the Youth Service; and,
- ‘local sites’ and/or ‘regional actors’ with case data that was accessible and open in the public domain and/or that could be collated through interviews with research participants.

Principally, this sample of 'sub-cases' can be characterised as including:

- voluntary and local authority services as key partners within the Welsh Youth Service programme, including local and national youth charities and local authority youth services; and
- local and regional delivery providers - and management agencies - as key partners in the English NCS programme, including local schemes and regional delivery and management providers.

More specifically, this sample of 'sub-cases' included those initially identified through documentary research (as per Appendix Table 2 in Appendix B) with case data that was open and accessible in the public domain:

- NCS partners in England (as signposted by NCS Trust's publications) - Ingeus, Reed in Partnership, The Challenge and Catch 22; and,
- local youth projects in Wales (as signposted by Welsh Government's awards programme) - Gwynedd Youth Service, Valleys Kids, Cardiff Council Youth Service and Grassroots Cardiff.

This sample was supplemented with 'local sites' 'and regional actors' (as per Table 12) that were also identified through interview research (as such they are subject to an anonymisation process, not least to respect anonymity of research participants):

- a local NCS delivery partner and the NCS management network in England, and,
- voluntary sector and local authority youth services in Wales.

Within this study, the selection and use of the 'sub-cases' was intentionally and strategically planned so that it would ensure a blend of 'local sites' and 'regional actors' from across:

- (a) English and Welsh contexts;
- (b) varied regions from within each nation (e.g. from the north and south of each country, though some organisations will also have operated more widely across regions and even nationally);
- (c) NCS initiatives in England operating locally and/or regionally - with delivery and management partners; and,
- (d) the Youth Service in Wales - with local authority and voluntary sector organisations.

Furthermore, the strategic plan that guided and framed (the researcher's judgement on) the selection and use of 'sub-cases' was to include:

- 'sub-cases' adding multi-level data (local and regional as well as national) to add contextual detail and richness into each programme's case study; and,
- 'sub-cases' adding localised accounts and regional experiences of: competing discourses of policy, services and practice; respective service models and developments; and spaces and settings for practice and agency.

Rationale for Geographical Delimitations and Historical Bracketing of Cases

Historically, English and Welsh youth service policy frameworks have been the most closely aligned out of all the UK nations. During the latter half of the 20th century, for instance, the state-led youth service policy of England and Wales became closely entwined through the Albermarle report (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1960) and

the JNC framework (for collective bargaining and qualifications) that specifically developed youth service provision in these two nations.⁴¹ This provided a common policy framework and practice tradition that set out: a key role for local authorities in youth service partnerships; state-led resourcing, buildings, and staffing for local youth services; and, the training and professionalisation of staff. Prior to devolution (in 1999), English and Welsh youth service policy frameworks were tied together and “largely synonymous” (Williamson, 2010, p. 84).

While there has been this synonymity to historic youth service policy development and traditions in England and Wales, the selection of these two nations - as the spatial focus for the case study comparison - will facilitate analysis of significant points of divergence between the nations during the timeframe of this study. Notably, during this study’s timeframe, significant policy and service variations to be analysed and compared are: (i) a new national policy and service framework of the NCS in England, and (ii) the continuation and development of the national policy and service framework of the (pre-established) Youth Service in Wales. Thus, this study will build upon and extend Williamson’s (2010) discussion of ‘points of divergence’ - both prior to as well as since devolution - between English and Welsh youth services policy, and King’s (2016) exploration of points of departure during the New Labour years.

⁴¹ There were also significant 20th century policy publications that addressed youth service provision across the UK as a whole. Notably, there was the Government Board of Education’s Circular 1486 (from 1939) and Circular 1516 (from 1940), both emphasising the coordination of youth provision through youth committees. However, during the late 20th century there were separate youth service policy frameworks developing in Scotland and Northern Ireland in comparison to England and Wales. Although the 1960 Albermarle report’s proposals were influential in other UK nations, that report’s remit was specifically for England and Wales. It had “no mandate for Scotland”, and instead Scottish youth work was more directly shaped by a focus on community education as detailed in the Alexander report from 1975 (Sercome et al., 2014). In Northern Ireland - although influential - the remit of Albermarle was not for there either, rather a 1961 White paper led to greater emphasis on voluntary sector provision, and the ‘Troubles’ too had contextual impact on youth worker roles (McCready & Loudon, 2015).

From their shared history of having been the most closely aligned UK nations in terms of youth service policy, the selection of these nations as the spatial focus of the case study comparison enables further analysis of key points of divergence for youth service policy of each nation in the post-devolution period. Nevertheless, even prior to Welsh devolution, there were notable differences and areas of divergence between these nations with, for example, the establishment of the WYA in 1992 (building upon earlier Wales-focused initiatives) and the significance of Welsh language provision (e.g. through the Urdd Gobaith Cymru and other organisations) (Williamson, 2010). King (2016) also identifies and discusses post-devolution strains of divergence, specifically during the New Labour period (e.g. with development of Connexions service in England, but not in Wales).

English and Welsh youth service policies have been taking increasingly different directions in the decades since devolution, and the national dimension to the case study comparison enables further analysis of youth service policy divergences across these nations. In particular, this study will focus upon the policy, service and practice developments across these nations - and phases of neoliberalisation impacting them - following the 2007-2008 financial crash until 2022. Most recently the *newer* policy framework for NCS in England (in conjunction with austerity measures) has accelerated and amplified these differences, with the significant displacement - and at times total demolition - of pre-established youth services in England, whereas in Wales there is - in policy at least - a greater level of governmental support for pre-existing youth services when compared to England's path. During the period of this study, there has been a new intense shift towards

greater divergence that make these two nations - and their youth service policy and flagship programmes - the focus for comparative analysis. In particular, this comparative analysis will explore the impact of neoliberalisation on each case, and the respective factors and conditions that contribute to - or constrain - neoliberalisation's impact upon these cases; thus the aim will be to generate further insight and critical explanation of the points of divergence and concurrence.

In summary, the geographical parameters of the case selection are delimited to Wales and England, and to their youth policy and youth service contexts. For example, the research is not extending further into the Scottish or Northern Irish policy contexts of the UK, or of other countries beyond the UK. By focusing on just these two nations, a gap is being addressed in the literature for cross-national studies of divergence across youth policy and services across England and Wales, especially post-devolution and post-New Labour. Additionally, the information generated through these *differing* nation-based case studies are expected to be sufficient and sufficiently focused - and insightful - for the purposes of this research study.

The historical bracketing of these cases (2007-2022) incorporates significant policy developments and deviations for the two nations that are insightful for further analysis. For example, 2007 was a year that significant seeds were sown by the Conservative Party for the subsequent expansion and dominance of NCS in England, and 2007 is also when the devolved Welsh Government published its first national youth service strategy through a bespoke in-house unit (post-WYA). This timeframe is also 'book-ended' by the significant ruptures of: (i) the 2007-2008

financial crisis; and (ii) the COVID-19 crisis from 2020 onwards (that has also overlapped with the 'cost of living' crisis of early 2020s as well as the post-Brexit 'levelling-up' agenda). There are common factors of the austerity measures that followed the 2007-2008 financial crisis (affecting both Wales and England) as well as the furlough and redeployment measures during the pandemic in early 2020s. However, this timeframe enables there to be comparative analysis of significant differences - as well as identifying commonalities - for these youth policy and service regimes within this timeframe, and within the respective political and social contexts of Wales and England. The literature of neoliberalism analysis has, for instance, identified a need for - and the usefulness of - studies that bring insight upon both the socio-spatial and the temporal unfolding of neoliberalisation within different localised contexts.

Overall, the rationale for the use of case studies is that they provide an opportunity for generating context specific knowledge, theory building and comparative analysis. Furthermore, these two cases are selected due to the understanding, illumination, and insight they are expected to provide into (the variations between the) youth policy, service and practice contexts of England and Wales, including the respective processes of neoliberalisation within each case. To build the case studies, the approach of a methodological bricoleur is adopted whereby data gathered through image-based and document research as well as through semi-structured interviews is 'quilted together' for analysis using a logics-based nodal framework.

The Bricolage Approach to the Production and Analysis of Case Studies

We live as bricoleurs in a plural world, having to take decisions within incomplete systems of rules (incomplete means here undecidability) and some of these rules are ethical ones... we are faced with incompleteness and not with total dispossession (Laclau, 1995, p. 120).

Rules of the Bricoleur and Rationale for the Bricolage Approach

Laclau's above quote is taken from his discussion of Derrida's (2012) *Spectres of Marx* and deconstruction. Here the figure of a bricoleur is embraced as a poststructuralist response to the lack of "a *total* ethical grounding" for emancipatory projects (p. 120). The term bricoleur, however, has many dimensions and applications.⁴² For instance, as Levi-Strauss (1962) noted the roots for the verb 'bricoler' are in an "extraneous movement" such as the rebound of a ball or the swerve of an animal to avoid an obstruction on its route, while the term 'bricoleur' itself refers to someone who takes up "odd jobs" and is a "professional do-it-yourself" person (p. 11). The bricoleur's "rules of the game" are to make use of

'whatever is at hand', that is to say with a set of tools and materials which is always finite and is also heterogeneous... elements are collected or retained on the principle that 'they may always come in handy' (Levi-Strauss, 1962, p. 11).

While Levi-Strauss focused on the bricoleur's way of producing knowledge and meaning-making *in general*, Denzin and Lincoln (2011a) refer to the bricoleur's knowledge production more specifically in relation to research, i.e. with the

⁴² For example, the diverse uses and applications of bricolage - and the bricoleur - is reviewed in the working paper on bricolage and welfare politics by Phillimore et al. (2016). These include the application of the bricolage concept to academic research, to entrepreneurship and to organisational formations.

“qualitative researcher-as-bricoleur” (p. 4).⁴³ Meanwhile, for Kincheloe et al. (2011) the “critical researcher-as-bricoleur” flexibly creates their own research methods from what is available, “rather than passively receiving the ‘correct’, universally applicable methodology” (p. 168).

For this research, the two case studies are to be produced with the approach of a bricoleur. The generalised figure of the ‘researcher bricoleur’ - as sketched out by Denzin and Lincoln (2011a; 2011b), and Kincheloe et al. (2011) - is particularly relevant to this research.⁴⁴ The approach of a ‘researcher bricoleur’ is adopted to aid case production and analysis. This involves using methods or tools ‘at hand’ - and that are deemed ‘handy’ - to stitch together materials to produce, and analyse, the two case studies (on NCS in England and the Youth Service in Wales). More specifically these could be characterised as the actions of a ‘researcher-as-methodological-bricoleur’ who incorporates various skills and practices within a strategy of inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011b, p. 246). In sum, the bricolage is what is to be arranged and produced using the ‘game rules’ of the bricoleur.

While the researcher bricoleur is a “quilt maker” who “stitches, edits, and puts slices of reality together” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011a, pp. 4-5), the bricolage is the quilt. The quilt can be viewed as the end-product. This metaphor is elaborated upon further by Denzin and Lincoln who describe the product of the researcher bricoleur’s work as:

⁴³ In this respect, the types of bricoleur identified by Denzin and Lincoln (2011a; 2011b) are: the interpretive, methodological, theoretical, political and narrative bricoleurs.

⁴⁴ Additionally, the figure of the ‘ethico-political bricoleur’ - as of Laclau (1995) - is also significant for this study. For instance, an approach of the ‘ethico-political bricoleur’ is adopted to aid critical explanation, critique and evaluation of the ‘logics’ of policies, services and practices regimes. This can involve, for instance, the foregrounding of subjugated and marginalised knowledges, alternative norms and counter-logics rather than concealing the contingency and non-fixity of the status quo through silencing these alternative forms of discourse. Indeed, the principal argument of the thesis involves such foregrounding.

a complex, quilt-like bricolage, a reflexive collage or montage; a set of fluid, interconnected images and representations. This interpretive structure is like a quilt, a performance text, or a sequence of representations connecting the parts to the whole. (2011a, p. 6)

In this sense, the various chapters of this thesis are the 'quilt'. There a bricolage - of images, documents and interviewee words - is intentionally and principally 'quilted' as a way of producing knowledge and making meaning that is relevant to this study's research question. However, in this context, the meaning of the term bricolage is not solely restricted to the 'quilt' of data - it also refers to bricolage as the collection of methods and analytical steps (i.e. the research practices) that have been arranged together as part of the research process (see Pratt et al., 2020). A purpose of this bricolage - of data and practices - is to provide context, detail and richness for the analysis of these two cases and related discourse and logics. For instance, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2011a), a strength of a bricolage approach is that it brings together these varied methodological practices and materials, and this "adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry" (p. 5).

Pratt et al. (2020) provide further guidance for the approach of methodological bricoleurs to help build the trustworthiness - and persuasiveness - of their qualitative research. To build trustworthiness for a qualitative research project, they argue that the methodological bricoleur's work is enhanced when it "exhibits *competence*, *integrity* and *benevolence*" (p. 219). Communicating *competence* for undertaking the research (e.g. demonstrating a clear understanding and rationale for the theoretical and strategic approach adopted, as well as the choice of methods to be deployed) "is essential for differentiating bricolage from a haphazard recombination of elements" (p. 220). Communicating *integrity* includes that each of the research steps (e.g. the

research question, the methods and the analysis) that are taken “cohere”, and there is internal consistency and/or further explanations relating to the ontological tradition of the research study (p. 220-221). Finally, *benevolence* requires taking care - and “respecting” (e.g. the insights and shared knowledge of interviewees) - during the ‘to and fro’ of moving from research data to wider theorising (p. 221).

As Phillimore et al. (2016) have identified, a bricolage approach is often - but not exclusively - adopted as a response to scarcity. A bricolage can often be a way of “addressing the lack of appropriate resources and in particular a way of overcoming challenges and turning them into opportunities” (p. 12). Indeed, that is part of the rationale for the adoption of this bricolage strategy for case production and analysis within this study, but it is not the whole of the rationale. In part, a bricolage strategy for data collection was a response to (relative) ‘data scarcity’ resulting from the restrictions and constraints of undertaking research during COVID-19.⁴⁵ However, the rationale for the adoption of this approach is more than that alone. It includes that bricolage has potential for “creativity: discovering under-utilized or hidden resources or recombining existing resources to tailor them to the challenge” (p.12).

Furthermore, as Pratt et al. (2020) argue there are benefits of bricolage as a methodological alternative to the use of overly narrow and restrictive methodological templates with risks of “formulaic uses” (p. 213). They argue a bricolage approach enhances “mindfulness” of the researcher as they process, articulate and enact their

⁴⁵ Notably, this study’s research with human participants was due to commence when the first lockdown was introduced in the UK due to COVID-19 in early 2020. The research plans have thus needed to adapt to repeated periods of lockdown and other public health restrictions to movement and face-to-face social interactions. The bricolage approach is thus an approach adopted to aid case production, when a range of other forms of data collection (e.g. whether through Participatory Action Research [PAR], participant observation, or other possible methods involving in-person fieldwork or interactions) have not been available or they would have faced (relative) constraints. See COVID-19 Impact Statement at start of thesis.

methodological choices aiming for “a sense of coherence, integrity, and benevolence” (p. 217), and there can be a “custom fit” of methods tailored to the research problem in contrast to a pre-set template (p. 232).⁴⁶

Documents and Image-Based Research for Case Studies

As stated, to build and analyse the case studies, the approach of a methodological bricoleur is adopted whereby data gathered through document and image-based research (as well as semi-structured interviews) is ‘quilted together’ and analysed. This section will explain: the images and their source texts, and the rationale for their use and arrangement; the wider pool of documents from where these images and source texts have been sourced; and the overall contributions - and limitations - with the use of document and image-based research. This was the first phase of data collection and analysis, commencing in Spring 2020. It was sequenced this way in order to generate a first wave of analysis and theorisation of collated materials ahead of moving into interviews. This first phase included the composition of two sets of images (for each case) that aligned with key themes of policy discourse and segments of the public service chain.⁴⁷

Overview of Images and their Rationale

There are 12 images that are used within the chapters 4, 5 and 6. The images include differing visual components that were drawn from various sources during this

⁴⁶ Pratt et al. (2020) also highlight potential limits to such a bricolage approach, including: that disciplinary judgements on integrity of a bricolage will vary; and a risk of “overly long methods sections” seeking to justify the bricolage or too many methods thrown into the mix (pp. 233-234). However, it is contended that this bricolage approach is suitable for the purposes of study, and with a sufficient rationale put forward for a suitable arrangement of methods that fits within the theoretical tradition and the research strategy that is articulated.

⁴⁷ During the interviews, these two sets of images could then be shared with interviewees for discussion as part of phase two of the data gathering process.

study's 2007-2022 timeframe, notably they include: front covers of documents, video stills, pictures from within webpages and reports, an institutional chart, an information pack cover, and snippets of accompanying text from webpages and other organisational documents. Overall, it is contended that these images lend themselves to discourse analysis - of the images themselves, their source text and their wider settings, contexts and circumstances.

Moreover these 12 images are selected and used for several reasons. *Firstly*, these images - each drawn from the English and Welsh policy, service and practice contexts and timeframe of this study - are selected because they each provide an analytical opportunity that will lend insight into key themes of policy or nodes of analysis within each case. Notably these case-specific images are understood as *visual signifiers* and they are being read - in this instance - as *embodiments* and *visualisations* of key policy themes and service nodes under analysis. In this sense, these images are used as they *embody* and *visualise* the policy discourse themes of envisioning and problematisation in these nations, and the segments (or nodes) of the respective service chains within each nation.

Secondly, these images are selected, not only as *embodiments* and *visualisations* of key themes and nodes for the 'researcher as discourse analyst', but also as thematic devices and prompts for use within the interviews. The images thus are selected as *multipliers*, as they can also generate additional data through dialogue - once shared for comment - with interviewees. The extra data generated on key themes and nodes is thus produced with the contextualised perspectives and insights from

interviewees, and from within their subject positions, organisational roles and settings.

Thirdly, these images are selected not only as providing important data that lend insight to - and visualisations of - key themes and nodes, but also as highly pertinent data that align with the overall objectives of this research study (see Table 11). The data - of the images themselves and the extra data they generate through interviews - is also helping this study address its stated objectives. This data lends itself to the analysis of: (i) how policy and practice discourses are shaping provision and subjectivity in both England and Wales (objective 1); (ii) the respective service regimes and models of service provision within each nation (objective 2); (iii) social actor accounts of policy, service and practice development in each nation (objective 3); and (iv) instances and forms of social and political agency (objective 4).

Table 11: Overview of Images

<i>Image</i>	<i>Source and Year</i>	<i>National Case Study</i>	<i>Related Policy Theme and/or Service Node</i>	<i>Related Research Objective(s)</i>
1. 'Chavez'	Still from video with webpage text on The Guardian website, 2011	England	Problematizations of austerity policy	Analysis of policy and practice discourses impacting services and subjectivity (objective 1)
2. Valleys Kids	Still from video with webpage text on Valleys Kids website, 2015	Wales		
3. NCS 'Green Paper'	Front cover of NCS envisioning document by Conservatives, 2007	England (and Wales)	Policy problems and service envisioning	Analysis of models of national service provision (objective 2)
4. YMCA Report	Front cover of YMCA report on 'Generation Cut' webpages, 2020	Wales (and England)	Node of service provision	Analysis of social and political agency (objective 4)
5. Delivering NCS 2.0	Imagery and headers for CEO statement on	England		

	NCS website, 2019		Nodes of service provision and distribution	Analysis of models of national service provision (objective 2)
6. On the Streets	Imagery within Welsh youth policy review by Jervis, 2018	Wales		
7. NCS Team Leader Recruitment	Still from staff recruitment video on Catch 22 website, 2021	England	Node of delivery (incl. NEET agenda)	Analysis of accounts of policy, service and practice developments, incl. employability and NEET agenda (objective 3)
8. Registration of Youth Workers	Logo and title from EWC guidance document, 2017	Wales		
9. Social Mobility	Imagery and text on impacts webpage of NCS, 2021	England		
10. Skills and Employability	Imagery and title of report by Wales Audit Office, 2019	Wales		
11. NCS Board	Profile of board members from business plan of NCS, 2021	England	Node of governance	
12. Board Recruitment in Wales	Cover of recruitment pack for Wales board, 2022	Wales		

The Arrangement of Images in Chapters 4, 5 and 6

Across chapters 4, 5 and 6, there are two sets of images. Images 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11 relate principally to case 1 of the NCS policy regime in England. While images 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 relate principally to case 2 of the Youth Service policy regime in Wales. Across these chapters, the images are intentionally paired (as 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8 and 9-10, and 11-12) to facilitate analysis and comparisons across the two cases. This pairing occurs to facilitate comparative analysis on key themes of policy discourse analysis (i.e. problematisations, policy problems and service visions for each nation) as well as the nodes of the public service chain in each case.

The dates of the images that are used - including the dates for paired images - cut across the 2007-2022 period of this study. The rationale of this is to provide

snapshots - back and forth - that provide insight into temporal continuities and changes from across this timeline. For instance, the continuities of austerity are highlighted through image 1 (2011), image 2 (2015), and also image 4 (2020). This also provides insight into the 'roll-back' and destructive phase of neoliberalisation - its unfolding and lasting impacts - across both nations during this full date-range. Furthermore, the images from across this period, also highlight the 'roll out' and the reconstructive phase of neoliberalisation (i.e. with a new more-highly-neoliberalised service of the NCS in England) - and how it has rolled-out and developed over time in England (e.g. from image 3 in 2007 through to image 11 in 2021), though not in Wales. This timeframe - and the other images that cut across it - also indicate how separate youth policy, service and practice developments were unfolding in both nations.

Wider Pool of Images

The 12 images that are selected and used are from a wider pool of images. Overall, this wider sample of images was strategically planned to include a mix of visual data that included imagery:

- (a) from English and Welsh youth policy and service contexts;
- (b) cutting across the 2007-2022 timeframe;
- (c) generated through local organisations as well as national bodies about the youth services sector;
- (d) related to the nodes of service provision, distribution, delivery and governance for each case;
- (e) emerging from a mix of media formats and publication genres;

- (f) depicting young people's experiences of service developments, as well as depicting wider policy and practice related visions and problematisations from within this sector; and/or,
- (g) connecting to commentary - with direct or indirect suggestions of imagery - from research participants.

Furthermore, in line with "rules of the game" of the bricoleur (Levi-Strauss, 1962, p. 11) the plan was that these images:

- would be 'handy' in that they would be accessible and open in the public domain; and,
- that they could 'come in handy' to lend insight into the cases and themes under analysis.

Additionally, in line with the bricolage strategy of Phillimore et al. (2016), it was planned that these images:

- could be repurposed and recombined for the work at hand, including overlooked or underused images as well as more common images from the sector.

While, in line with the bricolage approach of Kincheloe et al. (2011), the plan for these images was that:

- they could also provide "subjugated insight" of marginalised groups, as well as insight to dominant perspectives.

Overall, a pool of 32 images were gathered based upon the above plan. Further details of this wider pool of images are to be found in Appendix Table 3 in Appendix C. Principally these images were gathered from a wider pool of texts (see further details below on the documentary research process), however, there was also an opportunity in interviews for research participants to provide direct or indirect suggestions of additional imagery.

Selection of the 12 Images

Ultimately the selection of visual data for use within the chapters - as is the case too with interview data (see below) - has been the result of an “editorial decision” that draws upon the researcher’s judgement (Denscombe, 2007, p. 199). From the wider sample of images, the ‘editorial policy’ has been to select and use:

- (a) images that are ‘handy’, accessible and are open in the public domain;
- (b) more common images (e.g. that have been used in other academic and sector publications) as well as the use of overlooked and underused images;
- (c) images that can provide insight to subjugated as well as dominant knowledges from the sector;
- (d) images that cut across the timeframe of the study, and that include ‘roll back’ and ‘roll out’ phases of neoliberalisation;
- (e) images that ‘come in handy’ to lend and generate insight into the cases and themes under analysis within each of chapter 4, 5 and 6 (e.g. policy, service, delivery and/or governance matters);
- (f) images that lend insight - and act as portals - to policy discourse themes of envisioning and problematisation;

- (g) images that lend insight - and act as portals - to the segments (or nodes) of the respective service chains;
- (h) images that can be recombined and paired to shed light on the *variations* between the cases - and the similarities, despite their differences (e.g. to inform the analysis of logics within each case, and their comparison);
- (i) images from a range of documentary sources and media formats with a visual dimension (and for this a degree of image framing is required as per the researcher's judgement - including the use of freeze frames - in order to facilitate and enable their presentation in a more condensed and static format).

The Wider Pool of Texts

The images selected and used in chapters 4, 5 and 6 - and the majority of wider sample of images - are drawn from a larger body of texts that have been pooled and researched as part of this study (see Appendix Table 2 in Appendix B for an overview of this corpus). These texts - relating to English and Welsh policy, services and practice contexts - include consultation papers, legislation, reports, plans, evaluations, reviews, strategies, campaign resources, and various online resources on websites and webpages. The range of documents are selected to align with Flyvbjerg's (2011) *information-orientated* rationale for *maximum variation* case selection and sampling, with the documents providing information on case circumstances - and the diverse socio-spatial and political contexts - that contribute to variation, including the similarities despite the variation. The selection and retention process, however, has not been pre-set from the start of gathering these in Spring 2020, but has been an iterative process and taking account of unfolding

circumstances. This has continued until sufficient instances and varieties of texts were identified that lent insight to the cases and their contexts, the variations between them and their similarities. This selection and retention process for the pool of texts has been framed by - and aligned with - this study's research objectives. In summary, this wider body of texts was selected to provide detail, context and insight to inform analysis of: *key themes of policy discourse* - including policy problems, envisioning and problematisations of policy within each case; *key segments of the public service chain* - service provision, distribution, delivery and governance; and *social and political agency* - including, counter visions, organised campaigns as well as wider social antagonisms (including accounts of social unrest that are - in part - a response to policy developments).

Principles for the Selection and Archiving of Texts

Overall, the research practice for locating and selecting texts as part of the documentary research was strategically planned to include:

- (a) texts that are open and accessible in the public domain (especially online, i.e. in the context of research being conducted during a pandemic);
- (b) a mix of media formats and publication genres, including texts with added visual dimensions;
- (c) texts relating to English and Welsh youth policy and service contexts;
- (d) texts that lend insight to the cases and themes under analysis;
- (e) texts principally cutting across the 2007-2022 timeframe of the study, and the 'roll out' (austerity) and 'roll out' (marketisation) phases of neoliberalisation within that timeframe; and,

- (f) texts generated through youth service sector organisations, plus texts about the sector produced through other agencies and actors.

Furthermore, the research practice of archiving texts was guided by a set of four rules. These four rules functioned as an 'archiving policy' that framed and guided the researcher's situated judgement for the archiving of texts. These four rules have been as follows:

- *Rule 1:* Texts are to be 'handy' in that they are accessible and are open in the public domain, and are to include a mix of media formats and publication genres.
 - They are to include a mix of case relevant 'open' texts in a range of formats, including: consultation papers, legislation, reports, plans, evaluations, reviews, strategies, academic papers, campaign and media resources, online resources on webpages and websites.
- *Rule 2:* These texts are to 'come in handy' and they are used to lend and generate insight into the cases and themes under analysis:
 - They are to lend insight to policy discourse themes of service envisioning and problematisation for these cases;
 - They are to lend insight to the segments (or nodes) of the respective service chains within each nation, i.e. relating to the nodes of service provision, distribution, delivery and/or governance for each case; and/or,
 - They are to lend insight to social and political agency - and resistance - within the youth services sector, i.e. relating to counter visions, organised campaigns as well as wider social antagonisms (including

accounts of social unrest that are - in part - a response to policy developments).

- *Rule 3:* These texts are to relate to English and Welsh youth policy and service contexts, principally cutting across the 2007-2022 timeframe and phases of neoliberalisation.
 - Principally, they are to cut across the timeframe of the study and include 'roll back' (austerity) and 'roll out' (marketisation) phases of neoliberalisation within the youth services sector.
 - They are to lend insight to a range of youth sector responses, including navigations and resistances, to the phases of neoliberalisation.
 - They are to take account of developments that unfold during the period of study, and they can also incorporate preceding legislative and policy developments that hold specific relevance to the cases.
- *Rule 4:* These texts are to be generated through national bodies and through local organisations involved with delivering the NCS in England and the Youth Service in Wales, and/or the texts are to be produced through agencies and actors that govern, review, campaign, analyse and/or report on this sector.
 - *Texts for the English context are to include publications from:* the national body of the NCS Trust, and local or regional partners prominently identified on NCS Trust texts; as well as key political and governmental bodies involved with development, legislation and review of NCS, notably Conservative Party, UK Parliament, DCMS, and NAO.
 - *Texts for the Welsh context are to include publications from:* the Welsh Government's youth work and youth engagement body, the umbrella partnership bodies of the Welsh youth service (CWVYS and WLGA),

and local services prominently identified on the Welsh Government's platforms as local partners within the national youth services programme; as well as key professional and governmental bodies involved with the development, legislation and review of Welsh youth services, notably the UK Government, the Welsh Government, WAO, IYWB, ETS Wales, Estyn, and EWC.

- *Texts relating to wider policy analysis and service visions - and agency - within the youth services sector are to include publications from: advocacy and campaigning bodies - IDYW, Choose Youth, YMCA and related policy publications; and specialist news and reporting platforms.*

Contributions and Limitations of Document and Image-Based Research

Overall, the document and image-based research provides valuable data to address this study's research objectives. In doing so, it also provides crucial data for analysing key themes of policy discourse (such as service visions, policy problems, and the problematisations of policy within each nation), and the data informs analysis of key segments of the public service chain for each case. It also provides data for analysing matters of social and political agency. In sum, this data provides context, detail and richness for building the case studies and for informing the analysis and comparison of them.

Another point to note is that - especially relevant for the research approach of a bricoleur - all the above data is 'open' and in the public domain, as such it is

accessible and 'handy' to use.⁴⁸ However, a potential limit is that it lacks data from 'closed' service documents (such as records of 'hidden' policy-maker or senior management meetings, team meetings or session evaluations) that could provide further context, detail and insight. Access to such closed data may have been gained if the research had incorporated fieldwork visits and in-field observations, though this was not possible when the research commenced.⁴⁹ Another limitation is that this documentary data is generated with no direct interaction with the actual services and social actors within this field. Though this is one reason why semi-structured interviews are also used to generate data through interactions, dialogue and direct access to people and services. One further contribution, however, of using these 'open' images and texts is that, within a bricolage approach, these easily accessible materials - rather than being overlooked, disregarded or underused - are being re-used and re-combined in new ways that are bespoke to the purposes of this study (see Phillimore et al., 2016). The creative aspect of the bricolage approach is that it facilitates "combining resources for a new purpose" and it "helps yield creative combinations of practices crafted to suit a particular study" (Pratt et al., 2020, pp. 218-219).

Document and image-based research also coheres and is consistent with the ontological assumptions of the PDT approach. While PDT applies the term discourse to "all dimensions of social reality" (Howarth, 2004, cited in Marttila, 2015a), it is "most readily available in texts" (Gasze, 2007, cited in Martilla, 2015a) - and it is for this reason that texts (in the form of written as well as spoken language) are a key

⁴⁸ The accessibility and the 'at-hand' online nature of this data was especially pertinent as this study's research processes were unfolding during a pandemic and repeated lockdowns.

⁴⁹ During the first phase of this study's research, the pandemics and lockdown will have impacted and constrained service delivery (see UK Youth, 2020), as well as the research process itself.

form of data for this study. The research, however, is multimodal in that both linguistic and non-linguistic elements are included for analysis, as the discursive is more than written and spoken text alone. Images are thus integrated into the study to lend insight to the discourses and logics under scrutiny. This is also in-keeping with the PDT approach to discourse analysis that includes “analyzing empirical raw materials” with both “linguistic and non-linguistic data - speeches, reports, manifestos, historical events, interviews, policies, ideas, even organisations and institutions - as ‘texts’”, as it is such data that help form a discourse (Howarth & Stavrakakis, 2000, p. 4).

Interviews for Case Studies

To build and inform analysis of the case studies, as well as the document and image-based research, there have been semi-structured interviews. This section will now explain: the interviews, the interviewees, and the interview data, the rationale for their use and selection, and the contributions - and limitations - with the use of interviews as part of this study. Interviewing was the second phase of data collection, commencing after the first phase of document and image-based research and preliminary analysis. As stated above, this scheduling had resulted in the two sets of images - aligned to key themes of policy discourse, nodes of the public service chain, and social and political agency - being composed and available for sharing with interviewees for discussion.

Overview of Interviews and their Rationale

Interview data is used across chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7. The interviews were held from July to December 2022 with 8 participants (see Table 12). Four participants were

rooted in the Welsh context of policy, service and practice. Four participants were rooted in the English context. These were semi-structured interviews held over Zoom and organised in line with the relevant research ethics procedures.⁵⁰ The interviews were transcribed as clean verbatim (i.e. removing minor fillers and pauses of ‘er’ and ‘erm’ to enhance readability, while retaining interviewee voice and overall speech patterns) and anonymised.

Table 12: Interviews and Interviewees⁵¹

Interviews and Interviewees						
No.	Research Participants for Interviews	National Case Study	Type of Organisation	Role/Position	Interview Themes	Related Research Objective(s)
1.	NCS Local Manager	England	NCS Local Delivery Partner	Service Manager	Interviewee background, roles and experiences (2007-2022) Good practices or policy developments within timeframe Problems or tensions encountered within timeframe – and attempted navigations Envisioning and reimagining Image sets and related	Analysis of policy and practice discourses impacting services and subjectivity (objective 1)
2.	NCS Staff Member	England	NCS Network	Service Developer		
3.	Youth Work Activist	England	Youth Work Network	Network Member		
4.	Youth Policy Campaigner	England	Campaign Coalition	Coalition Member		Analysis of models of national service provision (objective 2)
5.	Local Authority Senior Youth Worker	Wales	Local Authority Youth Service	Senior Youth Worker		
6.	Youth Charity Manager	Wales	Voluntary Sector Youth Service	Charity Manager		Analysis of specific developments, e.g. employability and NEET agenda (objective 3)
7.	Grassroots Youth Worker	Wales	Voluntary Sector/Local	Youth Worker		

⁵⁰ While acknowledging that the discourse of research ethics is broader than just regulatory approaches and simple rule-following (see Canella & Lincoln, 2012; Rogers & Ludhra, 2012; Banks et al., 2013), these interviews were conducted in line with relevant institutional guidelines for research with human participants including, for example, informed consent, data protection and risk assessments.

⁵¹ In the following chapters, interviewees 1-8 will be referred to as i1-i8. Thus, while anonymising without pseudonyms, there is still a contextualisation of interviewee positionality with reference to Table 12.

			Authority Youth Services		themes, including 'nodes' of service provision, practice delivery (and NEET agenda), and governance	Analysis of political agency (objective 4)
8.	Voluntary Sector Officer	Wales	Voluntary Sector Youth Service	Senior Manager		

The interviews provided an opportunity to discuss pre-themed questions with participants: their background, roles and experiences within the field, especially during the 2007-2022 period; examples of good practice and/or policy developments within this timeframe, as well as problems or tensions encountered - and navigations of these; envisioning and reimagining of policy, services and practice for the future; and responses to the English and/or Welsh sets of images and their themes, including further discussion of the 'nodes' of service provision, distribution, practice delivery (and NEET agenda), and governance for each case. These themes for discussion within the interviews were selected due to their alignment with the research objectives of this study. Additionally, the interviews - as they were semi-structured - included room for flexibility and open space opportunities within the conversational format.

There are a number of reasons why interviews have been included as a form of data gathering for the case studies. *Firstly*, they address a limitation that has been highlighted with document and image-based research, which is the lack of direct interaction and dialogue with social actors within this field. Thus, semi-structured interviews provide an opportunity for generating more dialogic data, as the interviews include opportunities for follow-up discussion and open spaces, as well as the pre-themed questions. Such dialogic processes are viewed, within social research more

generally, as a common advantage of using interviews as a data gathering method. For example, Denscombe (2007) refers to the depth of information that can be generated because participants “can be probed, issues pursued and lines of inquiry followed” (p. 202). Additionally, the priorities of participants can also be discerned as they “expand their ideas, explain their views and identify what *they* regard as crucial factors” (p. 202). In conjunction with the added depth and interviewee priorities that can be generated, there is the flexibility of making “(a)djustments to the lines of inquiry” (p. 202) as the interview unfolds.⁵²

Secondly, the process of using an extra method (i.e. interviews) and an extra data source (i.e. the shared experiences and knowledges of the research participants) has been intended to also add greater depth to the case studies. For instance, Denzin and Lincoln (2011) characterise triangulation as the use of multiple methods within qualitative research. This is “not (as) a tool or a strategy of validation” for the capture of a ‘true’ reality, rather it “reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question” (p. 5). It is with such a notion of triangulation that this study’s inclusion of interviews - as well as document and image-based research - can also be explained. The purpose of this triangulation was to generate more insights and seek a better grasp of context and detail through using this extra method to enquire into an extra ‘data source’ of people’s first-hand experiences and knowledges. The process of triangulation - in this vein - can result

⁵² For instance, through dialogue with an interviewee (i2 - see Table 12) from the NCS, an anticipated line of inquiry being followed by me (as the interviewer) was into the potential benefits and advantages for NCS of the 2017 legislation that provided a statutory basis for its service. However, from the interviewee’s slight hesitation and cautious response, it was anticipated that from their ‘insider’ perspective there were added complexities and challenges associated with this legislation for NCS operations. Therefore, the line of enquiry was adjusted to discern more of the interviewee’s perspective on this, and the potential limitations, constraints and tensions of this legislation for the NCS.

in interview data reaffirming and echoing documentary and visual data, or else it can produce differences or add new light and insights to existing data - either way it adds greater depth to the research process underpinning the case studies.⁵³ Furthermore, the dialogic process of interviews also ensures that first-hand social actor perspectives are directly included within the empirical inquiry, whereas the document and image-based research has generated data largely - but not entirely - focusing on the 'structuring' of subjectivity (e.g. by policy and service regimes). Thus, from within a PDT perspective, the hazards of essentialising either side of the structure/agency debate (see Howarth, 2015) can be reduced through a triangulation process that brings a focus upon both social structures and social and political agency. Within this study, for example, the inclusion of dialogic interviews maintains an exploratory and analytical openness towards the capacities, modes, degrees, clashes and limits to social and political agency - individual or collective - in this empirical context.

Thirdly, within a PDT approach, a key purpose for the overall gathering and analysis of the data is to illuminate relevant discourses and logics under analysis, and the use of interviews contributes to this process. For example, Marttila (2015a) states:

(T)he primary analytical aim of the PDA (post-foundational discourse analysis) is to give visibility to discourses and discursive materialities. While discourses become empirically observable... in social subjects' practices of articulation... discursive materialities are observable in the form of subject roles and institutions.

⁵³ Expanding upon the earlier example (of the preceding footnote), the NCS Act 2017 is included within the pool of wider document research, and it is discussed within the interviews. In this piece of legislation, the NCS is enshrined as being principally for 16- and 17-year-olds, with some extra discretion including for 15-year-olds and some young people aged 18 or over. The interview process, however, has added depth and new insights to that data, this has been through the contextualised interpretation from an NCS staff member (i2). Potential tensions and constraints arise through the Act such as a view that the wording of the age range might be too restrictive, with limited wriggle room for working with more young people outside of that narrow age range, and with highly complicated procedures - with unlikely prospects in the short-term - for the legislation's wording being amended.

Interviews, for example, can be used to seek access “to routinely conducted patterns of practices” that lend visibility to discourse (Marttila, 2015a). This methodological approach is “second-order hermeneutics” (Marttila, 2015a). Rather than simply seeking to make visible the “social subjects’ experiences of the world” as would be the case with phenomenology, there is a Heideggerian stance focussing beyond the subjects’ own conceptions and upon the wider social context - and discursive world - that they have been “thrown” into (Marttila, 2015a). Or put another way, Howarth and Stavrakakis (2000) state that discourse theory “is not just concerned with way social actors understand their particular worlds”, as focus is also on the (discursive) “structures that organise social life”, and that “constitute identities of subjects and objects” (p. 6).

Rationale for the Selection of Interviewees

The selection of interviewees can be characterised as a form of purposive sampling; as per the rationale of the overarching case studies, there is an emphasis upon *information-orientated* selection (Flyvberg, 2011) with interviewees selected to provide information on the diverse contexts and circumstances of each case, thus shedding light on the *variations* between the cases (and the similarities, despite their differences). To achieve this, the research participants were recruited and selected from youth policy, service and practice contexts of England and Wales. To engage prospective participants, youth organisations and services in England and Wales, along with practitioner and campaign networks, were contacted by email and phone (with an e-flyer and invitation letter with further details) seeking volunteers to participate in the research project. Follow-up contact (by phone and/or email) was also made with these organisations and services, including to pre-existing field

contacts (i.e. as an 'insider' researcher making use of prior networks) as well with those individuals replying to express an interest in participating or cooperating.

The selection of participants has sought to include a range of social actor perspectives that included:

- a geographical and national spread from across both England and Wales;
- insider knowledge and first-hand experience from the varied services and organisational settings, including from local to national, voluntary sector and local authority;
- backgrounds within differing roles and positions, including grassroots practitioners, managers and hybrid practitioner-managers; and,
- an active engagement with youth policy concerns as well as service and practice matters.

Therefore, this sample of interviewees was intentionally and strategically planned to ensure a blend of participants from across:

- (a) English and Welsh contexts (though some individuals will have lived or worked, or had responsibilities, across both nations);
- (b) varied regions from within each nation (e.g. from the north and south of each country, though some individuals will also have moved between regions);
- (c) NCS initiatives in England;
- (d) the Youth Service in Wales (whether local authority or voluntary sector services, or experiences of both);

- (e) positions of grassroots youth workers as well as project or service managers, whether at local or national levels (or a mix of experiences across roles and levels); and,
- (f) youth policy campaigners and policy advocates (including campaign activists involved with political lobbying and/or grassroots organising, and practitioners with advisory roles for professional and government bodies).

The sample of the research participants have also been judged - not only by the researcher, but also by the interviewees through their decision to be involved - as relevant to this research. This is in keeping with Denscombe's (2007) general observation that "(s)ome people are interviewed specifically because they are in a position to know about the things that interest the researcher" (p. 201), and the interviewees are - therefore - likely to be knowledgeable and committed to the subject of the research to get involved. The interviewees have all been directly involved with the various organisations, services and networks that were contacted in order to recruit participants, these have included: the NCS national network of delivery partners in England, local authority and voluntary sector youth services in Wales, and youth policy campaign associations - trade unions, Choose Youth coalition and the In Defence of Youth Work network.

As Marttila (2015a) suggests, the initial sample was "necessarily tentative", with potential, as the research process continued, to "step by step, extend this sample to embrace further articulations." After conducting and transcribing the 8 interviews - and reviewing this alongside the first phase of data gathered through documentary and image-based research - a decision was made not to extend the sample of

interviews further. Rather than the numbers of people, a factor influencing the decision to not extend sample size even further (as is the case within various approaches to undertaking discourse analysis) is the discourse to be made visible and analysed; plus, this needs to be manageable due to the “labor-intensive, time consuming nature” of transcribing interviews and undertaking discourse analysis in depth (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 80). Furthermore, as per the COVID-19 Impact Statement that opens this thesis, a decision had already been taken to prioritise image-based and document research, with only a limited number of online interviews to supplement the images and documents. For this study, the interview sample size was intentionally limited - and not extended further beyond the sample of interviews from July to December 2022 - for two main reasons.

Firstly, the data generated and gathered by December 2022 (through documentary and image-based research as well as interviews) enabled the research question, aim and objectives to be addressed. Rather than extending the sample of interviews for this study (i.e. beyond those conducted between July and December 2022), a decision was made to prioritise the analysis and thesis write-up by using the research data (interviews, images, documents) gathered by December 2022. After conducting and transcribing this online batch of interviews, and carefully reviewing this alongside the wider pool of images and the archive of documentary data, it was recognised by the researcher that - as per the research objectives (see Table 8) and case study strategy (see Table 10) - that this sample of interviews provided rich, detailed, relevant and useful dialogic data from (a) both national policy contexts and service regimes, and (b) with practitioner, manager, and campaigner accounts of policy, service and practice developments, and accounts of experiences and agency

with regards to neoliberalisation. Thus, these interviews complemented the documentary and image-based data to enable the research question, aim and objectives to be addressed - and cases studies to be produced and compared - with useful data and a range of relevant data types.

Secondly, given the COVID-19 context - alongside the 2007-2022 timeframe of the study - it was also deemed prudent to stop interviewing and to proceed with the sample of interviews obtained by December 2022 alongside the imagery and documentary data. Proceeding with this sample of interviews - and not extending it - was in-keeping with the research plans for this study that, from the outset, had - by necessity - been adapted to the circumstances of the pandemic. Following various delays and constraints to this study's research due to COVID-19 circumstances (such as - for the researcher *and* for prospective research participants - lockdowns, social distancing restrictions, organisational changes, work and social pressures, and personal and/or family illnesses), an early decision had been made for there to be only a limited number of online interviews to supplement the images and documents that were collated for this study. As per the COVID-19 Impact Statement, this study could provide research foundations for more extensive fieldwork to be undertaken through later research projects that could be planned and conducted outside of a pandemic. Thus, it was in the context of a pandemic - that was declared as a public health emergency from March 2020 to May 2023 (World Health Organisation, 2023) - that it was decided that extensive fieldwork plans were not feasible for this study, but for later studies.⁵⁴ Principally, however, the decision to

⁵⁴ For example, a later study developed in post-pandemic conditions could involve more extensive fieldwork (e.g. with extra interviews and focus groups, in-person or online), and such research could expand the scope into post-2022 developments and experiences within the youth services sector of England and Wales.

proceed with this interview sample was made because the data gathered by December 2022 enabled the researcher to effectively address this study's research question, aim and objectives.

Interview Analysis and the Selection of Interview Data

After conducting and transcribing the semi-structured interviews, an initial process of interview analysis was undertaken with the transcripts. In the 'to and fro' of re-reading transcripts and identifying issues and patterns, a numbered list of codes was generated with reference to the pre-set interview questions and shared imagery while also taking account of the room for flexibility and more open spaces for dialogue within semi-structured interviews. There were 20 codes in total: 12 codes related to the images and associated discussions of policy, service and practice developments; 5 codes related to norms, antagonisms, negotiations, reimaginings and emotive investments; and 3 codes related to new developments, extra imagery and 'other' points (see Appendix C). In turn, this initial list of codes was aligned with broader categories, notably: policy envisioning and problematisations; nodes of the public service chain; social, political and fantasmatic logics; and emergent ideas and developments. Overall, this coding process was informed by and aligned with the logic-based nodal framework for analysis.

Transcripts were read and re-read with extracts - of varying lengths - coded manually (i.e. using basic word processing software). When selecting interview data to directly use within a chapter, all the coded transcripts were re-read once more (using print copies to enable a phase of screen-free re-reading with further annotations added). Typically, a specific extract would be highlighted within a transcript - such an extract

would correspond with the thematic flow of that chapter (e.g. extracts coded with numbers 1 and 2 would relate to discussions of images and policy matters that could be included within chapter 4's focus on policy discourse). The highlighted extracts would then be more carefully reviewed for potential paraphrasing and/or quotation within a chapter.

Ultimately the selection of interview data for use within the chapters has been the result of an "editorial decision" that draws upon the researcher's judgement (Denscombe, 2007, p. 199). The 'editorial policy' has been to include a range of quotations:

- (i) from across all interviewees who were recruited from a range of roles and positions, organisations, sectors and geographies (as discussed above);
- (ii) that further illustrate the thematic concerns under discussion within each chapter (e.g. with first-hand contextualised experiences of policy, service, delivery and/or governance matters);
- (iii) that add an extra layer of depth to the discussion, rather than documentary data alone (e.g. see footnotes 52 and 53 as a specific illustration of this); and,
- (iv) that shed light on the *variations* between the cases - and the similarities, despite their differences (e.g. to inform the analysis of logics within each case, and their comparison).

Contributions and Limitations of Interviews

Overall interviews contribute dialogic data with participants who are 'in the know' of the contexts and circumstances of these cases, and they have first-hand experiences and insights to share that are relevant to the purposes of this study.

Their accounts lend insight to the wider discourses and logics under analysis, as well to matters of structure and agency within this field. It also adds depth to the case data gathered through other methods.

There are limitations with having held these interviews online. *Firstly*, there is no fieldwork journal based upon site visits if interviews had been in-person. Thus, observations - and thick descriptions - from actual field visits to service sites are not able to be incorporated into the study. This matter is addressed in the COVID-19 impact statement at the start of the thesis, with online interviews adopted and maintained following risk assessments taking account of public health restrictions and the potential for them to be reintroduced once they had eased. These circumstances, however, have prompted and contributed to a research strategy that includes a bricolage of 'accessible' and 'handy' materials and practices, including document and image research as well as online interviews. This alternative approach (e.g. to one involving site visits) is viewed as worthwhile and insightful in its own right, including through the creative and constructive use of the materials and practices that it uses.

Secondly, another limitation of online interviews is that they may add to a general sense of 'Zoom fatigue' for the interviewer or interviewees, i.e. following a dramatic and intense shift to online activities and communication during the pandemic. However, as part of the interviews, individuals had the option of taking part or not, and to take pauses, breaks or even stopping the Zoom call during the interview if needed. Notwithstanding, the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and various social distancing requirements that contributed to the decision to hold interviews online,

there has been a growing literature on the role of online communication technologies for qualitative data collection. Prior to the pandemic, Archibald et al. (2019) focused upon researcher and participant perspectives of using Zoom as a data collection method, this expanded upon existing research on using communication technologies to conduct research. In summary, they argued that, although there can be “technical difficulties” (e.g. with devices or the internet or technical knowledge), there are practical benefits such as “relative ease of access” and “cost-effectiveness” (p. 1). To the most part there were no significant technical hitches with the holding the interviews over Zoom for this study, though in one interview the meeting was held and recorded in audio only - not video - to enhance the quality of the call, and to prevent buffering. One further benefit that can apply to interviews, whether held online or in-person, is that they have potential to be “(t)herapeutic” and “rewarding” for participants (Denscombe, 2007, p. 203). Indeed, on several occasions, various interviewees expressed enjoyment - even a sense of catharsis - at discussing their experiences and insights, and they expressed an appreciation of the research process and the wider role of research.

Finally, there is the challenge of protecting anonymity of interviewees in qualitative research, and these matters were part of the research ethics application with steps taken as part of the risk assessment of this study. However, “guaranteeing complete anonymity can be an ‘unachievable goal’” (Van den Hoonaard, 2003, cited by Saunders et al., 2015, p. 617) and this can be viewed as a limitation of undertaking interviews. Not only is the researcher - or research team - aware of participants, but there is a chance that some readers of publications may “recognise participants and places” despite attempts to anonymise identities (Saunders et al., 2015, p. 618).

Anonymity can be viewed as a “continuum” rather than “water-tight” (Saunders et al., 2015, p. 617), and with this study, when extra questions have been asked about this by participants, they have been informed their details will be anonymised as best as possible as part of the anonymisation process; although absolute guarantees could not be provided, anonymisation steps would be taken.

As part of the anonymisation process for this study, individual’s names and gendered pronouns are removed. No pseudonyms are used, but a numbering system is applied and referred to in the chapters. There is an approximate indication of position or role (to indicate some context), though without specific details of job title. There are no specific details of the exact organisation that employ individuals, though context is provided with reference to the type of organisation, service, network, partnership or coalition of which they have been a member. No exact location is provided (such as town, city, or county of participants), though some context of the national and/or regional setting is provided. Potentially extra ‘smokescreens’ could have been added (for the purpose of protecting identities) such as multiple pseudonyms for one person, or non-attributed quotes without contextual detail - however, for this study, that has not been done so that a certain amount of contextualisation occurs, including an indication of subject positionality, for interview data that is used within the case studies.

Logics-Based Nodal Framework Analysis

Having provided details of the methods deployed to gather data for the case studies, this section will now explain a key analytical framework that is used. The analysis of the two cases - and of the images, documents and interview data - incorporates a

form of logics-based nodal framework analysis (see Glynos & Speed, 2012; Glynos, Speed et al., 2015; Glynos, Klimecki et al., 2015). This framework is summarised in Table 13. This approach is adopted here to aid the analysis of neoliberalised discourses - and counter-discourses to neoliberalism - within these cases.

Table 13: Overview of Logics-Based Nodal Framework

Overview of Logics-Based Nodal Framework (adaptation of Glynos, Speed et al., 2015)		
Nodes (Segments) of Public Service Chain		Logics (Rules) within the Nodes
Service Provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What and how is a service provided?</i> • The service needing to be provided, and conditions in which the provision is instituted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Social logics</i> - dominant norms or rules of a practice or a regime
Service Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How is a service distributed, matched with users, and how is access gained and to what degree?</i> • How users find out about the service, and conditions of access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Political logics</i> - processes to contest, de-contest, defend or transform the norms or rules
Service Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How is a service delivered at the interface between user and staff?</i> • Norms shaping relationship between the professionals and users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fantasmatic logics</i> - the energy or affective grip of norms or rules
Service Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How is a service's provision, distribution and delivery reflected upon, evaluated and accountable? How are evaluations acted upon?</i> • How norms are evaluated, maintained or transformed within the service nodes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Projected social logics</i> - imagined alternative practices (with alternative norms or rules)

Firstly, the nodal framework will facilitate a focus upon key segments - i.e. the nodes - of the public service chain for each case. The public service chain as a nodal framework is depicted and applied in existing studies (e.g. see Glynos & Speed, 2012; Glynos, Speed et al., 2015; Glynos, Klimecki et al., 2015). With Glynos and Speed's (2012) original usage of the nodal framework for analysing the public service chain, they identified the nodes of *service provision and distribution*, *delivery*, and *governance*. Glynos, Speed et al. (2014, pp. 50-53) also provide a more detailed outline of the nodes within this framework: the *node of provision* concerns how a service is made available and instituted; the *node of distribution* is about how users

and a service are matched, and how users access a service; the *node of delivery* concerns professional performance and how norms shape staff-user relations; and the *node of governance* concerns the evaluation of a service and subsequent decisions and actions.⁵⁵

Secondly, a logics-based approach is adopted as it will further the analysis of the nodes within this framework. For these segments of the public service chain, the logics approach is adept at facilitating analysis into: the overall patterns and dominant rules (i.e. *social logics*) and alternative rules envisioned (i.e. *projected social logics*); insider-outsider frontiers to support or challenge the dominant rules, including the contestations, stabilisations and transformations that occur for these rules (i.e. *political logics*); and the extent of the ideological and emotive grip of dominant rules - and/or their contestation - upon subjects (i.e. *fantasmatic logics*).⁵⁶ These social, political and fantasmatic logics are units of explanation that can be drawn upon within the analysis. These logics are situated within a poststructuralist theoretical approach, and they are contrasted to other modes of explanation premised upon either the causal laws of positivism, the causal mechanisms of critical realism, or the self-interpretations of interpretivism (Glynos & Howarth, 2007).

⁵⁵ Arguably, there can be debate about the applicability of aspects of the nodal framework terminology, such as the notion of 'delivery' (potentially this might be interpreted in a mechanistic or instrumental manner) in contrast to youth work as a negotiated 'practice' or a more open and informal 'process' (see Davies, 2015). Nevertheless, the nodal framework terminology is used as NCS in England and the Youth Service in Wales are public services or publicly funded services; however, this use comes with the caveat that it is recognised there might be some discomfort with aspects of this terminology within the 'discourse of youth work', and not all youth work or youth services are public services or - not always - publicly funded.

⁵⁶ For instance, as Glynos and Howarth (2007) indicate this can include the role of fantasy for the naturalising or stabilising of existing arrangements, the energising of certain changes, the "filling" of - or offering to fill - a void, the setting out of ideals to work towards or obstacles to overcome, the containment of the political - for example through management and government techniques, and the concealment of contingency (pp. 145-147).

In this thesis, the nodal framework (as outlined above) is applied across chapters 4-6 with a focus on the nodes of provision, distribution, delivery and governance within each of the two cases. As a point of clarification, the framework is applied in a way that incorporates service funding and service envisioning within *the node of service provision*, thus these sub-components are viewed as part of how a provision is instituted. There is also a particular focus on social logics across chapters 4-6 to discern the variations - and similarities - across the two cases with their dominant service rules, norms and patterns. When reference is made to 'social logics' within these chapters, principally this is about those dominant social norms, rules and overall patterns within each of the public service chains of England and Wales. Additionally, there is a focus upon projected social logics, political counter-logics and fantasmatic logics in order to discern the variations - and similarities - across the two cases with regards service envisioning, contestations and struggles. Principally, the term 'projected social logics' is used here to refer to envisioning and proposals (short, medium or longer term) to amend and further develop the social norms, rules and patterns - often there may be a relatively high degree of consensus within the field for these visions and aspirations. 'Political counter-logics', however, is used to refer to those areas of deeper political contestations and antagonisms, where more significant dividing lines can be discerned within the field, and - especially - to discern counter-hegemonic resistances and alternative visions and practices. Finally, 'fantasmatic logics' is used to refer - principally - to those ideas (often with affective dimensions) that operate to cloak and conceal the dominant social logics as beyond contestation.

To provide its explanation of empirical phenomenon, the PDT logics approach makes use of retroductive (or abductive) reasoning - rather than modes of inductive or deductive reasoning that are typically associated with interpretivism and positivism respectively (Glynos & Howarth, 2007). It is the mode of retroductive reasoning that is used to provide a form of explanation - it "*conjectures*" the case and its conclusion, whereas deductive reasoning "purports to *prove*" and inductive reasoning "purports to *approximate*" (Peirce in Hanson, 1961, cited in Glynos & Howarth, 2007, p. 26). This reasoning seeks to avoid both the causal laws of positivism and the causal mechanisms of critical realism, and - while explanations do pass through self-interpretations - it is not reducing explanations "to the self-interpretations of subjects" (Glynos & Howarth, 2007, p. 34). Retroduction also merges "hypothesis generation and explanation" (p. 39), and thus it challenges:

the compartmentalizing tendencies of positivist social science investigation - a logic of scientific discovery followed by exhaustive empirical testing and explanation - and propose instead one overarching logic of investigation comprising three interlocking moments: the *problematization* of empirical phenomena; the *retroductive explanation* of these phenomena; and the *persuasion* of - and *intervention* into - the relevant community of and practices of scholars and lay-actors.

(p. 19)

It is through using retroductive reasoning, the empirical phenomenon of these case studies will be analysed and explained with a focus upon their social, political and ideological dimensions - and this is with the logics approach to critical explanation. However, a potential limitation is highlighted by Marttila (2015b) who stresses the "lurking trans-disciplinary analytical potential" of poststructuralist (or post-foundational in his terms) discourse analysis (p. 4), but he also questions "the logics approach" as having too narrow a focus on matters of political conflict that "are foremost of interest for political scientists" (p. 3). Nevertheless, the logics approach

will be applied to this study of long-running struggles surrounding policy discourses and subjectivity in the youth services sector, and there are examples of the logics approach being applied in fields such as media (Phelan, 2014), health and social care (Glynos, Speed et al., 2015), banking (Glynos, Klimecki et al., 2015) and workplaces (Glynos, 2008).

Evaluation and Reflexivity

Finally, a critically reflexive ethos has been adopted during this study, including, for example, the self-problematisation of 'insider' researcher. The importance of reflexivity and heightened self-awareness (and the ways that this might occur) in discourse analysis is strongly emphasised by many researchers from various traditions (see Rogers et al., 2005, pp. 381-382). For example, this can include reflexivity of "the analyst's choices at every step in the research process" and the analysis itself (Bucholtz, 2001, cited in Rogers et al., 2005, p. 381). Within a PDT approach, Glynos and Howarth (2007) draw attention to the role of a "self-reflexive and self-critical ethos" within the research process; this is an ethos that acknowledges contingency and contestability of - what Connolly (1995) has termed - "onto-political interpretation" (p. 154). Not only is this ethos to be incorporated within research to critique contingent social practices and regimes (p. 155), but it is also affirmed with an acknowledgement of the limits and contestability of the PDT research process itself and the status of its conclusions (p. 156).

This critically reflexive ethos is also applied to a deliberation of various evaluative criteria that can be deployed for this study. It is contended that for this proposed study - as with other discourse analysis studies from various traditions - that

conventional (and positivist) evaluative criteria of validity and reliability are not relevant (see Wood & Kroger, 2000, pp. 163-168; Wodak & Meyer, 2009, pp. 31-32). Validity as true likeness to an independent social world is not relevant, as meaning for PDT is not referential, but relational, differential and contingent (see Howarth, 2013). Reliability as repeatability is not relevant as discourse studies are contextual and meanings are multiple (see Wood & Kroger, 2000, pp. 164-5). Rather, moving beyond positivist-framed strictures, a valid explanation is one that “produces insights and greater illumination according to criteria that can be publicly articulated, criteria concerning evidence, consistency, exhaustiveness and so on” (Glynos & Howarth, 2007, p. 38). As discussed earlier in this chapter, thus one potential ‘framework’ that can be applied to evaluating the bricolage approach - and the various research methods and practices that it entails within this study - is that espoused by Pratt et al. (2020). In line with their evaluative framework, this whole chapter has, for instance, sought to communicate *competence* (with the approach adopted and methods deployed), *integrity* (with internal coherence of the research strategy and overall consistency with the theoretical approach), and *benevolence* (during research and theorising processes, care and respect is given to research participants and their shared knowledge).

Conclusion

In summary this chapter has contextualised the research question, the theoretical approach and the research strategy for this study alongside the existing literature of youth work and neoliberal studies. It has outlined how, from within the poststructuralist tradition, a PDT-informed theoretical approach and research strategy is adopted. This strategy includes the production of two case studies with

the approach of a methodological bricoleur by gathering case data with document and image-based research as well as semi-structured interviews. This case data is analysed with use of a logics-based nodal framework. The nodal approach provides a framework for 'zooming in' on segments of the public service chain, within each case. The logics approach provides a framework for - carefully and respectfully - producing contextualised theorisation and critical explanation for the norms and rules within the nodes of each case. Each component of this strategy is aligned to the research question, aim and research objectives, and it coheres with the PDT theoretical approach. Thus, this chapter endeavours to communication the *competence, integrity and benevolence* of this overall theoretical approach and research strategy.

4. Policy Analysis Bricolage: Logics of Funding and Envisioning of Services

Introduction

The previous chapter has provided an explanation of the theoretical framework and the research strategy that is adopted for this thesis. To operationalise the research, two case studies - of the NCS in England and the Youth Service in Wales - are produced and analysed using a bricolage approach that weaves together various research materials and research practices. This chapter now focuses on discussing and analysing the service funding and envisioning for each of these cases, including how neoliberalisation processes impact these aspects of service provision. This discussion and analysis is undertaken using a bricolage of research materials (paired paradigmatic images, source texts and interview data) that are intentionally and principally 'quilted' to produce knowledge and build an insightful account of these matters. Furthermore, within the logics-based nodal framework, service funding and envisioning are analysed as components within the node of service provision.

Format, Structure and Argument

In this chapter there are four images. Images 1 and 3 relate principally - but not exclusively - to the NCS policy regime in England. While images 2 and 4 relate principally - but not exclusively - to the Youth Service policy regime in Wales. These images are intentionally paired (as 1-2 and 3-4) to facilitate comparisons and analysis of key policy themes (of service funding and service envisioning) across each nation. The four images cut across the 2007-2022 timeframe of this study, i.e.

they are from 2011, 2015, 2007, 2020 respectively. The date-range of these images facilitates comparisons and analysis of unfolding processes of neoliberalisation within each nation during this date-range, including similarities and differences with the 'roll back' austerity phase and the 'roll out' reconstruction phase of neoliberalisation for each nation's service.

Part one of this chapter begins with a focus on images 1 and 2 with competing problematisations of the funding of pre-established youth services in both England and Wales. This is also at a time when NCS is allocated substantial levels of government funding in England. *Part two* of this chapter focuses on images 3 and 4 with competing accounts of youth policy problems and contrasting service visions - and service (re)constructions - for NCS in England and the Youth Service in Wales. As explained in the research strategy chapter, the four images - from the public domain - are used to visualise competing policy discourses and to generate extra dialogic data from interviewees. This image-based documentary research is triangulated with semi-structured interviews to generate extra depth of insight. Interviewees have insider knowledge and first-hand experience to provide contextualised insights from a range of roles and settings (see Table 12 in chapter 3). An 'editorial policy' (in chapter 3) has also outlined key factors that are taken into account when selecting images and interview data for use within this chapter and the following chapters.

In parts one and two of this chapter, logics within the node of service provision are identified and discussed alongside the research data. Initially, this chapter's identification and discussion of logics includes reference to:

- ‘social logics’ to discern the dominant social norms, rules and patterns for instituting service provision within each case, including variations and similarities;
- ‘projected social logics’ - as the envisioning to amend and further develop the social norms, rules and patterns for instituting service provision, often with a relatively high degree of consensus for these visions within the policy and practice fields;
- ‘political counter-logics’ to discern deeper political contestations, antagonisms and dividing lines through counter-hegemonic resistances and alternative visions and practices, and how these compare across cases; and,
- ‘fantasmatic logics’ as those ideas and practices acting to cloak the dominant social logics - and neoliberalisation - as fixed and unchallengeable.

Following on from parts one and two of this chapter, there is further exploration and analysis of:

- the logics that are identified in this chapter;
- the characterisation and foregrounding of these respective logics as either social, political or fantasmatic logics; and,
- the role and contributions that the logics approach bring to understanding and comparing these two cases and the forms - and conditions - of neoliberalisation and resistances within them.

In summary, this chapter will contend that, *firstly*, a ‘roll back’ phase of neoliberalisation - as evidenced with huge public spending cuts - has massively impacted the youth services sector in both England and Wales throughout the 2010s

and beyond. There are commonalities with a *dominant social logic of austerity for pre-established local authority and voluntary sector youth services*. Austerity also has its ideological dimensions - a common *fantasmatic logic of inevitability* - being pitched by its proponents as the only credible policy, closing-off other possibilities. *Secondly*, a 'roll-out' phase of neoliberalisation has been especially evident in England (not Wales) with a *dominant social logic of investment for a new national service (the NCS), with key roles for private sector and other non-state agencies*. Whereas in Wales, there is a *dominant social logic of continuity for the pre-existing partnership of local authority and voluntary sector youth services*. *Thirdly*, there are counter-discourses and counter-visions to the 'roll back' and 'roll-out' phases of neoliberalisation in both nations. From a range of actors in both nations, there is evidence of a *political counter-logic of public investment for pre-established youth services*. For many of these actors - including young people, youth workers, local youth projects and other collective bodies - there has been a refusal to accept the ideological framing of austerity as the only policy option available.

Part One: Funding Problematisations

Part one of this chapter explores problematisations of funding, and defunding, of youth services in England and Wales during the timeframe of this study. To embody and visualise this policy theme, two images have been selected that are based on video-still-captures of young people discussing service cuts. Both these images highlight commonalities across these nations, notably the destructive 'roll back' phase of neoliberalisation in the form of austerity that has affected pre-established youth services in both nations. These cuts occurred and impacted services throughout the 2010s, as the 2011 and 2015 images indicate. Interviewees also

provide extra insight to these matters - through conversation - from their 'insider' positions within the wider youth services sector. The problematisations by young people - and practitioners - of youth service cuts is contrasted to the neoliberal policy discourse of the UK Government - that spread to local government - that problematises the level of public spending following the 2007-2008 financial crash. While there has been a *dominant social logic of austerity for pre-established youth services* with widespread cutbacks across both nations, this has also been a focus of political struggle. This antagonism can be discerned through the *political counter-logic of public investment for pre-established youth services*.

Images 1 and 2: Competing Problematisations of Youth Service Funding and Defunding

Image 1: 'Chavez'



(Source: Topping & Robertson, 2011)

Image 2: Valleys Kids



'If You Tolerate This Your Children Will Be Next.' *Manic Street Preachers*

(Source: Valleys Kids: 2015)

The above images (image 1 and image 2) focus on two videos that were made in 2011 and 2015. Image 1 is a web-page screenshot that focuses upon a video still capture (recorded in 2011 by a national newspaper) of young people being interviewed in Haringey, north London. Image 2 is a web-page screenshot that focuses on a still from a 2015 video recording from a youth project in the Rhondda, south Wales. Both the screenshots for these images include snippets of additional text from their web-page sources.

These images both highlight how two marginalised groups of young people - in north London and south Wales - have reacted to youth service cuts as a policy problem on two separate occasions during the 2010s.⁵⁷ Within the videos that the stills are from,

⁵⁷ As discussed in the chapters 2 and 3, with a poststructuralist approach to policy discourse analysis, there is a case for foregrounding marginalised experiences and counter-discourses (e.g. so as not to cloak the contingency of a dominant discourse by making it appear as a natural condition and unchallengeable). Additionally, as part of a bricolage strategy, as advocated by Kincheloe et al. (2011), the researcher can provide “insight from the margins of... societies”, not least as research bricoleurs are “detectives of subjugated insight” of marginalised groups (p. 169). The insight foregrounded in this chapter - especially through images 1 and 2 - relates to the subjugated knowledge of ‘austerity-policies-in-practice’, especially as experienced by young people - as well as

the young people's reaction contrasts to the then Westminster government's dominant problematisation - during the 'age of austerity' - of 'unaffordable' public spending (including for established youth services) across the UK. During this same period, however, the Westminster government was piloting, announcing, launching and seeking to expand (initially with an ambition for it to spread into all the nations of the UK) a new programme for young people, i.e. the NCS. These two images were also shown to research participants during interviews, who were invited to share their observations. In turn the interviewees shared their problematisations of image 1 in particular (and the headline that accompanies it), as well as their problematisations of the wider policy of austerity.

Two Video Still Captures: Shifting Problematisations

In 2011, in the early years of the Coalition Government's programme of austerity, a young person called Chavez from Haringey, north London was interviewed in the media, both before and after the English riots that followed Mark Duggan's shooting by police (see Topping & Robertson, 2011; Topping et al., 2011). His comments on the youth service cuts that were then occurring in his local area included:

These streets in London are rough, you know you've got a lot of gangs, knife crime all that... but it's another thing when youth clubs and all that get shut down, it cuts kids' roots off and links, they don't really have anywhere to go... there's gonna be a riot, there'll be riots.

youth workers - who are rooted in marginalised communities such as those within north London and south Wales. As such this is an intentional ethico-political foregrounding of such voices and experiences.

Another young person who was interviewed, Erika, shared her first-hand accounts of violence and gun crime on the streets of the capital. She also expressed similar feelings to those of Chavez:

So it is a sad story that the cuts are affecting young people a lot, but - like - the Government doesn't realise what they're doing to us.

After the riots Chavez was interviewed again, he added:

Well, I kinda did see it coming, for the riots... well, the Government should have seen it coming really cause he [then Prime Minister, David Cameron] cut youth clubs... the kids have nothing to do, and they rioted... the streets are just crazy, they are full of people who have no ambitions or have ambitions but can't fulfil them...

It's about, you know, finding something to do man with your life, it's about having an intervention in your life you know, set yourself some goals, that's what I think some of these kids need.

Image 1 is a still captured from the video that contained the original interviews with Chavez, Erika and several other young people.⁵⁸ This image and the accompanying headline on 'youth club closures' and 'riots' were shared with research participants, and it prompted various responses from interviewees from both England and Wales. For example, as well as commenting upon other factors contributing to riots beyond youth club closures, a youth charity manager (from Wales, interviewee 6 [i6] - see Table 12 in chapter 3) noted a potential risk when assessing the importance of youth provision in local neighbourhoods. The "danger" is in thinking or saying:

⁵⁸ For further exploration of the grievances leading to the 2011 English riots, that significantly involved young people, see the publication on the first phase of *Reading the Riots* study by Lewis et al. (2011). Cuts to youth services were *one* of the grievances identified, as well as anger with discriminatory and aggressive policing, and other educational cuts and rising fees that were targeting young people in particular (pp. 4-5).

‘Well, if there aren’t riots, then there isn’t a problem’, and whereas there still clearly would be a problem, there would be a great, great many problems that would probably be, would be largely hidden.

Meanwhile a youth worker activist from England (i3) also urged care if adopting “deficit models of you know ‘don’t shut the youth club or we’ll all be engaging in crime.’” This interviewee stressed the importance of generating discussion with young people if they raised such arguments, including asking them questions:

Is that so? Shall we think about this? How might that come across? And who are you thinking of? And is that really what youth work’s doing, and is there more to it?

On the specifics of image 1 itself, this person also highlighted that an

interesting thing about this image is - I guess it touches on that tension of youth work... one of the things that youth work does, is indirectly [it] can be... preventative of whether it’s ‘unrest’, or, or ‘violence’, or ‘crime’, or - however, I’m, I’m using all these words cautiously.

The interviewee continued:

‘There’ll be riots’ - and that’s young people saying it, so that, that kind of adds more weight, and it’s a kind of almost, I remember that video as well, and thinking it was it was very powerful. And it’s also, of course, a bit, you have to be a bit cautious in saying ‘There’ll be riots if the clubs close’, or indeed that ‘There won’t be riots if these clubs open’, because sometimes it’s things - I mean, I’d never want to see people being hurt - but sometimes there are things that are valid to riot about, there’s reasons for riots that are valid, whether there’s a youth club there or not.

But... youth clubs as a place for belonging, as a place... to show young people that we - as a society - care about them, and there’s somewhere for them to go. The point can be... argued there, and I remember it being a very powerful argument for youth work.

The youth charity manager from Wales (i6) raised similar points about the absence and presence of youth work provision for young people:

And again so that goes back to... the intrinsic value of youth work and consistent and reliable youth provision, you know, in the absence of that, what you get then is piecemeal finite programmes that usually are driven by a particular agenda - and it's not really about the young people, it's not what they need... as it says [in image 2]... 'No Voice, No Choice' - it's not hearing them, and it's not giving them choice, it's not allowing them to sort of drive what it is that's important to them.

And I think... in the absence of... whether it's... a very strong statutory sector youth service... [or] voluntary sector youth services... I think in the absence of those, what you get then is screaming headlines like that that aren't particularly well informed that they - they only speak to a part of the impacts of an absence of youth provision rather than you know the ongoing lasting effects of an absence of youth provision.

Thus, a longer-term problematisation is provided by these interviewees, and it goes beyond the possibilities of social unrest (and attention-grabbing headlines that this might prompt) to the longer-term - potentially more hidden - impacts of cuts and absence of provision. As such, while the cuts agenda has been dominant, this social logic of austerity for pre-existing youth services is a source of antagonism.

Image 1 is accompanied by a still (image 2) from a separate video that was made in 2015 with an anonymised group of young people; it is from the website of a youth organisation in the Rhondda, south Wales. At the start of this video, the voices are heard of two young people talking:

'Treherbert youth club was shut like, a couple of months ago wasn't it?'

'...the Government cutback and they stop funding our youth club...'

'Nobody wants to be stuck in their house 7 days a week do they, so they're out on the streets.'

This brief conversation illustrates how the social logic of austerity for pre-existing youth services has played out in a local Welsh community, as well the English

example of Haringey. Meanwhile the footage cuts to different scenes from across the local area: a village sign, a train line, a mural, a community venue, an empty playground, a street and a riverside path. The young people's discussion moves on to openly address the 'sub-culture of the street', as well as the role of their local youth work provision in offering supportive relationships and an alternative range of opportunities for young people.

On seeing image 2 - and that it was from a film made with young people - one interviewee, a grassroots youth worker from Wales (i7), reflected upon the background educational process of such multimedia projects with young people:

It's good, you know, it's good for them - skills, engagement, they feel proud - it's good evidence for us [youth workers] as well to look back on, and to show other people what it is they're doing and things like that.

Furthermore, when considering image 1 as well as image 2, this youth worker's initial weighing up of the connection between riots and closures was: "maybe not riots, but, well, it did spark riots, or had its role in riots." This individual then continued to draw parallels to their "own experiences", including how image 1 prompted recollections of a policing body's crime study in the local neighbourhood. This crime study, according to the youth worker, demonstrated that investment in local youth services contributed to overall savings with, for example, reduced police involvements. It was recalled that this study calculated that "on the nights we were delivering [street-based youth work], anti-social behaviour was down by 80%." Thus, a political counter-logic (i.e. to the dominant social logic of austerity) to be discerned is one of public investment in youth services for wider social and financial benefits, as "closing these things, does

have a real impact you know on not just a youth club shut, on the wider community.”⁵⁹

With image 2, underneath the video, that is embedded on the organisation’s website, is a quote from a local band, the Manic Street Preachers: *If you tolerate this your children will be next*. (Incidentally, this is a band who - before their later success - used a youth service recording studio in Cardiff to record their first demos [see Grassroots Cardiff, 2020; BBC, 2020].) The quote is of one of the band’s most famous song titles, that itself is taken from a slogan on an anti-fascist recruitment poster for defending children in 1930s Spain from General Franco’s military attacks (see Trendell, 2018; Imperial War Museums, 2020). The selection and usage of this particular quote on the website is highly emotive. In this context, it can be viewed as symbolising antagonism, resistance and a ‘call to arms’ by that project’s youth workers - and their allied co-workers and local residents - against the regime of austerity and the wider picture of “poverty and urban degeneration” in which this is occurring locally (Valleys Kids, 2015). It suggests a regime that is attacking (e.g. financially not militarily) the services and opportunities for children and young people in the UK’s local neighbourhoods. Simultaneously, this quote indicates not only the anger and the fierce passion of practitioners in this field, but also a sense of care and a commitment to transformation.

⁵⁹ While not reducing public investment in youth service to only being a preventative strategy, it can also be a part of that (see Mckee et al., 2010).

“What’s the Problem?”

Based on the above conversations of the young people in Haringey and Rhondda, a policymaker or policy analyst might ask: “What’s the problem - or problems - supposed to be here?”⁶⁰ While the voices of young people (and the various youth practitioners too) in England and Wales are heterogeneous, these specific voices articulate a grounded yet imaginative problematisation. The young people - and the youth workers too - are questioning the official policy problems of that time, such as those policy decisions framed in the language of ‘deficit reduction’ (see Osborne as reported by Onanuga, 2010) and various ‘deficit models’ such as that of a broken morality of young people needing to be fixed (see Cameron as reported by Abbas & Croft, 2011). The alternative mode of problematising by the young people themselves - and the youth workers - relates not only to the immediate loss of services but also to the longer-term lack of support and opportunities, rather than the UK Government’s stated problems of ‘out of control public spending’ or young people’s ‘immorality’.⁶¹ Furthermore, although the young people talk openly about young people’s involvement with gangs, crime, sex, alcohol and drugs, their talk is not reducible to simply ‘young people are troublemakers’ or young people as ‘a moral problem’ needing to be fixed.

The young people’s talk - that problematises the reduction of established local youth services that had been occurring on national levels, simultaneously represents a

⁶⁰ See Bacchi and Goodwin (2016) on a ‘what’s the problem represented to be’ (WPR) approach to questioning the production and representation of problems in policy.

⁶¹ At the time, numerous Nobel prize winning economists, for example, objected to this characterisation of the ‘problem’ this way (see Dunkley, 2010; Krugman, 2015). Coalitions of workers and citizen groups also protested as to the ‘false economy’ of counter-productive cuts (see Puffett, 2011; Gayle, 2015). Austerity was not only a dominant social logic but was also ‘cloaked’ by a fantasy - while it was pitched by the Westminster government as the only “credible” policy available (Osborne as reported by Onanuga, 2010), there were alternative policies being proposed.

fascinating and informal version of a *counterfactual impact evaluation*. This talk can be read as a narrative account of what happens when services are no longer there, but also this talk speculates as to what the present or the future might be if the absent services were still there. This is also what various interviewees were referring to as well (while also trying to avoid over-simplifications or misrepresentations of the presence - or absence - of youth provision). Arguably, such talk pushes beyond the normalised auditing and managerial systems that are frequently required for measuring 'value for money' or evaluating impact of existing provision in this field. This talk opens-up a particular set of problems and dilemmas, such as: *What happens when a practice or service is not there, and how is the 'outcome' or 'impact' of a lack of provision to be taken into account? Conversely, what if that practice or service was still there, and what if it had been further developed, and if so, how would the present now look?* (see Spence & Wood, 2011; Thomas, 2011). This is a particular form of problematisation of austerity that can, arguably, be drawn out of these two images and their original media sources. Arguably, it hints towards a hopefulness for the unfulfilled and unpredictable promise of an alternative future that is still worth holding on to and working towards (irrespective of whether 'riots', 'uprisings' or 'social unrest' will - or will not - occur if a youth centre is still open or shut). It also can be read as the articulation of the *political counter-logic of (greater) public investment in pre-established youth services*. Simultaneously, it is a refusal to adopt *the 'cloaking' fantasy - and fantasmatic logic - of austerity* as the only credible youth policy available.

Youth Service Defunding and NCS Funding

The above two images were from 2011 and 2015, and from 2010 onwards dramatic cuts to pre-established youth services were occurring in both England and Wales.

On these events, one interviewee - a policy campaigner from England (i4) - reflected that:

In 2010 George Osborne put a footnote into the autumn budget paper which, in effect, gave the green light to privatising and demolishing the youth service... the youth service, because it wasn't statutory [in England], was even easier 'meat' in terms of cuts. And we didn't face just cuts, we faced complete collapse, demolition of whole services.

So, as a result of that, there's very, very little left. There are a few embers... well there's certainly not a national youth service [in England] in terms of, you know, every local authority providing an infrastructure of support for young people with: buildings, detached projects, professionally qualified staff, part time staff, volunteers, training officers and principal youth officers. That hardly exists anywhere these days, and so we've seen the pulling apart of what was the most popular public service for young people.

Simultaneously, a political drive (notably led by David Cameron initially as Conservative Party Leader, then as Prime Minister, and also as Chair of NCS Patrons) had been occurring to institute and expand a new service for young people, i.e. the NCS. So, while the cuts to pre-established youth services (local authority and voluntary sector provision) in England and Wales can be viewed as a 'roll-back' phase of neoliberalisation occurring in both nations, the 'roll out' phase of neoliberalisation - notably involving the NCS as a new service with key roles for the private sector as well as the voluntary sector - occurred primarily in England, not Wales. One view on this process - from the youth policy campaigner in England - was that "the funding that they were going to put into that (i.e. the NCS in England) was directly robbed from the youth service."

This person added that with the NCS funding:

it was equivalent to the youth service funding - a youth service 365 days a year, very cost effective, £310 million was the last audited figure of the English youth service in 2010.

You know they were going to, in essence, get rid of that spending on the local government-controlled youth service and transfer it into holiday schemes through the NCS - which weren't based on the same underpinning youth service educational ethos, it was a - you know - almost like an American summer camp programme in many ways with leisure activities for young people in the summer.

And, of course, there are all sorts of issues about where it was located, how young people got on it, which young people got on it - it certainly wasn't a service that would attract most of the kids from the estates that needed most support.

By the late 2010s - and early 2020s - the NCS had become the dominant service for young people in England (e.g. in terms of levels of funding as well as governmental and legislative backing received),⁶² yet in Wales it had been rejected and a different pathway was taken with an emphasis upon maintaining the pre-established youth services rather than the NCS.

Part Two: Policy Problems and Service Visions

Part one of this chapter has provided an analysis of images 1 and 2 as paradigmatic examples of service funding themes in England and Wales. It has highlighted how there have been commonalities in both nations with service cutbacks as a 'roll-back' phase of neoliberalisation, and a dominant social logic - and connected fantasmatic

⁶² However, under the banner of 'levelling up', there were later reallocations occurring of the English youth budget that included NCS funding reductions, as per the DCMS (2022) review.

logic of inevitability - of austerity. It has drawn attention to a political counter-logic of investment in pre-existing youth services that has contested the austerity logic and resisted the 'cloaking' fantasy of austerity as the only credible option. Part two of this chapter now focuses on images 3 and 4 as embodiments and visualisations of (contrasting) youth policy problems and service visions. In particular, part two will expand upon differences between the nations, including the envisioning and construction of a new national service in England that was rejected in Wales.

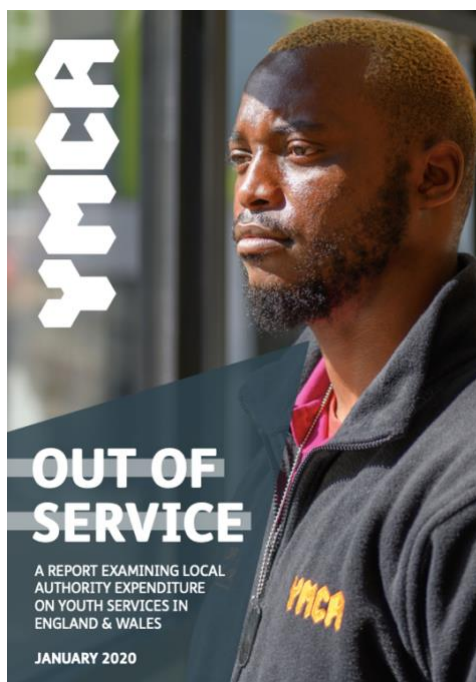
Images 3 and 4: Struggles over Policy Problems and Service Visions

Image 3: NCS 'Green Paper'



(Source: Conservative Party, 2007)

Image 4: YMCA Report



(Source: YMCA, 2020a)

The above images (image 3 and image 4) are taken from the front covers of two policy documents from 2007 and 2020. Image 3 is a screenshot of a front cover of a policy paper outlining the Conservative Party's original vision for the NCS in 2007. Image 4 is of a front cover from a youth charity's study (in 2020) into the financial impact of a decade of austerity upon local authority youth services in Wales and England. These images can be read as embodying and visualising contrasting policy problems and visions for each case. They also provide insight into both the (overlapping) 'roll back' and 'roll-out' phases of neoliberalisation, with pre-established youth services being cutback (in both nations) while a new service is imagined and created (in England). Interviewees were also invited to share their comments on these images and their associated themes.

Image 3 and its source text provides insight into the youth policy problem and vision (as originally articulated by the Conservative Party) that would influence the NCS

regime over the next 15 years (at least). Image 4 and its source text provides insight into an alternative articulation of the pressing problem of youth policy in both Wales and England, alongside an alternative form of envisioning for youth policy and youth service regimes (e.g. this document outlines a counter-vision for a greater level of state support and public funding for youth services that had been marginalised).

These images and their source texts provide insight into political struggles - and forms of agency - surrounding young people's services in both England and Wales over the timeframe of this study. They provide a pathway into exploring the hegemonic struggles relating to youth policy and service regimes (including the social agents influencing decisions about the adoption of NCS in England and the rejection of it in Wales, and ongoing political struggles surrounding the resourcing and running of local authority youth services in both nations).

Two Contrasting Documents: A Tale of Two Nations and Three Services⁶³

Four years prior to Chavez and Erika's interviews with The Guardian newspaper, David Cameron (2007) wrote a foreword to the Conservative Party's envisioning document for the NCS. At that time the Conservative Party were still in opposition, nevertheless the document's presentation was "very much in the form of a Green Paper" of government (p. 5). The opening paragraph states:

I've outlined a mission for the next Conservative Government which I believe is the central challenge of our times... our social fabric urgently needs repair today. Whether it is crime, substance abuse or addiction, young talent going to waste, human potential untapped or

⁶³ The two documents are those by the Conservative Party (2007) and YMCA (2020a). The two nations are England and Wales. The three services referred to are the NCS in England, the pre-established youth service in England, and the youth service in Wales.

individual spirits crushed by lack of opportunity, there is a pressing need for change. I want to shift the balance in our country so we support those who strive for the best and inspire the next generation with a vision of hope. (p. 1)

Notably this ambition to challenge “crime, substance abuse or addiction” and prevent “young talent going to waste” is to be achieved through a brand-new service for young people. As such this foreword omits to mention - and sidelines - the youth work practice of pre-established local authority (and voluntary sector) youth services of the nations. As this document explains, Cameron’s envisioning to address these challenges was a school leaver initiative called the NCS. Over the next decade the NCS would be piloted, further ‘rolled-out’ and implemented, keep on growing, and would eventually be awarded statutory status and a Royal Charter through 2017 legislation, as well as over a billion pounds worth of funding in England (see NCS, 2018; Davies, 2019). Running in parallel to these developments, however, would be a decade of dramatic cuts (and ‘roll-back’) to pre-established youth services of local authorities and the voluntary sector in England and Wales.

This so-called ‘Green Paper’ (Conservative Party, 2007) is a key text in the origin of NCS and an insightful policy document as indicated by existing analyses, including those by de St Croix (2011), Mycock and Tonge (2011), Mills and Waite (2017) and Davies (2019). It is selected here as an important reference point and rich text for analysis, not least as it provides insight into the early motivations, the initial planning and the broader ideals associated with this programme. For comparison - and juxtaposition - purposes, this ‘Green Paper’ (see image 1) is considered alongside the YMCA’s (2020a) publication (see image 2). The latter document addresses the wider state of local authority youth services in both Wales and England by the end of

the 2010s. The front covers, both rich in detail, warrant further attention and can be read as paradigmatic images of youth policy problems and service visions.

The NCS ‘Green Paper’

With an image of the Union Jack flag being held up, the front cover of the ‘Green Paper’ is designed to appeal to a sense of patriotism and a certain national identity of Britishness. There would appear to be a young woman, she is silhouetted against a sunny blue sky, holding up the flag in cooperation with the shadowed arms of others (presumably arms that belong to more young people). The document’s title refers explicitly to inspiring “Britain’s” young people (or rather “teenagers” in its words).⁶⁴ The term Britain, rather than the more accurate term UK, is used. At this early stage in 2007, there was actually a UK-wide and four-nations (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) vision for this programme, not just ‘mainland’ Britain. In reality, however, by the early 2020s the UK-wide vision for the NCS programme has not played out. There are differing youth service policy regimes in and across these four nations, and the NCS is not included in all of them.⁶⁵

When shared with research participants in interviews, image 3 did prompt distancing comments from ‘inside’ NCS as well as some very sceptical responses from ‘outside’ of NCS. For instance, for a staff member of NCS in England (i2), the vision represented in this Conservative Party document’s image has subtle differences -

⁶⁴ The choice of the word “teenagers”, for example, contrasts to the terminology of the Welsh Assembly Government’s (2007) strategic document, of the same year, that explicitly refers to ‘young people’ in its title. The latter reflects a more professionalised language (see Jeffs & Smith, 1999; Jones, 2009), the former’s origins are rooted in the history of ‘teen’-marketing and have connotations of consumption (see Jeffs & Smith, 1999; Savage, 2008).

⁶⁵ As Mills and Waite (2017) have stated, the geographies of NCS reflect the geographies of devolution.

and dissimilarities - to the form of citizenship envisaged by other agencies involved in the development and expansion of NCS:

I've read the content of that [the 'Green Paper'], but I've never actually seen that image... it's interesting to see it. And it does, it does give you that insight into some of the original ideas from that policy point of view from the Conservative Party.

... that image [image 3] speaks a little bit more than on that political view of the opportunity to connect young people with something bigger than themselves. And in this image that is clearly something about the country and the kind of, it ties in with the kind of values agenda that we saw rolled out through schools as well, right. The kind of British values, so that's interesting to see.

However, for this staff member, there were other agencies involved in the earlier days, such as The Challenge (who ran an initial pilot of the NCS) whose early work also developed a “real laser focus on cohesion... and bringing young people together and forming connections.” This staff member added:

And I would say, then what happened when NCS Trust came into the picture with the ability to create its own kind of brand of identity, it's been much more about connecting young people with each other rather than this sense of kind of connection to the country and those national values.

Meanwhile, other interviewees were antagonised to varying degrees by image 3, especially the prominence given to the flag. For instance, a voluntary sector youth officer (i8) in Wales “thought as an image, it just, it wasn't inclusive if I'm honest”, and also stated, “it just felt to me quite racist to be honest.”

Another local authority youth worker (i5) from Wales also half-jokingly referred to it as the image “with the BNP flag”, and the discussion continued:

Local Authority Youth Worker: I really love the Union Jack, and I've got it tattooed on my arm and I'm ex-army, and I just think it's such a shame that it's been hijacked by the right wing. Really sad that my flag's been hijacked by the right wing, and the Conservatives they are just, well they're right-wing aren't they?

Interviewer: Okay, so you can see the echoes of that with it.

Local Authority Youth Worker: Absolutely I can, I mean if we haven't had Conservatives [branding] there, it would either be a BNP thing or possibly Team GB at the Olympics.

In Wales, a youth charity manager (i6) - almost reluctantly - also noted the party-political dimension to the envisioning and development of the NCS:

I mean not wishing to particularly get party political about it, but they [the images for the NCS case] are more reflective of the... ethos of... who's driving it in England you know. It's not entirely surprising... where the value lies within that provision...

I mean there's an image - where's it gone now - the NCS image 'It's time to inspire Britain's teenagers'... it's just that that sort of lean towards some sort of idealistic patriotic kind of, it feels very much like a national service type thing doesn't it, but with the positive spin on it.

On the front cover (image 3), the programme's title of "National Citizen Service" certainly represents a 21st century update of the post-war National Service, with its 18-month military conscription of males. On this front cover, the National Service is now reimagined in various ways, such as for young women as well as young men - specifically for school leavers, and for 6-week periods on a civilian-citizen programme (though initially envisioned with room for military training opportunities to be incorporated too [see Conservative Party, 2007, p.13]). The programme's ideals of good citizenship - and, at this stage, a proud British national identity - are noticeably being framed through the political lens of the Conservative Party, as

indicated by the logo of the English oak tree and accompanying branding of “Conservatives” on the front cover.

At this time, in 2007, the oak tree was still a relatively new logo for the Conservative Party, replacing that of the ‘torch of liberty’ from the years of Margaret Thatcher’s party reign and afterwards. As such, the imagery of the NCS - and the model citizens to be reproduced or constructed through its activities - is placed alongside the political symbolism of the English oak. In turn, however, this can conceivably present a significant barrier to the expansion of NCS into ‘non-Tory’ devolved nations. A sceptic might declare: *not only is this a Conservative Party programme, but also an England-controlled one too*. Indeed, the above quotes about image 3 from research participants from Wales demonstrate such scepticism that can occur in devolved nations. (Historically, the Conservative Party has been much more successful, electorally, in England than in those other UK nations where it stands for election. This is further illustrated by debates about the type of tree to be used as a party logo, and how more diverse tree logos could appear less England-centric in Scotland and Wales [see BBC, 2006].)

While the oak tree itself was a new logo it was also situated within the tradition and legacy of the ‘torch of liberty’. This legacy of the torch is not simply one of “ballot box branding” and rebranding (as per the logo designs of Michael Peters and the Saatchi brothers [see Design Week, 2006]), but also the historic Thatcherite (and neoliberal) practice of ‘rolling back the state’s frontiers’ and the associated ideals of “enterprise and (economic) freedom” (Patel, 2019). This, though, is a neoliberal legacy with potential to be repelled - up to a point - through the powers of devolution, as indicated by (former First Minister) Rhodri Morgan’s (2002) ‘clear red water’ speech.

On the early actions of a devolved Welsh Labour government, he observed that they “clearly owe more to the traditions of... Beveridge and Bevan... than Hayek and Friedman.” These early actions will have included the potential for divergent paths for youth services policy in Wales, during - and after - the New Labour period and Blairism (see King, 2016).

Analysis of the front cover of this ‘Green Paper’ can thus provide insight into how the NCS in 21st century UK - despite its initial claims to Britishness - remains a predominantly England-centric service (rejected in both Wales and Scotland, though with a presence in Northern Ireland). It is also a service that can be read as embodying the ‘roll-out’ phase of neoliberalisation, in both its conception and implementation, not least as its envisioning ‘Green Paper’ is framed within a Thatcherite legacy.

NCS and Devolution

By the start of the 2020s the NCS continues to operate in both England and Northern Ireland, but noticeably it does not operate in Wales or Scotland. On this point a youth worker activist (i3) from England half-joked: “I guess they forgot that there was devolution. So they thought everyone was gonna just, just run with this.” This person continued:

The Union Jack on the cover is interesting isn't it, because there was certainly at the beginning in that document... there was quite a lot of, kind of nationhood and Britishness, and a bit of a militaristic thing going on there as well.

...but I think this document was the kind of Conservative Party vision for what they wanted to do with young people, and I think has really then shaped the Coalition, and then Conservative Party youth policy hugely.

There have been recorded efforts by the UK Government to promote the NCS programme to devolved administrations. For example, pilot documentation indicate that the UK Government's Cabinet Office did seek to encourage the move of NCS into Wales with the funding of a pilot (see Cabinet Office, 2014). There was initial reluctance of Welsh ministers to take up this offer of piloting NCS in Wales (see Weakley, 2012), but then in 2014 a limited pilot was held in deprived urban areas of south Wales. The conclusions, from an assessment of the limited pilot, included that the "brand is attractive", and the programme can generate a "buzz" (Jenkins, 2016, p. 35). Parents and young people may also provide positive feedback. It was, however, seen as an unnecessary duplication and over-complication with an accompanied risk of diverting resources and energy from the "wealth" of established existing provision that provides more long-term support (pp. 36-42). While there was a degree of openness to the potential of such a programme, there were cautions not only about acknowledging agencies doing similar work already, but also adapting for the cultural, language and organisational contexts of Wales (pp. 45-47).

Such concerns expressed in the Wales pilot about the NCS being a diversion, have also been expressed in England too. For instance, the youth worker activist (i3) from England recalled how, while diverting resources away from other longer-term youth provision with a wider range of age groups, the NCS offer itself kept being reduced:

[Originally] it was a six-week programme for school leavers, which has really rolled back over time to sort of four weeks to three weeks... so it kept getting shorter and shorter... I know it's changed again more recently.

The decision reached to not adopt NCS in Wales, obviously contrasts to the decision in England. To better understand such decisions, it is insightful to unpick the

alignments of the social actors associated with the initial development of the NCS in England, and its non-development in Wales. While Northern Ireland and Scotland's experiences would also prove to be extremely fascinating cases (such as republican and pro-independence - as well as pro-union - responses to a Conservative-led initiative for producing a reference point for the 'British national identity' formation of young citizens, as well as how the NCS programme might adapt and hybridise for such nations) they are outside the remit of this specific study.

For NCS development in England, key actors involved are identified in the Conservatives envisioning document. In Cameron's (2007) foreword to this 'Green Paper', he refers to setting up a Policy Group with some young people as advisors, representatives from youth organisations, the public sector and "commerce" (p. 2). For some commentators and analysts in the field, however, this has been viewed as a highly stage-managed and phoney consultation on the NCS programme (see de St Croix, 2011). For example, this document has the façade of a 'Green Paper'. Furthermore, in this document, the Policy Group is presented with a very narrow remit to "oversee the development" of the NCS in line with the leader's vision (Cameron, 2007, p. 2), in many ways it appears as a *fait accompli* without space for wider or deeper consultation about the vision or framework or nature of the consultation itself.

While the public sector is mentioned in the document, existing local authority youth services are marginalised within the text. A specific actor from the voluntary sector, The Young Adult Trust, is given a special prominence in the NCS envisioning process (Conservative Party, 2007, p. 6). Mycock and Tonge (2011) describe this

“independent’ charity” as one that was “inspired’ but ‘not owned” by the Conservative Party (p. 61). Further on, in the envisioning document, there is a role stated for the private sector as key collaborators in delivery (Conservative Party, 2007, p. 17) and private sector figures as working group chairs (p. 22). Close alignments are being made in this text between selected voluntary sector organisations and the private sector, with a new prominent role in this young people’s service delivery being suggested for the private sector. There is a silence on local authority services. It is for such reasons that NCS envisioning can be read as fitting within the ‘roll-out’ phase of neoliberalisation, i.e. through key roles being set out for private sector actors and ‘the market’ in this ‘blueprint’ for a new service. This envisioning is for social logics that, over the next few years, become dominant in England. There is: the *social logic of investment for a new national service (the NCS) with key roles for private sector and other non-state agencies*; and, the *social logic of consultation with private sector and voluntary sector actors*.

During a research interview, as the grassroots youth worker (i7) in Wales contemplated image 3, they mulled over the NCS offer to young people and what it was effectively replacing in England:

‘A 6-week programme for every school leaver’ - I just think, it’s not that I’m against those things there, that’s good, its potentially good for some young people, but not when it was... built upon the decimation of the youth service basically in England, of the open access statutory youth service in England... it’s sort of nonsensical thinking... ‘scrapping this [e.g. local authority youth services] completely’ and ‘we’re doing this [NCS]’.

The 'roll-out' of this new service coming as a result of the 'roll-back' of pre-existing services in England is thus problematised. This person was also thinking about the wider political influences upon the design and operations of the NCS:

Youth Worker: It [image 3] just makes me sort of think of how that party [the Conservatives] in particular is never going to be that open to, not just funding youth services, but the core sort of - you know - the pillars of youth work of empowering and voluntary relationship, you know, getting young people to think for themselves things like that. It's not... they're never really going to want to support that really, I don't think.

Interviewer: So... you can see a party-political dimension to... this as well.

Youth Worker: Yeah... There is isn't there... there definitely is, and there has been - and that's not just that party, but that's more pronounced with that party, but political in terms of you know neoliberalism and capitalism, and how we quantify everything, and how we look at things, and 'business is king', you know results, business plans, this that and the other - everything, we seem to look up to that model of working for everything, whether that's health, or you know, well-being - things like that when it's not really applicable... that party is the biggest component of it, let's be honest - but it's more the overarching (probably not getting all the words right here) but the overarching political ideology we've got anyway in our world now.

In contrast to the charismatic leader-driven top-down approach of the NCS 'Green Paper' (that framed the programme's rapid expansion across England), in Wales the governmental review of the NCS proposal suggests more of a 'bottom-up' approach. Not without its limitations - such as time pressures (Jenkins, 2016) - there was research undertaken in Wales with a wider range of stakeholders with a more open-ended remit than the so-called 'Green Paper' approach. For example, prior to this research in Wales, "the views of stakeholders... involved in the delivery of youth work and volunteering (from the voluntary sector) have not hitherto been collected"

(Jenkins, 2016). One such comment from a stakeholder, about the NCS being piloted in Wales, was as follows:

...it's just making sure that it's not squashing existing initiatives so that funding comes to an end and a new initiative like NCS comes out of the ashes. It's about learning from what's gone before and making sure you are incorporating the best from any programme that's preceded it. Making sure that there is that connectivity with other programmes to avoid duplication and ensure you're getting value for money. (p. 39)

On this occasion, the Welsh Government's decision to not adopt NCS in Wales was influenced by such stakeholders. It was being persuaded by grassroots practitioner judgements and localised knowledge of a wider range of local authority, community, not for profit and voluntary sector actors who were already working in Wales (in contrast to one particular charity given prominence in the 'Green Paper', with the support of others to be brought - or bought - in at a later date). Furthermore, in contrast to the developments of the NCS in England, the key partnership for youth services in Wales was - on paper - that of the local authority and voluntary sector, not the private sector with the voluntary sector. This partnership was reflected in the involvement of such key stakeholders in the review of the NCS pilot in Wales. As such, this example provides an illustration of how the dominant social logic for youth sector consultation in Wales contrasted to that in England. In Wales, the logic was for sector consultation to be with local authorities and voluntary sector actors, moreso than an alliance of the private sector and voluntary sector as was the case within England's NCS framework. Additionally, the above stakeholder quote, illustrates how the language of service 'efficiency' and 'value for money' - terms often associated with New Public Management (NPM) - was also used by local actors as part of the rationale for maintaining caution as to the expansion of NCS into Wales.

Just as reservations with NCS were raised by stakeholders in the pilot research (Jenkins, 2016) for the Welsh Government, ongoing scepticism with NCS is illustrated in the quotes from Welsh interviewees for this study too.

YMCA's 'Out of Service'

Meanwhile, in contrast to the 'natural optimism' and ambitious envisioning (some may say the messianic zeal) of the foreword and cover of the NCS 'Green Paper', is the YMCA report's front cover. Its cover image is of a young man - a young black man who is presumably a youth worker (judging by the YMCA fleece jacket that he is wearing) - looking out into the distance. Is this a contemplative gaze, a determined focus, or a battle-wearied and traumatised 'thousand-yard stare'? Initially, one implication might be the latter, based on the document's title, "Out of Service". However, even if a youth project is 'out of service', that might also prove to be a source of self-reflection for individuals (e.g. on past events or for reinvention in the future), or collective determination (e.g. for survival or transformative struggle), not simply the exhaustion and hurt associated with being at the brunt of cutbacks. While it is most likely this is a purposefully posed (rather than a more naturalistic) photograph for a booklet cover, it certainly has the potential to evoke or resonate with a range of conceivable experiences.

In contrast to the optimism of Cameron's (2007) foreword from 13 years earlier, Hatton's (2020) foreword to this document explains that from 2010-2019 there had been "4,500 youth work jobs" axed, "760 youth centre" closures, and "a billion pounds worth of real term cuts" for youth services, and that there is a "lost generation" facing a range of social problems (knife crime, mental health, social

isolation) with 'lifeline' services being lost (p. 2). So, if the young man's expression was to be interpreted as being despondent, then these could well be the reasons why that would be the case. Furthermore, in the public imagination the young man's image on the cover might also resonate with the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, with experiences of black young people and youth workers interweaving with that struggle against structural violence and racism (see Sallah et al., 2018; Clennon, 2022). As Chavez's earlier account (see Topping & Robertson, 2011) illustrated, many young people including black young people have been losing facilities, opportunities and interventions in their neighbourhoods, and feel increasingly unsafe as a result, thus compounding broader socio-economic inequalities and structural racism.

This YMCA report reinforces the mode of problematisation that was provided earlier by Chavez and Erika from Haringey in 2011 and the young people (and youth workers) of the Rhondda in 2015. The problem posed is the decline of *positive interventions* and *preventative work*, at the same time that *cases of knife crime, mental health difficulties and isolation* are increasing (Hatton, 2020). There is a degree of reluctance to pose the problem this way by the YMCA (as, according to a more practitioner-framed discourse, there are risks if youth work is pitched as a "de-rooted" "re-engineered" practice for fixing the official youth policy problems of the day such as youth violence, unemployment, teenage pregnancy or substance misuse [Davies, 2015, p. 96]). Nevertheless, the problem of rising knife crime amidst service cutbacks, is presented on the grounds of persuasiveness: "Unfortunately it is not until news of young people being isolated or incidents like the recent knife crimes in London hit the headlines, attention seems to go to the role of youth services"

(YMCA, 2018a). Noticeably it does not emphasise young people as lacking or the problem, but it does emphasise problems and difficulties that young people encounter. In particular, the lack of youth services and reduced youth work practice is accentuated as *the problem*. This contrasts to the initial problematisation of character by Cameron - which was that young people frequently lack a sense of 'duty' and as a result the UK lacks 'responsible' citizens - to justify a character-building NCS.

The envisioning within the YMCA's document also contrasts strongly to that of the NCS 'Green Paper'. Cameron's vision was for the NCS - a brand new *character instilling* programme for all the UK - to be *recapturing virtues and values* from the past, with a dominant alliance of the voluntary and private sector (Conservative Party, 2007). From the sub-title of the YMCA's (2020a) document, however, it clearly has an alternative focus: *examining Local Authority expenditure on youth services in England and Wales*. The report's conclusion sets out a vision that is tailored for these pre-established services. Broadly, its envisioning is of a state role, regulations and standards for the existing local authority provision, with more secure funding and 'real' partnerships with the voluntary sector (p. 13). It thus set out a political counter-logic - applicable to both nations and their respective youth policy programmes - of improved investment in pre-existing youth services of local authorities and the voluntary sector.

The more specific recommendations in this document recognise the distinctive policy contexts for both England and Wales.⁶⁶ Different levels of youth service spending cuts are discernible, from 2010 to 2019 there had been cuts of 71% in England (p. 6). This is compared to 38% in Wales (p. 10) - though, of an already underfunded service, some would argue (see Rose, 2008), with regional variations in both countries. Although there are commonalities of austerity in both nations, there are differences with the extent of the cuts for local authority services.⁶⁷ Additionally, in contrast to England, Wales had retained a national strategy for youth work including a key role for local authority youth services during this period in partnership with the voluntary sector (see Welsh Assembly Government, 2007; Welsh Government, 2014; 2019a). Thus, further differences are discerned across the flagship policy programmes of England and Wales - in Wales a dominant social logic was to continue the existing partnership model for local authorities and voluntary sector, whereas in England it had become one of constructing a private and voluntary sector alliance. However, as the YMCA (2020a) identifies with its tailored recommendations, this is no youth work panacea in Wales (or England), and youth services are often “overlooked” and undervalued including within local authorities themselves (YMCA, 2018a) - as such, the policy and infrastructure struggles for youth services are occurring at all levels of government, local as well as national.

⁶⁶ The YMCA's (2020a) imagining and proposals for England's local authority youth services include ring-fenced funding, universal and targeted provision, and a national strategy (p. 9). Meanwhile for Wales the call is for ring-fenced funding, minimum standards in statutory guidance, deepening the voluntary sector partnership, and a longer-term strategic vision (p. 9).

⁶⁷ When compared to England's - overall - local government spending cuts of 23.7% (from 2009-2017), the Welsh Government's - overall - cuts for local government were 12.1% (Downe & Taylor-Collins, 2019).

When discussing austerity with interviewees, the grassroots youth worker (i7) in Wales talked of a “different direction” happening after 2010. This person was focusing upon their own experiences at that time within one local authority’s youth service. In this one example, there were managerial as well as financial changes happening that affected service provision and practice on the ground, and these managerial changes “coincided” with the Conservative Party coming into government.

So you had the austerity agenda come in, and then we also got took from Education (directorate) and put under Leisure Services (directorate), under someone who didn’t really understand youth work and - to be honest - didn’t really value it, especially things like detached youth work, we had to really battle to say what it was and what’s the point in it. He used to just openly say in meetings after, ‘I still don’t get it, I don’t get the point in it’...

With that and the cuts... everything changed a lot, the direction, the work changed - so our youth centre ended up closing, getting knocked down... And we got put in with a children’s centre where we only had the two evenings a week, but we had to share a nursery space, so it just wasn’t practical. The youth club - the young people and the workers - had no ownership of the space anymore, and it wasn’t workable working a youth centre out of there. And the detached work got run down and we got put in different roles.

In Wales, although there was a slight buffer to the level of the cuts happening when compared to England’s local authority services, there were still cuts and other service changes happening in Wales. The youth worker continued to explain what they had encountered:

the direction the service took was, from delivering open access work in the community, to more what they’d call targeted work whether that’s in schools or 1-1 work, or work that looked at getting young people to stay in education or to access training or things like that. It moved more towards that sort of stuff - which I’m not saying there’s not a value in - but I wasn’t happy at the

time, that it seemed to be 'let's do that [targeted work] and let's replace... this open access provision... it's just not needed'...

... as the money was getting cut, and they were also wanting to take this new direction. It was like to them an easy thing to just cut, you know what I mean, in their head. And they were still saying 'really you could work, we're still working with the same amount of people' and stuff like that, but they weren't really.

This practitioner's example also illustrates how the service changes occurring in Wales - with new funding prioritisation decisions in the context of cutbacks - were prompting *a social logic for increasing (the proportion of) targeted provision* - often at the expense of more open provision, thus also impacting how services were being instituted. Yet within campaigning materials (e.g. YMCA, 2020a) as well as various Welsh policy and practice documents (e.g. Welsh Government, 2014; Jervis, 2018; IYWB, 2021; Youth Work in Wales Review Group, 2022) there was a shared recognition of the role of open-access and universal provision within a variety of settings, alongside - not to be supplanted by - targeted and specialist provision. Thus, within Wales, there is also a projected social logic of universal and open youth work provision.

Another local authority youth worker (from another county in Wales - i5) also highlighted that although the youth service remains, there have been significant reductions of youth workers and youth centres within their county's service due to austerity:

Yeah, things have changed a lot... I'm a senior practitioner with the youth service... [prior to 2010] there were five of us as senior practitioners... it went down, and I was the only senior practitioner in the service... We've gone down from over twenty clubs now to half that amount. We've had all sorts of closures. We've had lots of people made redundant... things have just

gone down and down and down, and there have been less and less and less funding, or the funding has remained the same, and hasn't kept pace. So things are very different now than they were in a decade ago.

The extent of the reductions is not only revealed by there being fewer senior practitioners and youth centres, but also by the reduced numbers of other staff members and of fewer centre-based sessions too:

there were twenty plus full-time workers who went down to four, you know that's a massive cut... [There are now] 11 centres that are, most are, only open one evening a week. It used to be that we had over 20 centres most were open two nights a week. So it's not the fact we've gone down 21/22 [centres] to 11, which is half. It's probably about a quarter, because most of them are just one night a week now, and there were 2-3 night a week clubs. So you know you, you've got a quarter of what used to happen happening now in the clubs that are still open, and they're really struggling. I haven't got any spare staff.

In Wales, however, the overall youth service cuts were not to the same degree as in England (as the YMCA report has documented). On their experiences, a local service manager (i1) from a large English city commented upon how:

since austerity the youth service has diminished [in this city post-2010]... but it's held on because the Director of Children's Services in the city accepts that youth work is actually a preventative strategy.

Again, this illustrates how local buffers can be in place in England too, and how there is a *political counter-logic for public investment for pre-established youth services* in both nations. Nevertheless, the level of cuts are still very dramatic in this city, even with some local mitigations in place:

So the youth service [in this city] had a £14m budget twenty years ago. We're now down to £2m, and I consider myself very lucky to have a £2m budget [in this city] for youth work. That's an awful lot of money.

This interviewee then compared this city's provision to various other cities and localities across parts of England:

I have witnessed Wakefield... I think they have two youth workers now in their city with nearly a third of a million people in it. Bradford their youth service is smashed to pieces - Calderdale, Kirklees all the[se] cities... And then... you know there's the [youth services in] Derbyshire, Oxford... Devon... Blackpool... I think youth work's now gone back into the local authority in Blackpool - so for years it was commissioned out, and it was only lucky that in Blackpool the commissioned services were run by youth workers... So it's devastating what's happened to youth work.

On this matter, during an interview, the policy campaigner (i4) questioned the often 'anti-youth work' agenda from government for England, in contrast to a more supportive stance of Welsh government:

... the governments over the years were never keen on statutory youth service, and various governments in England in particular saw youth work as a problem as something that was too anarchistic and difficult to control, or as an extension of job creation and employability, or as an extension of social work.

So, over the generations in England, there was a continual ideological struggle [especially by organised labour and the wider community of practice] for the survival of youth work as a liberatory educational practice working with young people on their own terms to empower them and give them a voice and to appreciate, not their future, but their present, and to explore opportunities and so on with them.

And the line was held for many years in England that it [youth work] was an educational practice, that it was informal education that it was outside school and outside work, and it was on young people's own terms. But that eventually got completely whittled away.

While discussing the liberatory tradition of youth work, the interviewee again returned to their own line of questioning, asking "why have the governments of the day in the

period of neoliberalism wanted to hit that informal education spectrum so hard?" For this interviewee, the government agenda - in England - against youth work and informal education is because this line of work contributes to "a more collective consciousness and a more egalitarian approach to social issues." Such practices "have been effective, empowering working-class developments which have raised consciousness, which have developed collective ideas, which have led to a community rather than an individualistic spirit." As such, these practices - including youth work - that are within "the informal education spectrum" should not be "underestimated" by the youth work field, pedagogically nor politically.

Certainly, when analysing images 3 and 4, contrasting models of social agency (individual and collective) can be aligned with the differing models of service provision that are embodied and visualised in the two images. However, prior to unpicking these differing models of agency associated with differing types of service provision, there is a similarity within these images - of logos and branding - that will be explored first.

With image 4, as well as being visible on the fleece jacket of the young man, there is the heavy lettering of the YMCA logo on the front cover of this report. As was the case with the Conservative's logo on the NCS 'Green Paper', the YMCA's logo that is used had also resulted from a rebranding exercise with a marketing agency (see Steven, 2014). This hints towards the competitive charity landscape in which the YMCA operates, and the encroachment of 'charity branding' as a normalised practice (see YMCA, 2018b). Intriguingly, the guidance on imagery (such as the picture of the young man in the fleece jacket) states:

Our images should give an idea of the variety of people, environments and activities we work with. Subjects are confident and engaging, at the heart of the composition...

Avoid using... negative images.

While the image used is not necessarily 'negative' - it does hold an ambiguity that can be more thought-provoking than a standard image of positivity.

Putting aside any potential associations with a 1978 disco song, the Young Men's Christian Association's (YMCA) identity was rearticulated by the marketing agency as "Youth Minded Community Approach" (ArthurSteenHorneAdamson, n.d.). This was designed to reflect its work with all young people (not just young men) and people from all faiths or none (not just Christians). The tradition and legacy of this brand is actually that of the oldest youth charity in the world, with a long history of mutual aid and 'social action' with - and for - young people (see Smith, 1997).

Notwithstanding the commonalities of the branding and marketing made visible on both the front covers of these documents, there is a significant contrast in their core messaging within them. The nature of the problematisations and envisioning differs considerably in each document, as does the 'model of social agency' that they each present. The 'Green Paper' is presenting the NCS-branded and compliant citizen undertaking 'good deeds' as social action - a citizen actively produced and functioning within a neoliberalised service framework (see Mycock & Tongue, 2011; Mills & Waite, 2017). The YMCA report is itself an alternative form of social action - with youth workers and their allies engaged in acts of awareness raising and political campaigning for youth service policy change (in a manner that suggests a transgression - to some degree - of the neoliberalised logic of austerity).

In fact, the young man in the branded fleece jacket also embodies this latter ‘model of social agency’ and political subjectivity. Alan is actually the young man pictured on the front cover of the YMCA report. He was a refugee (an unaccompanied young minor, originally from Zimbabwe) who became a YMCA service user and later became a qualified youth worker (see YMCA, 2020b). Alan is also involved with the YMCA’s campaigning work. In a video interview (YMCA, 2020b), he outlines the manner of thinking for acting politically on these specific matters:

If cuts continue, it would be very difficult for me to do my job... and because I know the impact of what cuts can do to young people, I think it wouldn’t be a positive outlook. These support structures help keep the world clearer for young people.

He is imagining a counter-factual alternative (of a “world clearer”), while problematising the impact of austerity on local services (including his own job and practice) and for young people more generally.

Image 4 thus provides an embodiment and visualisation of a model of political subjectivity, and this is discernible through the campaigning vision of YMCA and the political agency of Alan. This subjectivity involves political citizenship and politicised advocacy as social action. This contrasts to the dominant model of citizenship - and social action - that was noted by Mycock and Tongue (2011) during the early years of NCS. This was a model of subjectivity and social agency - as originally envisioned by NCS - as one of “(v)olunteering rather than political participation” (p. 65).⁶⁸

⁶⁸ However, NCS and social action is a theme that is explored further within chapter 6, including with ‘insider’ NCS staff experiences and perspectives on it.

Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter has explored the 'roll-back' and 'roll-out' phases of neoliberalisation, and their impact upon the youth services sector in both England and Wales. It has used four (paradigmatic) images to organise and analyse research data surrounding the key policy themes of funding and envisioning for the youth services sector in England and Wales. It has demonstrated that, while massive cutbacks were occurring to pre-established youth services in both these nations, a significant proportion of the remaining youth budget in England was being channelled into the new flagship programme of the NCS. This compounded the cuts for pre-established local authority and voluntary sector provision in England, while investing into a new programme delivered by a new private and voluntary sector alliance. In Wales, however, this was not the case as the NCS programme was rejected and not rolled out there. Rather, in Wales, austerity was managed in a way that - despite the massive cutbacks - maintained a greater degree of continuity with pre-established youth services with their youth worker staffing and practice traditions. The key findings of this chapter are summarised in Table 14 (see below). What follows now is further discussion and analysis of this table and this chapter's findings.

Table 14: Comparison of English and Welsh Youth Policy (Post-2010 Age of Austerity)

	England	Wales
Neoliberalisation Processes	<p><i>Roll-back phase:</i> over 70% cuts (YMCA, 2020a) to youth services of local authorities</p> <p><i>Roll-out phase:</i> construction of new national service (NCS) with new provider network including private sector</p>	<p><i>Roll-back phase:</i> over 30% cuts (YMCA, 2020a) to youth services of local authorities</p> <p><i>No roll-out phase:</i> rejection of expansion of new service (NCS) to Wales, maintain pre-existing partnership model instead</p>
Dominant policy discourse	<p>Social logic of austerity for pre-established youth services of local authority and voluntary sector</p> <p>Fantasmatic logic of austerity as inevitable</p> <p>Social logic of investment in a new service with key role for private sector</p> <p>Social logic of consultation with private sector and voluntary sector actors</p>	<p>Social logic of austerity for pre-established youth services of local authority and voluntary sector</p> <p>Fantasmatic logic of austerity as inevitable</p> <p>Social logic of continuity of existing partnership model for local authorities and voluntary sector</p> <p>Social logic of consultation with local authorities and voluntary sector actors</p> <p>Social logic of more targeted services</p> <p>Projected social logic of universal and open youth work</p>
Counter-discourse	<p>Political counter-logic of investment in pre-existing youth services of local authorities and voluntary sector, and investment in universal and open youth work.</p> <p>Critical political subjectivity of youth workers and young people</p>	<p>Political counter-logic of investment in pre-existing youth services of local authorities and voluntary sector</p> <p>Critical political subjectivity of youth workers and young people</p>

Firstly, there will be further elaboration of the set of logics that this chapter has identified and characterised (as summarised in Table 14). In particular, it is contended that these logics develop insight, understanding and support comparative analysis of the neoliberalisation phases in each case context, as well as navigations and resistances. These logics have been characterised as including:

- *Social logics* with dominant rules and norms for service spending and dominant service partnership patterns in each case context. This helps to

identify how a key difference is in the 'roll out' phase of neoliberalisation, despite broad similarities to the 'roll back' phase. For both cases, there is a dominant rule and norm for cutbacks and 'roll back' to pre-established youth services of local authorities and the voluntary sector. However, for the English case, there is a logic of investment for - and the 'roll out' of - a new private and voluntary sector alliance for service provision. Whereas, in the Welsh case, the reduced funding is channelled towards the pre-established youth service partnership of local authorities and the voluntary sector, and there is a logic of governmental consultation with this service partnership. While such pre-established youth services have been more protected in Wales (within the context of cutbacks when compared to England), there has been a logic of instituting more targeted forms of provision within these services (rather than a logic of instituting an entirely new service as has been the case in England). Arguably this is a subtle and hybridised form of neoliberalisation also occurring within the Welsh case, for example, with marketised ideals that such targeting of provision is offering 'value for money' with a streamlined and efficient use of more limited resources on 'at risk' population groups.

- *Projected social logics*: while within Wales there has been a dominant social logic of increasing targeted forms of provision within pre-existing service partnerships, this has coexisted alongside a *projected social logic* for more open and universal provision. In the Welsh case, policy envisioning frequently asserts proposals for - a rebalancing back towards - more universal and open provision, though this vision has not yet fully materialised. In England, however, such envisioning - for more open forms of provision through pre-

established youth services - is in a more marginalised and oppositional position when compared to Wales.

- *Political counter-logics*: in both case contexts, there is opposition evident within the wider youth services sector to austerity, and there is a struggle - and a political counter-logic - for greater investment in pre-established youth services of the local authority and voluntary sector. Similarities are identified with such resistance to neoliberalisation - notably austerity - occurring in policy contexts for both cases, though the alternative envisioning (for greater investment in social collectivist rather than marketised provision) has a stronger 'foothold' within youth service policy discourse of Wales than England. While there has been significant organised resistance in England to youth service cuts, its position has been marked as more oppositional - and marginalised - largely due to the extent of the demolition and displacement of pre-established youth services, youth worker staffing and practice in England, when compared to Wales. In England, such resistance has included opposition lines - and political frontiers - being drawn against the establishment and growth of NCS at the expense of pre-established youth service provision, whereas in Wales this has not been the case (as NCS was blocked from expanding beyond its limited pilot project in Wales). Additionally, calls for more universal and open youth work in Wales have been characterised as a projected social logic not least as they have had a greater 'foothold' within policy envisioning, but in England similar calls have been characterised as a political counter-logic that stands in opposition to the dominant forms of service provision of the NCS.

- *Fantasmatic logics*: within the policy contexts of each case, while there has been opposition to austerity, there has also been an ideological and emotive appeal for the necessity of cuts - including for pre-established youth services - by governmental bodies and actors. This governmental appeal to cuts as the only sensible and credible option is characterised as a fantasmatic logic that seeks to cloak alternative possibilities as fanciful and unworkable, thus undermining alternative policy options and resistance mobilisations.

Secondly, having elaborated on the set of logics that have been identified, further clarification will now be provided on the characterisation and foregrounding of these respective logics as social, political and fantasmatic. As Glynos, Speed et al. (2015) observe “in practice social, political, and fantasmatic logics are all operative at any one time, each being in a relation of over-determination with the others” (p. 48), nevertheless the foregrounding of specific logics can occur to further analysis. In this chapter, for instance, there is the characterisation - and foregrounding - of austerity for pre-established youth services as a dominant social logic. This is because austerity is a dominant rule and norm (e.g. for policy makers and senior managers to implement), and it directs the concrete practices and cutbacks for service provision (and the youth work staffing levels for this provision). However, while characterised as a dominant social logic, austerity is not without contestation and resistance - as such there is a political dimension to it too. There is also a fantasmatic dimension with efforts to build affective attachments and sensibilities towards a perceived inevitability and credibility of cuts. Nevertheless, in this chapter there is the foregrounding of specific logics (such as the austerity for pre-established youth services) as social logics in order to generate insight and analysis of the dominant

social norms, rules and patterns for the policy contexts of each case - thus enabling points of divergence and convergence to be further discerned on these matters. Meanwhile, this is accompanied by the foregrounding of specific logics as either projected social logics, political counter-logics or fantasmatic logics in order to discern the variations - and similarities - across the two cases with regards the wider policy context of service envisioning, contestations and struggles. The rationale of this characterisation and foregrounding is to enrich understanding and analysis of service funding and envisioning for each case and their wider policy contexts, and to further analysis of the respective forms of neoliberalisation, contestation and resistance within the policy contexts of each case too.

Thirdly, having elaborated on the foregrounding of the respective logics within this chapter, further discussion will now be provided on the points of divergence and concurrence that have been identified, including the conditions that contribute to the respective outcomes in each case. For instance, across these case contexts there is the identification of a common social logic of austerity for pre-established youth services. The shared political conditions for this came from *the UK Government's overarching programme of austerity* from 2010 onwards. It was within these shared political conditions - with the policy choice of austerity being pitched by the Conservative-led government as deficit reduction - that 'roll back' neoliberalisation occurred and deeply impacted the youth services sector of both England and Wales. However, differences with the 'roll out' phase of neoliberalisation can also be discerned, such as the social logic for the new NCS programme to be provided by a partnership of the private and voluntary sector in England, but not Wales. Broadly, the contributory factors and conditions shaping such points of divergence include:

- *Institutional and governance differences*: youth service policy in Wales is a devolved area of government with strategic developments being overseen by various youth work service units and boards (post-WYA) reporting to the Education Minister, whereas NCS policy framework in England has been overseen by the UK Cabinet Office and DCMS (and in conjunction with the NCS Trust's board);
- *Differences of political culture and political ideals*: youth service policy in Wales has been overseen by a Welsh Labour-led administration expressing certain post-devolution ideals of civic municipal socialism, whereas NCS policy in England has clear roots in the Conservative Party and its 'Big Society' ideals of the early 21st century; and,
- *Differences to the engagement with professional youth work discourse and the youth work field*: youth service policy in Wales has been open to integrating youth work discourse within its strategic planning through consultation and engagement with pre-established youth service partnerships and the wider field, whereas the recent development of NCS policy in England has been premised upon privileging private and voluntary sector involvement, while marginalising professional youth work discourse, pre-established youth service partnerships and the wider youth work field.

Neoliberalisation has occurred in both case contexts, but it takes a different shape and direction in each, with the above factors and conditions playing significant roles in these variations. In Wales, while there is a form of 'austrian realism' in operation that simultaneously implements and seeks to mitigate austerity, the continuation of a tradition of youth service provision and youth work practice has been advocated for

and maintained (though significantly diminished as a result of cutbacks) with professional youth work discourse playing a role in this. In England, the historic youth service tradition and youth work practice has been more seriously marginalised and attacked with both cutbacks and the expansion of the NCS programme, largely at its expense. It is within these contexts that respective forms of agency - with various navigations and resistances to neoliberalisation - can also be discerned and compared.

While there are oppositional political counter-logics in both case contexts, this is more acute in England when compared to Wales. In England, professional youth work discourse has been placed in a more oppositional position. A political frontier - and a logic of equivalence - has been identifiable during the timeframe of this study. On the one side, there have been those actors and bodies highly critical of the funding and expansion of the NCS programme, especially at the expense of the wider youth services sector - these have included critical voices from: trade unions and professional networks; and, youth sector employers including local authorities, the LGA, and voluntary sector organisations. Meanwhile, on the other side, there are those advocating for - and defending - the NCS programme. These have included: the Conservative Party, the NCS Trust and its various delivery partners principally drawn from private and voluntary sectors (including those without a background of youth service provision or a youth work tradition). In Wales, there has not been such polarity or frontiers, as the devolved government - by comparison - has more openly engaged and consulted with the youth work profession through its strategic framework. Advocacy and campaigning by various youth work actors, individual and collective, have collaborated through such governance channels - and, as the NCS

never expanded beyond its initial pilot in Wales, it was not possible for the dividing lines seen in England to be replicated within Wales.⁶⁹

While checks and buffers to neoliberalisation (incomplete and partial) have been identified in Wales, they have also been identified within certain English regions and cities (e.g. where there have been navigations around the social logic of austerity for pre-established youth services). Professional discourse and youth work traditions - that incorporate political education and collective organising - have also contributed to forms of resistance and advocacy in both England and Wales, and to the political counter-logic of greater investment in pre-established youth services. For instance, individual and collective agency is discerned at the grassroots in both nations, including on-the-ground problematisations of the austerity logic by young people and youth workers, and there has been a refusal to accept the ideological framing of austerity as the only political decision available. While there has been the implementation and adaptation to cuts with 'austerial realism', there have also been those actors and bodies who resist and actively assert alternative proposals beyond austerity and neoliberalisation.

To conclude, this chapter has used the selected images and wider research data to discuss the policy discourse of service funding and envisioning for each case, and such policy discourse has been analysed as components within the node of service provision. The chapter has used a logics approach - and identified a set of logics

⁶⁹ Nevertheless, political tensions can also be discerned in Wales, such as those between workers and senior management (or unions and employers) when cutbacks and service reorganisations have occurred, as well as between the local authority and voluntary sectors within its partnership framework.

(summarised in Table 14) - to generate insight and facilitate comparative analysis of the two cases and the forms - and conditions - of neoliberalisation and resistance within them. Points of divergence and concurrence across the cases - and the policy contexts in which they are each situated - are identified and analysed, including the role of respective institutions, political cultures, and professional discourse for shaping and instituting the respective forms of service provision - and the logics at play - in each case.

5. Services Analysis Bricolage: Logics of Provision and Distribution

Introduction

This chapter continues with the investigation and comparative analysis of the two case studies, the NCS in England and the Youth Service in Wales. Using the bricolage approach, two new service-related images, their source texts and related interviewee discussion of these images and their associated themes are 'stitched together' as part of this chapter's inquiry. There is now a focus on further analysing service provision and distribution for each of these cases. Service provision and distribution are analysed to identify the internal logics within these nodes of the publicly-funded service chain.

Format, Structure and Argument

In this chapter, there are two images. Image 5 relates principally to the NCS in England, while image 6 relates principally to the Youth Service in Wales. These two images are used intentionally to facilitate commentary and comparative analysis of the two cases, and to visualise and further analysis of contrasting forms of service provision and distribution. *Part one* of this chapter discusses image 5 and service provision and distribution for the NCS in England, while *part two* of this chapter focuses upon image 6 and these nodes for the Youth Service in Wales. The two images are from 2019 and 2018 respectively, and thus they are from the latter end of this study's timeframe. The later timing of both these images facilitates further analysis of the development of the youth services sector in each

nation during this study's timeframe, while taking account of the 'roll out' and firm establishment of NCS in England, and the rejection of it in Wales.

In this chapter, this documentary and image-based research is again triangulated with semi-structured interviews. The two images were shared with interviewees to generate conversational data and greater depth of insight, beyond the documentary research alone. The interviewees are social actors with insider knowledge and first-hand experience of the cases and relevant themes under analysis (see Table 12 in chapter 3). Additionally, the selection and use of the images and interview data has been guided by an 'editorial policy' (see chapter 3).

In parts one and two of this chapter, logics within the nodes of service provision and distribution are identified and discussed alongside the research data. Initially, this chapter's identification and discussion of logics includes reference to:

- 'social logics' to discern the dominant social norms, rules and patterns for service provision and distribution within each case, and to identify notable variations where they occur;
- 'projected social logics' - as the envisioning to amend and further develop the social norms, rules and patterns for service provision and distribution, often with a relatively high degree of consensus for these visions within the policy and practice fields;
- 'political counter-logics' to discern deeper political contestations, antagonisms and dividing lines through counter-hegemonic resistances and alternative visions and practices; and,

- ‘fantasmatic logics’ as those ideas and practices acting to cloak the dominant social logics - and neoliberalisation - as fixed and unchallengeable.

Following on from parts one and two of this chapter, there is further exploration and analysis of:

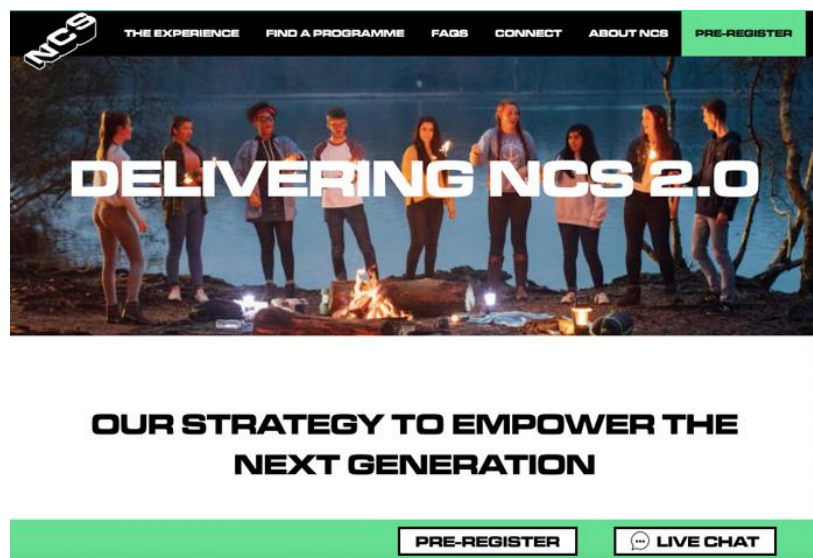
- the logics that are identified in this chapter;
- the characterisation and foregrounding of these respective logics as either social, political or fantasmatic logics; and,
- the role and contributions that the logics approach bring to understanding and comparing these two cases and the forms - and conditions - of neoliberalisation and resistances within them.

In summary, this chapter will advance the following two main arguments. *Firstly*, neoliberalisation processes have been especially evident in the ‘roll out’ and firm establishment of the NCS in England, whereby there has been a dominant *social logic of market competition for service providers*, alongside a *social logic of targeting this provision upon a narrow age range* coupled with a dominant *social logic of marketing and branding* to attract service users. *Secondly*, in contrast to England, Wales has sought to maintain a pre-existing service provision through a *social logic of partnership for the local authority and the voluntary sector*, accompanied by a *social logic of community-based engagement* with young people to build relationships and service access. While a *social logic for targeting of provision upon ‘at risk’ segments of the youth population* has been identified in Wales, so too has a widely held *projected social logic of universal, community-rooted and more open forms of provision*. The chapter will also highlight how a range of counter responses

and alternative projections - for service provision and distribution - are evident in both cases.

Part One: NCS Summer Camp Imagery

Image 5: Delivering NCS 2.0



(Source: NCS, 2019a)

The discussion in part one of this chapter is centred around image 5 (above). This is an image selected as a visualisation of the NCS approach to service provision and distribution. Image 5 was originally used as background imagery on a web-page containing a statement from the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for the NCS. The statement was about the (then) new NCS strategy for improving its service provision in England from 2020 onwards, with an emphasis upon updating its competitive commissioning-out model. This image and its source text are selected to illustrate and provide insight into the NCS contracting of providers, including at a more advanced stage of the service's development - i.e. once it had become formally recognised and endorsed with its own legislation and a Royal Charter (see NCS Act,

2017). Overall, it will be contended that this service has been characterised by a *social logic of market competition for the management and delivery of provision, involving private sector and non-state agencies as key actors*. The image also lends insight to service distribution too, including how the service has a *social logic of targeting a narrow age range* in order to access the service for a few weeks within a year, with a *social logic of marketing and branding* operating to attract users to that service.

NCS 2.0: Commissioning Strategy

From 2013-2020, Michael Lynas was - in his own words - the “founder and CEO” of the NCS Trust, the body that oversees the work of the NCS (Lynas, 2021). On the NCS website, he outlines an NCS delivery strategy that looks forward to the 2020s (see NCS, 2019a). His strategy statement is accompanied by the photograph in image 5. This is a summer camp scene of a group of young people standing by a campfire, holding sparklers in the setting of a lakeside at dusk. With this visual backdrop, Lynas (NCS, 2019a) announces a strategic vision for “DELIVERING NCS 2.0” that includes “a new model” with “more impact” and more “value for money” - to “buy as efficient and effective as we can” (such as reducing management layers through direct providers). While dressed in the rhetoric of empowerment and visionary inspiration for “THE NEXT GENERATION”, the NCS 2.0 strategy statement by Lynas can also be interpreted as a response to various - high profile - criticisms of lack of impact, poor ‘value for money’, high unit costs, and low participation rates (see National Audit Office [NAO], 2017; UK Parliament, 2017).

Alongside the relatively dry procedure of the NCS recommissioning of its delivery partners, the image is - arguably - intended to reflect, promote and idealise the summer camp experience that NCS delivers (potentially resonating with - or appealing to - young hopes of friendship and fellowship or relationships, as well as on-screen representations of teenage rites of passage experiences or adventure). Indeed, on image 5, an NCS staff member (i2) observed:

So, you can see in this image, I mean, I'm always interested in the actual images that are chosen as well with NCS ...I think the easiest thing and sometimes the most appealing thing to show visually are always those great shots of the great outdoors.

However, a note of caution was added to the dream and vision being promoted - overtly or subliminally - to young people, in case the 'promise' would never be fully realised:

We have sometimes had this kind of expectation problem through the brand that we've had. And then the young people going well, 'Okay, this created a promise to me of this, that then hasn't been fulfilled by this version of your programme.' So, there's that about the image as well.

Meanwhile a policy campaigner (i4) in England took a very damning view of the 'staged performance' of the image:

Well, I mean the picture says it all doesn't it... This is an image of young people in a line. Actually, they don't look like a particularly multicultural group, but maybe they are. They're in a line doing a performance, so they've been done to, they've been trained to do a performance. So, it's a great image of non-interaction in many ways, and young people performing within a service.

The quote touches upon matters of service delivery and methods of practice that will be discussed more in the following chapter. However, this specific comment also

taps into various debates (and critiques), not only about the NCS methods of working with young people, but also about the cohorts of young people who were matched with and accessing NCS. By the early 2020s, for instance, there has been mounting criticism and ever-growing uncertainty of this flagship youth programme of successive Conservative governments (see Cohen, 2021a). According to Cohen (2021a), “one former board member” of the NCS Trust has described “the programme as little more than *a holiday camp for mostly middle-class kids*” (as opposed to being a more powerful vehicle for involving more ‘marginalised’ young people who may, for instance, live in poverty and experience deprivation).

A local service manager (i1) for the NCS also reflected upon such matters, noting - from their experience - it was a minority of the young people (i.e. those with fewer support networks and lower motivation levels) who “actually benefitted massively from the whole experience.” Whereas the majority of young people

80-85% maybe 90% of the young people involved were young people whose parents were motivated for their children to be involved. They were young people that were motivated to progress in life anyway. So, you know, it was only a few that really, that really benefited... I'll stand by that.

This local manager's experience from a two-year period working with approximately 350 young people on their local NCS was that:

A lot of those young people came along and enjoyed the ride, but were doing fine anyway, and were likely to go on to university and were likely to go on to positive destinations without the NCS interventions.

It was the minority of young people accessing NCS, those with more complex and difficult life circumstances, who needed and benefited the most from the support of the programme and the staff.

With such observations in mind, the summer camp imagery might be viewed in a less-than-ideal light. While the confidentiality and anonymity of the young people in the actual image need to be respected and treated non-judgementally, arguably the substance of the ‘middle-class holiday camp’ type-critique could be evidenced in the (periodically) below average, or relatively low and ‘unambitious’, involvement of children on Free School Meals (FSM) (see Cohen, 2021a). Thus, bringing restraint - and added caution - to the NCS claim to be an agent of social mobility and a “ladder of opportunity” (Lynas, 2021).⁷⁰ However, while greater hedging is required for claims about the extent - and fluctuation - of its support for ‘disadvantaged’ or ‘under-represented’ groups, NCS involvement could still benefit different young people (including from various socio-economic backgrounds) in different ways (e.g. see young people’s case studies in NCS, 2020a, p. 10).

Commissioning Away from ‘State Monopoly’ and Local Authority Provision

The strategy statement - with its headline emphasis upon forming empowered and responsible citizens - bring echoes of the origins of NCS in the Big Society political project of David Cameron, while he was Prime Minister (2010-2016). The statement retains an imprint of the Big Society project of Cameron, notably the ‘social action’ as ‘volunteerism’ strand (see Watt, 2010). Upon launching NCS pilot schemes, back in

⁷⁰ Though the 2020-2021 Business Plan (NCS, 2020a) refers to a recent set of FSM participation rates as above the national average, i.e. 23% compared to 14% (p. 8).

2010, Cameron declared that, "It's going to teach them what it means to be socially responsible. Above all, it's going to inspire a generation of young people to appreciate what they can achieve and how they can be part of the 'big society'" (as reported by Mulholland, 2010). The Big Society project, however, was made up of multiple layers, and not just its take on 'social action' and 'volunteerism' alone.

Another aspect of the Big Society project - notably 'public services reform' and 'breaking state monopolies' - can also be discerned in Lynas' strategy statement that focuses on a re-boot to the commissioning approach of NCS. Ongoing traces of the Cameronian language - and associated practices - of liberal social conservatism appear linked to an ongoing neoliberalisation of services (e.g. see Byrne et al., 2014; Mycock & Tongue, 2011), notably with the commissioning and contracting-out to more and more 'local delivery partners'. Thus the CEO's statement highlights the dominant social logic of market competition for provision within the NCS programme, principally involving private and non-state partners and the bidding for market-based contracts.

On this matter a youth worker activist (i3) observed:

[T]he National Citizen Service has been a key means for the privatisation or marketisation of youth work... it's not the only thing that involves kind of commissioning out, but it - rather than central government funding local authorities to then decide what was best in their local area - it was a programme that was already designed, and then bodies were selected to run those very prescriptive services in regional areas, and then they again commissioned, paid, or contracted more local organisations, or they ran it themselves sometimes.

One of the early side effects of this approach, according to this interviewee, was that organisations with an established history of youth work with young people were largely marginalised from the provision of this service.

The first set of organisations that got most of that funding were not services with the history of youth work by and large... There wasn't a possibility for local authorities, or regional youth service units, for example, to bid for this, and then at some point there was some National Youth Agency involvement. But by then... the model had really become clear... there's money sort of siphoned off every turn.

From within the NCS, a staff member's (i2) observation on commissioning was that it has been in flux and "a changing picture" - with various strategies and phases involved with the contracting of service providers. Initially, with the very first NCS contracts (in early 2010s) there was variation across the country in the approach taken. Some partners, such as The Challenge, would undertake management and local delivery. At the same time there were other "managing partners who would then look after their own supply chain of smaller youth organisations, charities, all sorts of organisations" that would deliver locally.

On such matters, the youth worker activist (i3) did question the rationale, logic and motivations of the involvement of certain "forerunner" organisations (e.g. The Young Adult Trust with its close ties to the Conservative Party, and The Challenge with its links with "investment bankers") as well as various private sector bodies in running this service.⁷¹ There were, for instance, many "organisations that got a lot of that money were... not youth work organisations." This included "inexperienced

⁷¹ The Challenge, for example, has its origins in the Shaftsbury Partnership, see <https://www.spx.ventures/ventures/>

organisations that had never run a residential for young people before” getting these contracts. This interviewee added:

People are making money out of this. It's profitable, not directly... they've got leaders who are getting very well paid, and they've got the workers on the ground who are on zero-hour contracts or very poor hourly rates or you know very poor temporary contracts over the summer.

On this point a local service manager with NCS (i1), commented upon one of the largest private sector bodies overseeing the regional and local provision during the 2010s:

Serco was the organisation that was commissioned directly from the Government - the Cabinet office paid Serco to undertake the procurement of the five or six different organisations... And I, you know, still to this day don't know what Serco's aims were apart from financial gain in the whole thing.

This sense of incredulity from the local manager, hints at how the neoliberal spreading of market ideas and principles (such as 'market efficiency') into more and more spheres of life can have an element of absurdity and irrationality to it. This is further illustrated by the sense of disconnection - and incongruity - between Serco and on-the-ground practice:

Serco came to visit twice out of the whole time [a two-year period]...

Also the guy that came from Serco who, you know, was a fantastic guy to meet, but he was actually a governor of a prison. And I'm not suggesting doesn't understand young people, but he certainly didn't understand our work. Whilst you know he was able to give a lovely speech for half an hour about his own life experience, it just didn't seem relevant.

However, an explanation from another NCS staff member (i2) would be that the “contract managers [from companies such as Serco, Ingeus or Reed in

Partnership]... who are the main point of contact with our delivery partners... are great people” - but although they are not from a youth work or young people background - they are “quite often kind of retailing background, so their skill was more in contract management.”

Meanwhile the local service manager for NCS further explained the multiple layers of commissioning and service provision that was experienced (that the later contracting strategies of NCS would seek to reduce and streamline):

So we understood that there was a budget for us of around £900 or maybe £1000 for each young person on the programme, and that's what we received. But obviously Serco received more than that, and then the NYA received obviously some commission for their management and so on...

So we too [the local delivery partners] had to take off some funds [for overheads]. So by the time the money got down to the young people, a lot of people had sort of scraped off some on-costs or surplus, if you like. So that was a downside.

Image 5 is from an updated and later phase of the NCS contracting strategy. As elaborated upon in the 2019-2020 Annual Report (NCS, 2021a), the strategy then was about “NCS 2.0 recommissioning” of “suppliers” as “a major step forward in developing the programme for the next decade” (p. 5). Not only would there be more local delivery partners, but there would be a reconfiguration of regional management structures. This included the NCS Trust taking on the “direct management of three out of the nine regions - North East, South West and London... The intention was to remove a layer of management cost and establish and share best practice by working directly with local suppliers” (p. 5).

One NCS staff member (i2) observed - retrospectively - that this NCS 2.0 strategy was never fully realised as it was “so heavily disrupted by COVID.” The staff member explained that an underpinning motivation was to

flow more of the funds directly to those kind of smaller organisations, but also seek efficiencies in how you could do that kind of coordination layer and management layer. I think those intentions were successful in some small ways.

While more direct links were made by NCS Trust with smaller organisations, the NCS 2.0 strategy “didn't quite fulfil that promise of directly reaching the small local youth organisations in the way that were intended, which is why I think the new strategy [post-2.0] takes a much bigger leap forward towards that.” So in turn, as the very final part of the above sentence suggests, an even newer strategy has been developed - since NCS 2.0 - with “a tailored combination of commercial [commissioning] and grant funding approaches” for service provision for post-2022 (NCS, 2022, p. 23). While there have been differing phases to the NCS contracting strategy - and further adjustments and adaptations have been anticipated in future years - the dominant social logics for service provision have, nevertheless, included (a) constructing a competitive market of providers, and (b) extending market-based contracts for delivery and management partnerships.

The CEO of NCS throughout most of the 2010s was Michael Lynas, he was acutely involved with the Big Society political project - indeed, his role prior to working with the NCS Trust was, from 2010-2013, “Senior Policy Advisor to the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister” (Lynas, 2021). In turn, Cameron continued his involvement with NCS, and he became the Chair of NCS Patrons (see <https://wearencs.com/our-patrons>). In 2010, while Prime Minister, Cameron

responded to early critiques that the Big Society was a smokescreen for cuts declaring: "It is not a cover for anything. I was talking about the 'big society' and encouraging volunteering, encouraging social enterprises and voluntary groups to do more to make our society stronger" (as reported by Watt, 2010).

Despite such defences put forward, the rise of NCS has frequently been viewed as coming at the expense of other youth services in England, notably local authority provision (see Local Government Association [LGA], 2020; Cohen, 2021b). For instance, Cohen (2021b) reports NCS as "taking up 90 per cent of youth budget" in England (and 95% according to the LGA in 2020), as well as over "£1.3bn of government funding in 10 years", while elsewhere across the sector there is a "70 per cent drop in youth funding." Such points were echoed by the youth worker activist (i3), this was while the interviewee commented upon the NCS logic and practice of having developed a competitive market of service provision. For the NCS, for politicians and policymakers:

the market is the assumed norm, so: 'That's how we're going to do it. We've got this product. That's a way we can then kind of ask for bidders, and we can contract it down to these regional organisations and then down again to these local organisations.'

... And yes, it's assumed the market, the market will do best. So, 'Let's give a couple of year contracts, or a year contract' - the contracts are always sort of last minute, always changing around, but a lot of messing about.

Such policy assumptions that 'the market will do best', also hints towards the trust being placed within an ideal - and the fantasmatic logic - of market efficiency.

Thus, it was this marketised approach to NCS provision in England that:

militated... against long term, locally embedded youth organisations... it was 95% of the English funding for youth services for quite a lot of this period going into NCS... and it was going through these [competitive market] processes.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the above local government stance - and the view of the youth worker activist - on the NCS differs to Lynas' account of his own role in the NCS and its broader social impacts. Lynas' personal narrative is of "founding National Citizen Service Trust, building a new national institution enshrined in legislation and by Royal Charter that has created billions of pounds of social value by supporting 600,000 young people - building bridges across social divides and ladders to opportunity" (Lynas, 2021). This narrative from Lynas excludes a consideration of the wider picture of young people's services. It omits the political privileging of NCS over other services - not only in terms of the distribution of funding but of legislative underpinnings too. Unlike NCS during the 2010s, other youth services in England were experiencing disproportionate cuts and lacked a sufficient national framework of support (see YMCA, 2020a; 2022). Though not that a former-CEO's online curriculum vitae would be likely to include the caveats and disclaimers that agencies such as the LGA (2020) have sought to highlight and contest. As a result, there are significantly contrasting accounts of the NCS impact during this period of history - especially during the 2010s - by many NCS 'insiders' (such as its patrons, founders, key voluntary sector and private sector partners) and the NCS 'outsiders' (such as those local authority bodies, voluntary sector organisations, youth service campaign groups as well local and national politicians that have been highly critical of NCS monopolisation of the UK Government's budget for youth services in England).

Indeed, while the rules, norms and patterns of NCS service provision through market competition and marketised contracts are characterised and foregrounded as a dominant social logic, there are political dimensions to NCS service provision too. For instance, these can be discerned through the political frontiers - and logics of equivalence - that are outlined above. Furthermore, this chapter also characterises the critique and opposition to NCS as 'political counter-logics' (with counter-hegemonic positions identifiable, e.g. for reviving youth service provision through local authority and voluntary sector partnerships in England, and for more universal, community-rooted and open forms of service provision).

Service Distribution and Target Markets

Upon revisiting image 5, the picture of one of NCS summer camps - putting to one side the more general merits of out-of-school term youth provision and residentials - can also become emblematic of the cuts that have been occurring elsewhere. The representation of this relatively 'fleeting' summer-time provision contrasts to those services providing all year-round support (to a wider age range of young people) who have been 'missing out'.⁷² Not only has the political privileging of NCS been critiqued as coming at the expense of England's pre-established youth services, but - during this period - there were repeated calls for funding to be redirected back to youth services of local authorities and to the wider voluntary youth sector (see LGA, 2020; Cohen, 2021b).

⁷² For instance, accounts of young people and youth services 'missing out' or 'overlooked' are provided by NYA (2021) for those in England's rural areas, and Berry (2021) for Londoners.

On the matter of where, when, how and which young people can access NCS - compared to other youth services - there have also been some shifts in this area. Throughout the 2010s, the service distribution by NCS has differed when compared to more traditional and pre-established youth services in both England and Wales. The latter have typically offered all-year-round provision for 13-19 in England and 11-25 year olds in Wales. This contrasts with the NCS main offer of short programmes for those of school leaving age. Recently, there have been ongoing changes (see NCS, 2022) to the NCS 'offer', especially for beyond 2022, with a broadening of activities to complement its core summer and autumn programmes (condensed to 2-weeks from the original 6-weeks vision). Nevertheless, the dominant social logic for the distribution of the service by NCS is to target a relatively narrow age range (i.e. school leaving age), as set out in both the 2007 'Green Paper' (see Conservative Party, 2007) and the 2017 legislation (see NCS Act 2017). In terms of young people and their access to this service, there has also been a dominant social logic for making significant use of marketing and branding activities - during the timeframe of this study - to match young people with the programme and encourage take-up of the NCS offer.

When further analysing image 5, the NCS website header is discernible above the summer camp photograph. As reported by Whitehead (2019), this website itself has been part of a rebrand for NCS costing £1m in the first year rising up to £10m. This rebrand involved an advertising agency Karmarama (NCS, 2019b), that is part of the Accenture corporation (see Accenture, 2023).⁷³ Thus the re-branded website itself

⁷³ Arguably the rebranded website itself, as well as the photograph of a fleeting activity, can also be emblematic of those services 'missing out'. The channelling of youth sector funding to such an advertising company rather than directly to services for young people has intensified the critique of the "totally disproportionate" funding of NCS coming at the expense of other initiatives (Cohen,

also sheds light on how users may engage and find out about the service and how it is distributed, notably through its marketing and branding to young people. Similarly, Cohen (2021a) reports a former employee explaining how - during the pandemic - NCS relied heavily on marketing to match users with its online resources by spending “a fortune on Facebook adverts to drive people to the site, so it was paid marketing that drove the clicks.”⁷⁴

On the webpage where image 5 is sourced, there are more computing matters to consider. In particular, the headline text overlaying the summer camp photograph reads “DELIVERING NCS 2.0”, with - underneath - the sub-heading of “OUR STRATEGY TO EMPOWER THE NEXT GENERATION”. The overall imagery and language of the strategy statement is, however, messaging about more than just a shift to the NCS commissioning procedures. For example, this term “NCS 2.0” - intentionally and subliminally - echoes the promises (especially from computing and the digital world) of greater interactivity and collaboration as well as the making of a superior version of itself. While the “2.0” is now commonly used to refer to an updated and improved version of an item (see Meriam-Webster, 2023), its usage itself is closely tied to the idea of “Web 2.0” since the emergence of this term in the late 1990s and early 2000s (see DiNucci, 1999; O’Reilly, 2005). In particular, the idea of Web 2.0 is frequently associated with participatory web developments, the rise of user-generated content and the online pooling of knowledge. Image 5’s term

2021b). As reported by Cohen (2021b), community and voluntary sector practitioners (at financially struggling projects that seek to prevent youth violence and knife crime) are sickened by the “waste (of) £10m on a website”, and they say the “scale of funds wasted on NCS is utterly shocking.”

⁷⁴ Further details of the NCS marketing practices came from the Committee of Public Accounts (House of Commons, 2017a): “We questioned the Trust on how much it spends on marketing NCS. The Trust spent £2.7 million on television advertising in 2016. The Trust told us that to get someone to sign up to NCS it spends just over £100 per person covering sales, marketing, public relations and its telephone contact centre.”

“NCS 2.0” thus resonates and calls back to such promises of empowerment and version updates to make the user’s experience better for the future.

This computing metaphor, however, is worth unpicking a little more. As when interviewed about the term “Web 2.0”, the inventor of the world wide web - Tim Berners-Lee - frowned upon its increased usage as “jargon” (as transcribed and reported in Zdnet, 2006). His commentary, in an interview on this matter, continued, “If Web 2.0 for you is... people to people (*connecting, interacting and collaborating*). But that was what the Web was supposed to be all along” (from transcript extract in Zdnet, 2006). For Berners-Lee, Web 2.0 is just ‘the web full stop’, as such the so-called Web 1.0 held all the promises that Web 2.0 is said to hold. In this light, the language of “NCS 2.0” - and its intentional and subliminal messaging - could be similarly portrayed as ‘jargon’. On one level, it could be said that this ‘jargon’ is the repackaging of a ‘version’ of NCS commissioning that already existed. On another level, it could be said that the NCS 2.0’s overarching vision of being a service - that is participatory and empowering - was held by ALL those pre-established youth services that that came before; and this NCS 2.0 vision is nothing new, but an appropriation and repackaging of the core participatory principles of youth work and the youth services in England that the NCS’s rapid growth has been at the expense of. As pointed out by the NCS staff member (i2), however, the ‘roll out’ of this recalibrated strategy was impacted by the pandemic.

While pitched with terminology of the digital age, the NCS 2.0 delivery strategy statement is signed off as follows:

Michael Lynas

CEO, NCS Trust

Underneath the name of the former policy advisor for 10 Downing Street, the sign-off includes details of the role (of “CEO”) and the institution (“NCS Trust”). Firstly, the acronym ‘CEO’ is encountered. The title of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) - and pay culture - has become increasingly widespread in the voluntary and local authority sectors of the UK, thus expanding the reach of the language and management structures of corporate business (see Verkaik, 2009). In the NCS Trust, for instance, the CEO’s pay - and that of other senior staff too - have come under close political scrutiny; though its remuneration packages have been justified by the NCS Trust as being at the “market rate” (as reported by Cooney, 2018). In this specific instance, market discourse is expanding and deepening within England’s youth services sector producing various responses that include scrutiny, opposition, compliance and consent.

Arguably, this marketisation can also be witnessed in the professional backgrounds of those individuals taking up this position of CEO for the NCS Trust. Prior to taking up that role, Lynas - who describes himself as an “executive with passion for purpose” - had worked for a management consultancy firm as well as the policy unit of a Conservative Prime Minister (Lynas, 2021). Lynas’ successor, Mark Gifford, arrived with a background in supermarkets (NCS, 2020b). Thus, those individuals taking up these roles bring more and more of the ideas, values and practices of the market to become further embedded within the decision-making structures and operations of the youth services sector England (as was also the case with NCS contract managers from retail backgrounds). These key actors - who have been

shaped by market discourse - are shaping the service provision and distribution of NCS in England.

The second component of the strategy statement's sign-off is the name of the institution, NCS Trust. Initially the NCS Trust was a community interest company that then became incorporated with Royal Charter in 2017 to bestow official 'prestige'. As clarified in the Royal Charter documentation for the NCS Trust: "The word 'trust' is used in the name of the NCS Trust in a colloquial sense, to suggest a body which discharges a public trust in the exercise of a service to the public" (NCS Royal Charter 2017). However, an effect of ongoing political scrutiny of NCS is that 'public trust' in the body - and its management and operations - can periodically become destabilised. Strikingly this can be read in the appendices of the 2019-20 Annual Report (NCS, 2021a). There the auditor general's comments included that - due to an ongoing government review of youth services and the NCS (and in light of close political scrutiny of NCS) - "a material uncertainty exists that may cast significant doubt on the National Citizen Service Trust's ability to continue as a going concern" (NCS, 2021a, p. 41).

In addition to the, aforementioned, criticisms of disproportionate funding for the NCS at the expense of the wider youth services sector (that would typically offer year-round community-based provision for a wider age range of young people), there were other significant public controversies surrounding trust in NCS. These controversies included - but are not limited to - the following. *Firstly*, despite the market-led and commercial approach to developing efficiency of NCS provision, there were various 'value for money' concerns from official bodies. These included

political scrutiny and critical questioning of the high cost per place, unfilled spaces, flaws with payment-by-results, non-transparent executive pay, the lack of financial accountability, and the need for evidence on longer term impact (see NAO, 2017; House of Commons, 2017a; Cohen, 2021a). *Secondly*, there was a high-profile legal dispute with one of the historic vanguard partners of NCS in England. The Challenge, claimed defamation and mismanagement against NCS Trust, eventually ending with an out-of-court settlement (without acceptance of liability by NCS), and The Challenge collapsed (Hayes, 2020). *Thirdly*, there was DCMS censure over the intended exit package for Lynas upon his departure from his CEO role (Puffett, 2020).

Following DCMS reviews, by 2022 the allocation for NCS through the English youth budget had been reduced (see DCMS, 2021; 2022; Cohen, 2022). The NCS still retained a significant proportion of the youth budget with £171m over 3 years (DCMS, 2022), though it had previously been committed £1.26bn from 2016-2020 (NAO, 2017). As well as the backdrop of the NCS coming under close scrutiny, the stated rationale for the redirection of the budgets included the need to fund “regular clubs and activities” and local “youth facilities in the areas most in need” (DCMS, 2022). As such, in England there are official statements emphasising a shift back towards resourcing provision for a wider age range of young people with year-round provision, and a commitment to: “‘Levelling up’ and Expanding Access to youth provision” (DCMS, 2022). While this shift had not fully materialised on the ground during the timeframe of this study, it can be characterised as a projected social logic within mainstream English youth policy (i.e. with the envisioning for year-round service provision for a wider age range in a way that contrasts to the NCS

programme's initial envisaging, development and expansion). While NCS is constrained by the legislation (see NCS Act 2017) from offering its service to an even wider age range of young people, it was adapting its "suite of services for 2023, and beyond" (NCS, 2022, p. 4). As well as its online and residential initiatives, this would include more "regular activities" that were "year-round" (p. 20).

Part Two: Imagery of Local 'Hoodies'

Image 6: On the Streets



(Source: Jervis, 2018)

The discussion in part two of this chapter is centred around image 6. This is an image selected as an embodiment and visualisation of the Youth Service in Wales approach to service provision and distribution. Image 6 was originally used as imagery within a review (Jervis, 2018) of the policy framework for the Youth Service in Wales. In that review there is an emphasis upon supporting the 'mosaic' of existing service providers, from both the local authority and voluntary sectors. This image and its source text are selected to illustrate and provide insight into the contrasting approach to service provision and distribution in Wales, compared to the NCS approach in England. The image also lends insight to service distribution including,

for example, how young people might be matched to provision through street-based work in local neighbourhoods. Overall, it will be contended - in part two of this chapter - that provision of the Youth Service in Wales has been characterised by a *dominant social logic of maintaining a partnership of local authorities and the voluntary sector*, and its distribution is characterised by a *social logic of community-based engagement* to involve young people aged 11-25 within, typically, year-round provision that is often county-based. Thus, it contrasts significantly to the dominant logics of service provision and distribution for the NCS in England during the timeframe of this study. During this period, there has also been a *social logic of more targeting of provision upon 'at risk' segments of the youth population* in Wales. In parallel, there has also been a *projected social logic of more universal, community-rooted and open forms of provision* and this has been increasingly advocated within governmental and strategic as well as practitioner bodies.

Youth Service Policy Review in Wales

Image 6 is from a ministerially commissioned review (Jervis, 2018) of youth support services in Wales. The image is of three young people on a red-bricked street. They appear to be white (possibly 'working class') males, all wearing hooded tops, and all with their hoods up. Their facial expressions are blank. Upon first appearance, the image has the composition and feel of a staged photograph, though one edited and adapted with a watercolour treatment. By way of contrast to the lakeside image 5, it could be assumed that the young people are in their own home environment (i.e. their own local neighbourhood rather than staying away on a residential). In this sense the image echoes detached and outreach forms of street-based youth work that occurs "where young people 'are at' both geographically and developmentally"

(CWWYS, 2014, p. 5). Whether young people are being encountered on the street, or in a local centre or through another local setting or institution for a youth work initiative, such imagery provides insight into a social logic for community-based engagement with young people in Wales. While such forms of engagement are facing challenges - and they might be diminished, undervalued or repositioned alongside more explicit targeting of 'at risk' populations, especially during periods of cutbacks and reorganisations - they have been, and are, common norms and customs for youth service distribution, youth work practice, and for service policy too in Wales.

On image 6 a grassroots youth worker (i7) from Wales commented:

I suppose that image makes you think just literally about that, contacting young people on the streets and stuff like that which can be, can be difficult - good results in the end.

The image could thus represent a small group of young people looking across to be met by a local youth worker (and/or a local photographer or community artist) who acknowledges them in their own territory. Furthermore, to an extent, the image also plays on stereotyped depictions of the popular folk devil of the young 'hoodie' wearer as a potential young offender or 'thug' on the street. That, of course, would be an unhelpful generalisation as former-PM David Cameron himself once pointed out: the 'hoodie' could actually help a young person to "keep your head down, blend in, don't stand out" (as reported by BBC, 2011). The 'hoodie' could thus symbolise a form of social insecurity and internal vulnerability of these young people (or even just a shared fashion sense), not simply youth aggression and youth crime as the stereotype goes.

Going beyond associations with the purported ‘hug-a-hoodie’ phrase, a key legacy of David Cameron to support young people - who may or may not be wearing hooded tops - has been the rise of the NCS in England. Ultimately, as documented already, this has been at the expense of pre-established youth services including detached youth work provision on the streets - with changing access to, and distribution of, services away from year-round community-based provision. In Wales, however, an emphasis upon community provision and localised access to services has been maintained, including through detached and outreach youth work (though such practice is not always understood or valued in Wales, as was highlighted in chapter 4 by the grassroots worker’s account of a senior management perspective in one local authority).

The devolved government of Wales has taken an alternative approach to supporting the youth services sector when compared to England. This has included the publication of successive national strategies (see Welsh Assembly Government, 2007; Welsh Government, 2014; 2019a) despite the austerity experienced by youth services and wider public funding in Wales (and UK). On this matter, a policy campaigner from England (i4) observed that:

[It] always seemed to me that the direction of travel being taken in Wales was much more favourable [than in England]... on paper [Wales had] very, very good pro-youth work, pro-youth service statements. And statutory commitments.

However, a caveat was added about what “percentage of education spending in Wales” went to youth services, as it was “always one of the lowest in the UK” and it was uncertain if they had been able to “bump that up”. In Wales, this different approach to England’s is demonstrated in the series of strategy documents being

published since the late 2000s. Additionally, whereas Wales' local authority spending per head on youth services was, historically, much lower than in England, this situation reversed during the 2010s - with the shrinking of per head spending in Wales not occurring at the same rate or extent as in England, though with big spending cuts in both nations (see YMCA, 2022).

Youth Service Strategy and Partnerships

The first of these Welsh strategy documents (Welsh Assembly Government, 2007) was published in the same year that the so-called NCS 'Green Paper' (Conservatives, 2007) came out with its initial UK-wide vision. As demonstrated in part one of this chapter, the service in England has secured its providers through commercial rounds of commissioning-out (as illustrated in the NCS 2.0 strategy statement that is accompanied by image 5). In England there had also been a marginalisation of many historic and experienced youth work providers, including local authority youth services. In Wales, however, the Welsh Assembly Government (2007) set out a "vision for a world class Youth Service" (p. 3) with a "Youth Service Strategy for Wales [that] is built on maximising the relationship between the maintained [[local authority] and voluntary sectors" (p. 12). In Wales, such documents provide insight into a dominant social logic of service provision through a partnership of local authorities with the voluntary sector. A "lead" role is also expected of local authorities in reviewing and responding to needs with the voluntary sector, while the strategy also sought to utilise the existing expertise and experience of local, regional and national bodies and programmes (p. 12). In Wales this central role for local authorities (as well as for youth work practice and for existing youth services) contrasts significantly to the English approach. Though the Welsh approach is the

one most in-keeping with the direction that youth service policy in England and Wales had taken prior to significant points of departure (such as Connexions and NCS in England) during the post-devolution era. This separate Welsh path for youth work and youth services is reviewed in a policy text (Jervis, 2018), which is where image 6 of the hoodie-wearing young people is to be found.

Notably, the lead author for this specific Welsh policy review is an individual (Margaret Jervis) with “nearly 40 years” of running grassroots community initiatives for children, young people and their families (Jervis, 2018, p. 7). Jervis’ work has been rooted in south Wales with the Valleys Kids project, and she has been awarded for her outstanding contribution to youth work (Welsh Government, 2019b). As Jervis’ (2018) text clarifies, the review also draws upon wider research with “young people, youth work practitioners, training institutes and other relevant people” (p. 7). Her specialist experience of working with young people contrasts markedly to the market-based backgrounds of the NCS Trust’s CEOs, including that of Lynas who authored the NCS 2.0 strategy statement. When compared to the NCS strategy statement, Jervis’ text is more grounded in grassroots experiences and it is rooted in the professional discourse of youth work and youth services.

While Jervis’ (2018) review of policy is extremely knowledgeable of the field of youth services in Wales, this does not mean that there is widespread support or understanding of youth work at a strategic management level across relevant bodies in Wales. As Rose (2017) comments, based on his direct experience in this field of youth policy (i.e. in the WYA and the subsequent youth work branch of the Welsh Government), there was a “lack of qualification, experience and relevant expertise”

by those with “strategic responsibility” for youth services within local authorities, as well as by “many of the civil servants who provide advice to the Minister” (p. 3). Arguably, the lack of civil servant expertise could explain why certain aspects of the Welsh strategy (such as the nature of the targets and measurement systems entailed within) have been critiqued (see Smith, 2007). As further illustration of this, Williamson (2010) points to the numbers of “dedicated youth work staff” being “steadily reduced” within the Welsh Assembly Government’s youth work strategy unit, and he described the post-WYA period as “rudderless” years (p. 90). Arguably, there remains a lack of local - and national - strategic support for youth services in Wales, and this could go some way to explaining why Welsh Government funding for youth services too frequently gets re-channelled to other services at a local level, especially if no ringfencing rules apply (see Jervis, 2018, p. 21).

At a local level, from within a local authority service in Wales, the grassroots youth worker (i7) had also recalled such difficulties (when placed in a new directorate) with the senior management approach taken towards youth work during the 2010s. For instance, there was a disregard for detached provision, when the senior management “people were saying to us ‘we just don't get what you're doing’ when we were trying to explain what we were doing.” There was also an appetite for cost-cutting and a targeted approach at the expense of more open youth work provision, as the strategic leadership figures did “not believe in youth work in its traditional sense - if you like - and its core aims and values. It [i.e. that management approach with austerity] was a bad mix really.” This instance illustrates how, in this local context, there was a social logic for service distribution to be increasingly targeting ‘at risk’ young people with targeted services. Detached street-based youth work, for

example, was one aspect of work that was no-longer supported and no-longer valued by sceptical senior managers in this locality, even though the workers might cite it as an area where good practice can occur - this was practice based upon a longer-term, and unpredictable, process of relationship building within local neighbourhoods.

While working for that local authority (in neighbourhoods categorised as amongst the 'most deprived' in the country) at an earlier time when there was a belief and support from senior management for detached youth work, the grassroots youth worker recalled an example of a positive and constructive intervention through street-based provision. This example, however, had required groundwork of slowly building relationships with young people through community-based engagement processes. There was one specific group of young people who were "messing around in the street... they were vandalising some local facilities." Through having built an initial relationship with the group - "just from talking with them on the street, as well as doing a lot of activities and personal development activities and taking them out of their environment" (though it took time, perseverance and patience to develop that group's trust) - the youth workers were then able to set up a mediation between the young people and the local organisation that had been damaged.

They were wrecking like a dance club so from our relationship with them, rather than getting them criminalised we took them to see this woman - and she said her piece and they said theirs, and they ended up helping to paint the centre, and they ended up being able to use it for their own purposes then as well.

However, that example did not end there. The youth work support went beyond just that, this was:

because of the relationship we built up with them on the street. There was one [young person] ... who come to us to access mental health support. There was one who's mum we got to know who we got to help over a housing issue. And then there was another young man who got involved in crime, probably what you call county lines crime these days... and because of our relationship we were able to help him get out of that. So just from that one bit of work on the streets [there were these extra longer term interventions]... But it took [time]... You have to lay this work first sometimes with relationship building to do that.

A voluntary sector youth charity manager (i6) in Wales echoed concerns if - or when - there might be tensions with a local authority's strategic approach. This manager, while not wanting to generalise to other counties, explained a local experience which meant "we haven't seen any of the youth work funding from Welsh Government sadly." This was when certain funds from the Welsh Government's Youth Engagement Branch were to be administered by each local authority for local youth work provision with the voluntary sector.

But in [this county] we haven't seen a penny of that... but I think that is literally because... [it is] the local authority youth services that will determine how that money [is] spent and who they work with. And if you haven't got a particularly positive relationship with your local youth service, then that rules you out of the picture really.

Another voluntary sector youth officer (i8) felt that "when you have a smaller pot of funding available, then there's more competition for that funding." This person further commented upon the broader picture:

I would definitely say that there feels that power imbalance between the sectors. I wonder if the voluntary sector feel the local authority get funding and the voluntary youth work sector have to really fight for funding, and I think the statutory sector can sometimes be quite envious at the voluntary sector, because there's more creativity in the voluntary sector. So there's tensions from both sides for good reasons I think.

This individual had experiences of working in both the statutory and the voluntary sector, and so they highlighted the difficulties when working in local authorities often with “prescribed targets” and “significant funding cuts”. This person added that, while there are senior managers responsible for youth work within local authorities, often “it’s a tag-on to lots of other parts of their job”, and when it comes to partnership, “I think some [local authorities] are still better than others at doing that.” The person also drew attention to the national youth work grant for the voluntary sector:

but it really is a very small pot of funds, about £1 million - which sounds a lot, but it’s not [a lot] for 22 local authorities and all the voluntary youth work sectors out there. And you have to be a national organisation to go for that pot of funding. So what does that mean if you’re a small voluntary organisation in a community? You can’t go for it. So there’s issues there in terms of how the money is given to the voluntary sector.

The broader matter of underfunding - for local authority and voluntary provision - is further addressed in the Jervis review, the source text for image 6.

Funding Matters

Jervis’ (2019) review draws attention to a “postcode lottery” of youth services in Wales, and the history of underfunding:

Little of the ‘notional amount’ for youth work in the Revenue Support Grant provided to Local Authorities is actually spent on providing this type of service. In some areas, some of the grant is spent on youth work and youth support services but the overall result is the unmanaged and non-mandated decline in community-based, open access youth work provision throughout Wales. (p. 21)

Notwithstanding the various strategies stating support for youth services in Wales, youth services in Wales have experienced significant cuts during the austerity

programmes of the 2010s - as has been the case in England (see YMCA, 2020a; 2022). While the scale of youth service cuts have not been at the same level as in England, the starting point of the youth service funding level was much lower in Wales - furthermore, as Jervis (2018) highlights, the notionally allocated funding does not always reach the local youth services.

If image 6 is revisited, this situation of underfunding means young people - including those hanging out on a street - have fewer and fewer youth centres and youth projects to engage with and are less likely to encounter outreach or detached youth workers. As the Federation of Detached Youth Work (FDYW) (2016) have identified, when street work occurs it is often with young people who are most marginalised - so such underfunding risks further marginalising some of the most marginalised young people. Wales' separate approach to service provision and distribution in England is thus no panacea for those marginalised young people who are likely to be on the street, just as it is not a panacea for marginalised youth services (whether local authority or voluntary sector). Furthermore, as the grassroots youth worker (i7) has stated - when the cuts agenda is combined with senior management actors who might be sceptical of youth work methods, or even opposed to more open-ended youth work approaches - then this further constrains and limits the service provision:

I'm not saying that the [local authority] youth service don't do good work [in this particular county] because I think they still do, and there's good youth workers working there, but the direction of it's changed, and there's a lot missing from it because of what the decisions got made then [in early 2010s], in my opinion. The decisions that got made then have still carried through to today. And it has a direct impact... there's just not that core service in the community

at all... which is important. 'Target this high risk young person and this' which is needed but not at the expense of the other stuff.

On the specific matter of the systematic underfunding, Jervis' (2018) recommendation is of "ringfencing" for youth service funding (p. 21). Complementing this point is a call for "sufficiency assessments undertaken by Local Authorities" to detail local provision (p.18). As well as Jervis' (2018) review, other recent reviews and evaluations of the youth service in Wales have included those by: Arad Research (2015), Rogers (2016), Trinity Saint David (2016), Mark Brierley Consulting (2017), Glyndwr University (2018), Wavehill Consulting (2021), and Interim Youth Work Board (IYWB) (2021).⁷⁵ A recurring theme has been a need to improve the resourcing and financial stability for youth service provision in Wales, to review resourcing and allocations for local voluntary sector organisations, and to reverse the neglect of open-access and open youth work provision. Thus, such publications provide insight into various projected social logics in Wales, including for sufficiency standards, for sufficiency for youth provision, for a strengthened partnership with the voluntary sector, and for more open youth work.

To address the various limitations of Welsh youth policy, Jervis (2018) makes more recommendations to further strengthen the strategic framework for youth work and youth services in Wales. These include recommendations for a longer-term strategy (10-20 years rather than 4-5 years), and the setting up of a national body for youth

⁷⁵ These matters of consultancy - and evaluation of provision - will be returned to in the following chapter, including comparison of similarities and differences for the Welsh and English experiences.

work in Wales (a replacement for the WYA that was dismantled in 2006 with the ‘bonfire of the quangos’). Such recommendations are largely reflected in a later - and more detailed - report (IYWB, 2021) to the Minister on such matters. This later report also elaborates upon strengthening the legislative basis for youth work services for young people aged 11-25 in Wales, and - amongst other recommendations - it calls for developing four regional educational consortia of local authority and voluntary sector services.

As highlighted earlier, when compared to youth policy in England, a campaigner (i4) described the Welsh approach - including the successive strategies on the youth service and youth work - as good “on paper”. For instance, these texts aspire to a ‘world class’ service and they are framed in the rights-based discourse of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).⁷⁶ The wider approach in Wales - with successive Welsh Labour-led governments - has also been described not only as the “clear red water” metaphor (Morgan, 2002) but also as “civic, municipal socialism” (Drakeford, 2019, as cited by Evans et al., 2021). However, a question that arises with the Welsh Government - in general - concerns whether it has the “political will to take the necessary steps... to turn their rhetoric into reality” (Evans et al., 2021, p. 12). Unless they do, asserts Evans et al. (2021), then the “radical rhetoric at the macro level - set out in strategy documents, speeches, and social media, and recirculated by an attenuated news media - is useless” (p. 12). On this matter, a sceptic of the Welsh approach to youth policy may refer to Rose’s (2008) example when, “after years of chronic underfunding”, a new budget of over

⁷⁶ See United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) (2019) for a quick summary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Further details are also here: <https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/>

£120m (rather than just £20m) was required in the early 2000s for employing “300 additional qualified workers, and refurbishing the buildings” (p. 56). This ambition, however, has never materialised over the course of the successive youth work strategies, and underfunding has continued and deteriorated with austerity. ‘Action’ (notably on the long-running funding problem) has been deferred through a series of repeated reviews and reports that frequently highlight the same funding problems, including Jervis’ (2018) review.

As well as questions of political will and political priorities, the example of the Youth Service in Wales has highlighted how devolution has enabled a separate path to youth policy in England. However, there are limits to the (partial) political will for supporting the Youth Service in Wales, with competing agendas and interests for investment locally and nationally, and in turn this has been further constrained by the Welsh Government’s own funding settlements set within the UK’s wider politics of austerity. On such matters Williams (2021) also argues that:

in practice policy-making in Wales has never been about staking out a truly different path for Wales (for all the talk of clear red water) but rather adding a Welsh veneer to Westminster policy-making. This (is a) technocratic approach, materially rooted in a comparative lack of economic, financial and legal levers. (p. 78).

Rather than ‘clear red water’, some describe it as ‘murky brown water’ (Evans et al., 2021). According to such lines of thinking, the levers and parameters of devolved Welsh politics - and the expression of a so-called distinct Welsh political identity - have been constrained by neoliberalisation affecting so many aspects of Welsh life including the mindsets of those in the Welsh Labour-led governments. To this end, Evans et al. (2021) argue that Wales is not escaping the “logic of neoliberalism and

its pernicious practices of targets, datafication and economism” that are affecting workplaces (including youth services), and this logic has also “insidiously infected worker’s lives through these disciplinary tools” (including youth workers) (pp. 13-14). Nevertheless, Wales has taken a separate path for youth policy when compared to England, though both nations have experienced neoliberalisation in differing ways. While commenting on prospects for greater political support for better funding of the Youth Service in Wales, a voluntary sector officer (i8) acknowledged that there was “no guarantee” of such support. However, while youth work had “gone through a really tough decade” (of austerity), this person maintained their optimism and saw the present as “an opportunity... [an] exciting space...and a challenge... [and was] hoping... [for] progression in sustaining and protecting the future generations of young people’s involvement in youth work in Wales.” For this person the seeds of hope included a youth service funding review and £11m towards implementation of the IYWB’s (2021) recommendations.

Shifting Terminology

Intriguingly what can also be discerned in the Welsh case is a subtle shifting of the terminology that is deployed in the framing of service provision in this field.

Williamson (2010) has previously commented on how, not only in Wales but also across the UK, there has been controversy with:

The mutation of the Youth Service (encapsulating municipal and voluntary youth work organisations) into “youth support services” (covering a much broader range of interventions based on different principles, philosophies, methodologies and practice) (p. 84).

However, in the Welsh context further nuances in terminology can be discerned as well, including the distinctions between a *national youth service*, *national youth work* and *national youth work services*.

Firstly, in Welsh Government policy there was initially (post-WYA) an emphasis upon a *national youth service* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2007). This stressed that the state and civil society's pooled youth work resources, provision and practice *were a service and a partnership* with young people - thus also recalling a lineage of mutual aid and voluntary action as well as post-war state-led developments for a national structure 'in the service of youth' (see Rose, 2020).

Secondly, there was then a shift in later strategic documents away from the language of a *national youth service*. Instead, there was an emphasis upon *national youth work* in government policy (Welsh Government, 2014; 2019). Thus, there was a subtle move away from the language of the youth service as collective provision, and towards the distinct form of educational practice (i.e. youth work). Arguably this rhetorical shift reflected the 'gutting' of local authority youth services (largely due to austerity measures) while also calling out to the idea of a youth work movement beyond the state. Furthermore, this rhetoric had a practical use of identifying a distinctive form of practice that otherwise was at risk of being 'lost' or 'diluted' if youth workers are no longer employed in distinct local authority youth services but in integrated services, multi-agency initiatives or other organisations.

Thirdly, by 2021 a synthesis appears to have occurred with the term *youth work services* (see IYWB, 2021). Notably this terminology expressly refers to both the form of practice as well as to the plurality of component services (rather than referring to a singular youth service as a partnership). Though strictly speaking the 's'

(at the end of *services*) is not necessary, if the plurality is taken as already implied in the term *youth service*. As, according to Rose (2008), the term *youth service* in Wales already “refers to the collective of the local authority Youth Service, national voluntary youth work organisations and local voluntary youth work organisations” (p. 62).

In summary, this shifting terminology provides extra insight into the various struggles surrounding: (i) recognising and protecting the ideal of collective youth service provision (that has pluralism and partnership implied within it), while cautioning against the fragmentation and dismantling of this collective provision; (ii) recognising and protecting a distinctive form of youth work practice, while cautioning against its complete dilution into generic ‘youth support’ or ‘work with children and young people’; and (iii) recognising the local authority and voluntary sector pluralism that is involved with the youth service partnership, while cautioning against marginalisation of the voluntary sector or the demolition of the maintained sector.

Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter has further explored the ‘roll back’ and ‘roll out’ phases of neoliberalisation - as well as responses to this - within the youth services sector from 2007-2022 in both England and Wales. It has organised its analysis around two images that have embodied and visualised the service provision and distribution in both the English and Welsh cases. It has demonstrated that, after its initial piloting and incremental ‘roll-out’ across England, the NCS became a firmly established - if controversial and contested - national service through which neoliberalisation processes continued to unfold. For instance, NCS service provision has been characterised by market competition and market-based contracts, privileging private

and non-state actors, with its service distribution characterised by marketing and branding to attract users, principally of school leaving age. Neoliberalisation, however, has not unfolded this way in Wales, as there has not been the ‘roll out’ and establishment of such a new national service in Wales. Instead, its service provision is characterised by the maintenance of a partnership between the local authority and voluntary sector, with service distribution characterised by local community access for a wider age range of 11-25 year olds, alongside more targeting of ‘at risk’ segments of the youth population. The key findings of this chapter are summarised in Table 15 (see below). What follows now is further discussion and analysis of this table and this chapter’s findings.

Table 15: Comparison of Service Provision and Distribution

	England	Wales
Neoliberalisation Processes	<i>Roll-out phase:</i> embedding of market competition in provision for this relatively new national service (NCS).	<i>No roll-out phase:</i> rejection of expansion of new service (NC) to Wales, maintain pre-existing partnership model instead
Service Provision	Social logic of market competition for providers Social logic of market-based contracts for provision Fantasmatic logic of market efficiency	Social logic of partnership for local authority and voluntary sector providers Projected social logic of sufficiency standards
Service Distribution	Social logic of marketing and branding to attract users Social logic of targeting narrow age range (i.e. principally school leaving age) Principally 15-17 year olds (18-24 with additional needs) Typically accessing short-term programmes	Social logic of community-based engagement Social logic of more targeted services (i.e. targeting ‘at risk’ segments of youth population) 11-25 years olds Typically year round provision
Counter-responses	Projected social logic of year-round service provision for a wider age range	Projected social logic of sufficiency for youth service provision

	Political counter-logic of reviving local authority and voluntary sector youth services	Projected social logic of stronger partnerships between local authority and voluntary sector
	Political counter-logic of universal, community-rooted open youth work	Projected social logic of universal, community-rooted open youth work

Firstly, there will be further elaboration of the set of logics that this chapter has identified and characterised (as summarised in Table 15). In particular, it is contended that these logics develop insight, understanding and support comparative analysis of the neoliberalisation phases in each case context, as well as navigations and resistances. These logics have been characterised as including:

- *Social logics* with dominant rules, norms and patterns for service provision and service distribution within each case. This helps to identify points of divergence that are exacerbated through - especially in England - the 'roll out' phase of neoliberalisation. Within the NCS programme in England, a dominant social logic identified for service provision has been that of constructing a competitive market for its providers, principally a market of private and non-state actors. Similarly, there is a dominant social logic of extending market-based contracts for the delivery and management of this provision. Additionally, its service distribution also embeds ideas and practices of the market, notably there is a dominant social logic of marketing and branding to attract users (principally those of school leaving age who access relatively short-term programmes). Thus far, these social logics identified for the NCS programme provide insight into how a 'roll out' phase of neoliberalisation is unfolding within the nodes of service provision and distribution. With the Youth Service in Wales, by way of contrast, there is no

such 'roll out' phase of neoliberalisation occurring through the expansion of a new service. Rather its nodes of service provision and distribution are characterised by the dominant social logics of: maintaining provision through the local authority and voluntary sector partnership, as well as distributing community-based access and engagement opportunities on a year-round basis for 11-25 year olds alongside the targeting of 'at risk' young people. While 'roll out' neoliberalisation process are more overt within the NCS programme, a case can be put forward that - as highlighted within the previous chapter - the element of service distribution in the Welsh Youth Service that targets 'at risk' population groups is increasingly driven by neoliberal pressures to assert 'value for money' through claiming the ever more 'efficient' use of limited resources within 'streamlined' services.

- *Projected social logics*: while within the Wales Youth Service there has been a social logic of increasingly targeting 'at risk' young people (though this logic is not new for the sector, but it has at times displaced alternative forms of provision and distribution), it has coexisted alongside a *projected social logic* for more universal, community-rooted and open youth work. There has been a recurring theme in Welsh policy envisioning documents for a rebalancing so that open youth work is not neglected but recognised as the core component within service provision and distribution, alongside targeted initiatives. The Welsh policy envisioning extends to matters of funding too, with common proposals - and projected social logics - for sufficiency of provision, sufficiency standards, and the strengthening of the voluntary sector position within the service partnership. In England, however, a projected social logic identified within policy envisioning signifies a potential shift away from aspects of the

NCS programme that was 'rolled out' from 2010 onwards. There are visions and proposals for the post-2022 period - a projected social logic - for partially reversing the loss of year-round services for a wider age range of young people across England (the loss of which had largely been a result of both the 'roll back' and 'roll out' phases of neoliberalisation that displaced such forms of provision and distribution).

- *Political counter-logics*: as discussed in the previous chapter, when compared to England, alternative envisioning (e.g. for improved and 'sufficient' resourcing of pre-established youth service partnerships) has had a stronger 'foothold' within youth service policy discourse of Wales and the Welsh Government. In England, youth work and youth service advocacy has been placed in a more oppositional - and marginalised - position following the rise of the NCS and its highly marketised service. As a result, calls for a revival of pre-established youth services of local authorities and the voluntary sector is identified as a political counter-logic in England, whereas in Wales maintaining that service partnership is a dominant social logic. Calls for a shift towards universal, community-rooted and open forms youth work in England are also identified as a political counter logic. In Wales, by way of contrast, such envisioning and proposals for a greater valuation - and rebalancing towards - such forms of youth work are identified as a projected social logic, as they are commonly and widely asserted within Welsh youth policy discourse.
- *Fantasmatic logics*: there has been contestation and opposition to the expansion and dominance of NCS in the English youth service sector, and political frontiers (with both critics and defenders of NCS) and political

counter-logics (to revive open youth work and pre-established youth services) have been identified. As part of the wider political struggles surrounding NCS and its highly marketised service model, a fantasmatic logic of market efficiency is identified with a widespread assumption and belief - not least amongst politicians and policymakers - that 'the market will do best', as a result this logic functions to close down and silence the possibility of non-market proposals for service development. Even when flaws are identified within NCS market-led approaches of NCS, the 'solutions' being put forward are for an update or a recalibration - not a replacement - of such approaches.

Secondly, having elaborated on the set of logics that have been identified, further clarification will now be provided on the characterisation and foregrounding of these respective logics as social, political and fantasmatic. As noted in the previous chapter, social, political and fantasmatic logics can all be "operative at any one time, each being in a relation of over-determination with the others" (Glynos, Speed et al, 2015, p. 48), nevertheless the characterisation and foregrounding of specific logics can occur to support analysis. In this chapter, for instance, market competition and market-based contracts are identified as dominant social logics for NCS provision in England, however, there is also a political dimension as there is significant dissent identified to this NCS approach. Nevertheless, marketisation and commercialisation have shaped concrete norms, rules and patterns (e.g. with successive commissioning rounds) that lead to these being characterised as dominant social logics, rather than a political logic with contestation. Within the node of distribution, a dominant social logic is the marketing and branding to attract users to NCS. While, this is not to deny that other distribution methods would also be adopted to connect

with young people (e.g. word of mouth, forms of school and community engagement) and it is not to deny that there have been dissenting voices to the marketing budgets of the NCS, but marketing and branding has been very prominent, extremely well-resourced and therefore it has been characterised and foregrounded as a dominant social logic. Rather political counter-logics - with counter-hegemonic alternatives seeking to displace neoliberalised social logics - are also characterised and foregrounded in order to identify the opposition and contestation that occurs in relation to NCS provision and distribution. Meanwhile a shifting policy demand towards year-round provision (and away from shorter term schemes) is characterised as a projected social logic because, especially at the end of the 2007-2022 timeframe, it was becoming the official and widely accepted vision on the way forward for post-2022 development of service provision in England. However, during the 2010s this vision would have been a more oppositional proposal (e.g. when governmental, financial and legislative backing was fully behind the NCS model, and at the expense of other forms of year-round provision), and arguably it could then have been characterised as a political counter-logic. This also illustrates the contingency and non-fixity of the logics of service provision, and the associated challenges when seeking to characterise and foreground social, political and/or fantasmatic logics.

Additionally, this chapter's characterisation and foregrounding of specific logics as social logics helps to generate insight and analysis of the dominant social norms, rules and patterns for each case context - thus enabling points of divergence to be further discerned on these matters. For instance, the respective rules and patterns for service provision with private partners (in England) and lead partners of local

authorities (in Wales) can be discerned and contrasted through the dominant social logics. In Wales, for example, rather than marketing and branding as per the NCS, community-based engagement has been characterised and foregrounded as a dominant social logic for service distribution. However, opportunities for young people's voluntary engagement and service access through community settings - whether street-based, centre-based, or within other local settings or local institutions - will have been reduced due to cutbacks, and services have been developing more targeting of young people. Nevertheless, community engagement is characterised as a dominant social logic - alongside targeting - due to the various forms and settings for youth work practice with young people, and this is broadly year-round provision and for a wider age range than when compared to the NCS programme.

Meanwhile, these dominant social logics are accompanied by the characterisation and foregrounding of specific logics as either projected social logics, political counter-logics or fantasmatic logics in order to also discern the variations - and similarities - across the two cases with regards service envisioning, contestations and struggles. For instance, while reviving provision through local authority and voluntary sector partnerships is a political counter-logic in England, that service partnership is a dominant social logic in Wales. Meanwhile a fantasmatic logic of trusting in market efficiency is characterised and foregrounded to discern - especially within policy and managerial circles in England - the downplaying and cloaking of the possibility of alternatives to the market within the NCS programme. Additionally, the envisioning of more open youth work is also a political counter-logic in England, but in Wales it has a stronger 'foothold' (e.g. in policy documentation) and so is characterised as a projected social logic. Overall, the rationale of such

characterisation and foregrounding is to enrich understanding and analysis of service provision and distribution for each case, and to further analysis of the respective forms of neoliberalisation, contestation and resistance within each case context too.

Thirdly, having elaborated on the characterisation and foregrounding of the respective logics within this chapter, further discussion will now be provided on the points of divergence and concurrence that have been identified, including the conditions that contribute to the respective outcomes in each case. For instance, there is divergence across each case with service provision and distribution. NCS did not 'roll out' in Wales, and so the highly marketised approach to service provision and distribution of the NCS is delimited to England. This 'roll out' phase of neoliberalisation has taken youth service policy within England further away from its historic commonalities with Wales. The Welsh approach, however, has maintained a stronger connection and resemblance to the historic youth service policy of both Wales and England, as it still emphasises local authority and voluntary sector partnerships and service provision and distribution on a local community basis. Broadly, the contributory factors and conditions - as highlighted in the previous chapter - shaping such points of divergence include:

- *Institutional and governance differences*: youth service policy in Wales is a devolved area of government with strategic developments being overseen by various youth work service units and boards (post-WYA) reporting to the Education Minister, whereas NCS policy framework in England has been overseen by the UK Cabinet Office and DCMS (and in conjunction with the NCS Trust's board);

- *Differences of political culture and political ideals:* youth service policy in Wales has been overseen by a Welsh Labour-led administration with certain post-devolution ideals of civic municipal socialism, whereas NCS policy in England has clear roots in the Conservative Party and its 'Big Society' ideals of the early 21st century; and,
- *Differences to the engagement of professional youth work discourse and the youth work field:* youth service policy in Wales has been open to integrating youth work discourse within its strategic planning through consultation and engagement with pre-established youth service partnerships and the wider field, whereas the historic development of NCS policy in England has been premised upon privileging private and voluntary sector involvement, while marginalising professional youth work discourse, pre-established youth service partnerships and the wider youth work field.

The above contributory factors and conditions have resulted in England experiencing greater levels of neoliberalisation 'roll out' within its youth services sector - key politicians, including the Prime Minister (from 2010-2016), were strongly behind the envisioning, development and expansion of the NCS which included (a) the marketisation of NCS service provision and distribution, and (b) the silencing and marginalisation of pre-established services and the wider youth work profession. Meanwhile, the respective Minister(s) overseeing youth service policy in Wales have (a) rejected the NCS model and its expansion in Wales, (b) prioritised provision and distribution through pre-established youth services and service partnerships with a lead role for local authorities, and (c) engaged and actively consulted with the wider youth work profession. Within such conditions, the 'roll out' phase of neoliberalisation

has encountered more buffers within the youth services sector of Wales, especially when compared to England.

The above contributory factors and conditions have resulted in more acute political frontiers developing in the English context. For instance, the level of cutbacks and marginalisation to pre-established youth services and the youth work profession have fed into the emergence of a set of political counter-logics that resist such neoliberalisation in England. As well as critique and opposition to the dominance of NCS, there have been counter-hegemonic visions and alternative proposals for developing service provision and distribution in England. These include (a) reviving the pre-established services of local authorities and the voluntary sector, and (b) emphasising universal, community-rooted and open youth work opportunities for young people. By way of contrast, as the pre-established services are already central to the delivery of government youth work strategies in Wales, the agency and advocacy of the youth work field has fed into projected social logics for the sufficiency of service provision, stronger partnerships for provision, and more open youth work for young people to access. While such visions have not fully materialised, they are in a less oppositional position than in England and are integrated as common themes within Welsh government policy publications as well as through advocacy channels.

To conclude, this chapter has used the selected images and wider research data to discuss service provision and distribution across the two cases. The chapter has used a logics approach - and identified a set of logics - to generate insight and to further comparative analysis of the two cases and the forms - and conditions - of

neoliberalisation and resistance within them. Points of divergence across the cases are identified and analysed, including the role of institutions, political cultures, and professional discourse within each case.

6. Services Analysis Bricolage: Logics of Delivery and Governance

Introduction

The previous two chapters have focused on the forms of service provision in the English and Welsh cases, including analysis of the funding, envisioning and distribution of the respective services. This chapter now focuses upon their approaches to service delivery and governance. To develop this chapter's inquiry into each case's delivery and governance, the bricolage approach is again used to combine and stitch together node-relevant imagery, text and interview data for comparative analysis using the logics-based nodal framework.

Format, Structure and Argument

In this chapter there are 6 images. Images 7, 9 and 11 relate principally to the NCS in England. While images 8, 10 and 12 relate principally to the Youth Service in Wales. These images are also paired intentionally (as 7-8, 9-10, and 11-12) to facilitate commentary, comparisons and analysis across the two cases. *Part one* of this chapter focuses on forms of service delivery with analysis of images 7-8, and *part two* focuses on an aspect of delivery as well as governance with analysis of images 9-10 and 11-12. The 6 images are all from a later period (2017-2022) within this study's wider timeframe. The later timing of these images facilitates analysis of how delivery and governance has unfolded in each nation once NCS had become firmly established - including its own piece of legislation - within England, while Wales maintained its own distinct path.

The images visualise and prompt analysis of service delivery and governance within each case, and - as in previous chapters - they are triangulated with semi-structured interviews. Interviews - with a range of 'in the know' participants (see Table 12 in chapter 3) - have provided dynamic two-way conversational data surrounding the imagery and associated themes. The selection and use of the images and the interview data has been guided by an 'editorial policy' (see chapter 3).

In parts one and two of this chapter, logics within the nodes of service delivery and governance are identified and discussed alongside the research data. Initially, this chapter's identification and discussion of logics includes reference to:

- 'social logics' to discern the dominant social norms, rules and patterns for service delivery and governance within each case, including variations and similarities;
- 'projected social logics' - as the envisioning to amend and further develop the social norms, rules and patterns for service delivery and governance, often with a relatively high degree of consensus for these visions within the policy and practice fields;
- 'political counter-logics' to discern deeper political contestations, antagonisms and dividing lines through counter-hegemonic resistances and alternative visions and practices; and,
- 'fantasmatic logics' as those ideas and practices acting to cloak the dominant social logics - and neoliberalisation - as fixed and unchallengeable.

Following on from parts one and two of this chapter, there is further exploration and analysis of:

- the logics that are identified in this chapter;
- the characterisation and foregrounding of these respective logics as either social, political or fantasmatic logics; and,
- the role and contributions that the logics approach bring to understanding and comparing these two cases and the forms - and conditions - of neoliberalisation and resistances within them.

In summary, this chapter will advance the argument that there are contrasting approaches to delivery and governance in these cases. In England, it will be argued that there has been *a social logic of casualisation for delivery staff*, and *a social logic of embedding private sector actors in key governance mechanisms*. In Wales, however, it will be argued that there has been *a social logic of registration and professionalisation for youth work staff*, and *a social logic of embedding actors who have youth work expertise and/or lived experience in relevant governance mechanisms*. In both cases there has been a logic - and pressure - of targets and outcome measurement within governance systems, with implications for modes of delivery and forms of practice. The chapter will also highlight the respective benefits of delivery for young people in each service, as well as political counter-logics and alternative projections for service delivery and governance that are evident in the English and Welsh contexts.

Part One: Staffing and Service Delivery

Part one of this chapter organises its discussion and analysis of service delivery and staff practice around two images. Drawing upon imagery, documentary sources and interview data the benefits for young people of service delivery in both nations are

highlighted, as well as tensions and challenges within each case. It begins by focusing upon the respective approaches to staffing and labour for the purposes of service delivery within each case. During the timeframe of this study, it is argued that there has been an overarching *social logic of casualisation and deprofessionalisation* of delivery staff within the NCS component of the youth services sector in England. Meanwhile in Wales there has been an overarching *social logic of registration and professionalisation* of delivery staff as part of that nation's wider education workforce. Images 7 and 8 are visualisations of these logics in play.

Images 7 and 8: Contrasting Models of Staffing and Labour

Image 7: NCS Team Leader Recruitment



(Source: Catch 22, 2021a)

Image 8: Registration of Youth Workers

Guidance for Employers

Employing qualified Youth Workers and Youth Support Workers

(Source: Education Workforce Council [EWC], 2017)

The above images (image 7 and image 8) provide insight into contrasting models of staffing and labour between case 1 (NCS in England) and case 2 (the Youth Service in Wales). Image 7 is taken from a staff recruitment video that has been used by various delivery partners of NCS, including Catch 22. It visualises the established practice of recruiting a largely seasonal and casualised workforce for NCS work with young people in England. Image 8 is taken from the cover of a guidance document about youth worker registration in Wales. It visualises the emphasis placed upon practitioner registration, a national framework of qualifications, and the professionalisation for youth workers in Wales.

England: Service Delivery and Casualisation

Image 7 is a screenshot from a short 15 second promotional video about recruiting 'leaders' for NCS. This was embedded on the staff vacancies webpage for Catch 22, one of the NCS regional and local providers - though it is a video also used on

various online platforms by other local partners of NCS too.⁷⁷ Catch 22 has delivered in a range of English regions, notably the North West, North East, East Midlands, West Midlands, South East and South West. In the video a particular sell is given to this seasonal and casual labour, as the advert's title reads: "LOOKING FOR A GREAT SUMMER JOB?" With an enthusiastic voiceover from a female Team Leader about the rewarding nature of the role, the video very quickly cuts between many different shots including: a drone view of a lake from up above (as pictured in image 7), a male leader running through a river with a group of young people following him, another leader helping young people put on outdoor protective equipment, a classroom, seashore dancing, more dancing, clapping, cheering, outdoor games, a cookery session and so on. In terms of a contrast, when compared to the more mundane image 8 that relates to the registration of practitioners in Wales, the NCS Team Leader role - on a national basis in England - has not been expected to have a relevant qualification (or be on a recognised training programme or be registered). The job description for a Team Leader with Catch 22 (2021b), for example, did not require or desire qualifications, though an essential requirement was: "Substantial experience of working directly with young people from a wide variety of backgrounds."

Since 2010 this specific delivery partner had more than "3000 dedicated members of Catch22 NCS staff" who had worked with "35,658 young people" (Catch 22, 2021b). This was on "Catch22 NCS programmes, dedicating over 460,000 hours to social action and community projects" - notably, it was the delivery staff who "helped make this happen." Historically, short term and temporary contracts were the norm for the

⁷⁷ The same video is also used by other partners of NCS including, for example, [NCS Harrogate](#).

majority of these workers. As further illustration of this, the website of Catch 22 provided a list of NCS programme vacancies during a recruitment cycle. At that time on that website in 2021, the full-time and permanent NCS posts were extremely limited, and the majority were casual posts.⁷⁸ Thus image 7, the promotional video and the additional recruitment documentation provide illustration and insight into the social logic of casualisation of delivery staff within the NCS programme.

From an interview with a staff member of NCS (i2), observations were shared about the staffing for NCS service delivery. In summary, “the reality of the staffing model where it’s been at its peak in terms of volume” has been to offer:

a summer job... for a lot of [older] young people themselves, still at university or fresh out of university, training to be a teacher, something that looked fun, something that looked like a chance to kind of get away from home and earn a bit of money over the summer, with a very short training window.

This NCS staff member highlighted potential benefits of this staffing model. *Firstly*, it enabled NCS - as a new national service - to grow rapidly by getting enough staff in place quickly to help run and deliver the local programmes. *Secondly*, there were affinities, bonds and a dynamism between the leaders and the participants. For instance, there was:

incredible feedback from young people [NCS participants] who felt like they could really connect with those people [NCS leaders] well, because they were quite close in age group,

⁷⁸ On 05/11/21, for example, out of 69 NCS vacancies advertised on the Catch 22 website (2021a), 5 were full-time permanent and 64 were casual contract. Team Leaders and Assistant Team Leaders, who work directly with young people, were listed as “contractual type: sessional”, as was the Wave Leader.

and... part of it is about letting loose after... exams, or whatever it might be. So there were benefits to that [staffing] model.

The NCS staff member explained how this picture (of a bonding process) has been painted through participant feedback within a “net promoter score mechanism” that provided “customer experience learnings”. The responses from participants to the more open-ended questions within this customer survey create a sense of it being “a kind of fun model” - and even if it might sometimes lack “a bit of coherence... and could have felt a bit chaotic”, even then the “young people would never kind of blame the immediate team leaders for that”. Rather, there was a bond of “we were all in it together”. Furthermore, this NCS staff member explained how, in such a short space of time, the standard staffing model of NCS would not allow much time for more in-depth training beyond the “basics” for its leaders. As a result, “a reality of that model” was that the NCS leaders - many were still young people themselves - would “probably not” identify or “see themselves as practitioners in the youth space.”⁷⁹

This delivery model, however, has not been without its critics and sceptics in both professional and governmental publications. The NCS Trust’s oversight of its programmes - including of its outsourced provision and highly casualised workforce - has been an area of scrutiny. *Firstly*, Davies (2019) draws attention to concerns with the NCS staffing structure, including: that it was reliant upon the recruitment of many untrained and unqualified staff, coupled with retention barriers for more experienced practitioners; that it provided limited support and training for those staff new to working with young people; and, that there was the absence of a firm national

⁷⁹ The NCS staff member (i2) anticipated changes and a subtle shift with the staffing model in the post-2022 period. This is because NCS would be looking to use more of the existing staffing and systems of those organisations bidding to a new grants programme, and it would not just be commissioning-out the running of pre-planned programmes with the same casualised staffing model.

commitment to an externally recognised training and qualifications framework for staffing (pp. 195-197). *Secondly*, the Public Accounts Committee (House of Commons, 2017a) censured the NCS Trust's "governance arrangements" from when it was set up, and doubted if it had the "skills and expertise necessary to oversee a project of this scale." It also questioned the safety and safeguarding of young people within the "dispersed delivery model" of NCS. When asked about "what is keeping you awake at night about the risks to this programme", senior figures from DCMS and NCS both stated the safeguarding of young people as a key concern (House of Commons, 2017b, Q120). While safeguarding is a key concern and responsibility for any programme with young people, arguably such anxieties in NCS could be exacerbated by an approach to staffing heavily reliant upon outsourcing, subcontracting, casualisation and with limitations to its education and training standards - at a national level - for the delivery staff (including when compared to the approach adopted in Wales, as illustrated in image 8). The DCMS (2017), however, provided an overview of NCS safeguarding procedures (pp. 24-25) to inform and reassure local authorities and schools when the programme is promoted to young people.

On the one hand, through an optimistic lens, the NCS staffing structure could be viewed as creating short-term opportunities for new student-practitioners preparing to work within a range of educational and welfare services. This might include student teachers, teaching assistants, social workers and youth workers who have been in-training and are looking for work placements and extra work opportunities (see Puffett, 2012). As such a 'developmental' pitch has been given to the staffing for the delivery of NCS schemes. *On the other hand*, through a sceptical lens, the NCS

staffing model can be viewed as undermining the long history of developing a qualification framework for employing staff within youth and community organisations. The youth policy campaigner (i4), for example, was conscious of the historical struggle to ensure that “everyone involved in youth work should have a qualification relevant to the level of their operation”, but the NCS approach has strayed far away from this system. This interviewee pointed out that

you wouldn't go to any kind of service without feeling assured that the staff who are delivering that service had some competence and qualification and dedication to the job they were doing. So you wouldn't go to an unqualified dentist to have your wisdom teeth out, so why would you entrust your young people for often sensitive and challenging discussions and free involvement in all sorts of, sometimes risky, challenging experiences - why would you entrust them to youth workers who are not qualified?

Therefore, according to the policy campaigner, image 7 represented the diminishment of practice with young people by reducing it to a casual summer job. Additionally, the caption and imagery of image 7 was being read as saying:

‘If you like the outdoors, come and work for us’ isn't it. It's not saying, ‘If you like people, come and work for us’ - it's inviting people to enjoy a summer job in the great outdoors.

While working outdoors is “an important part” of youth work with young people, it is not the “sole purpose”. The alternative counter-vision (and political counter-logic) to employing “amateurs for short term summer jobs”, would be to “employ qualified people for long term dedication and deployment of their skills and you reward them accordingly.”

The NCS approach to contracting local providers, as discussed in chapter 5, meant that there were many delivery partners who were new or relatively new and

inexperienced at running projects with young people, as well as some that were very experienced in the field. Notwithstanding these organisational differences, the NCS staff member (i2) highlighted the commonalities to delivery across organisations. Although in the earliest days of NCS, there was not “not a curriculum as such at a national level”, there were shared “main aims” for each week and an expected “cycle” for young people to go through on the programme, including reflection upon the outdoor residential, local community and social action components. While there were organisations and staff requiring more national guidance and detailed specifications, there were also those delivery partners and staff

who were very much, ‘we understand how this works, our day-to-day job is working with young people’ - a lot of kind of qualified youth workers in that space, but also people who are coming... who [have] been in teaching backgrounds, things like that. And you know [they were saying to the NCS Trust] ‘your job as a commissioning body is basically to back off and let us do our thing’.

Over time, on a national level, a ‘Theory of Change’ developed that sought to capture “the near-term outcomes you might expect through to longer term more societal impacts” of the NCS programme and its local delivery.⁸⁰

For the NCS staff member (i2), there was one very specific example - as an illustration - of how the programme helped to bring ‘change’ through building confidence, social trust and a sense of belonging for young people. This staff member recalled the experiences and conversations with one participant on a local NCS programme. This young person had “mental health issues that led him to really

⁸⁰ See NCS (2017) for a version of the Theory of Change in a submission to the Public Accounts Committee.

withdraw from school and become quite isolated.” It was on the NCS programme that the delivery staff on

a residential discovered just how serious some of these issues were, quickly equipped themselves to keep this young guy engaged on the programme, rather than say, ‘oh, we’re not equipped to kind of deal with this’.

Through conversations, young people like this individual, would say to the NCS staff member, “This has been a fantastic space because I don’t feel... I’ve smiled or laughed for a good 2 or 3 years... and this has been one of the most enjoyable things”. This particular young person also commented upon their own mixing and making friendships with young people from different social and ethnic backgrounds beyond what was usual for them. On such experiences and conversations, the NCS staff member reflected, “And it’s those moments that I think revolve around the social mixing and the cohesion that always stand out for me in in our journey.”

While there have been questions raised about the staffing model for NCS, the core programme itself has not been without critique within the youth services sector. For instance, de St Croix’s (2017) has viewed the NCS main programme as a pre-packaged and highly marketed “consumable product” with pre-determined activities that too frequently reduce staff practice into the supervision of young people. It is this - as well as the casualisation of employment - this she argues is deprofessionalising practitioners by limiting opportunities for informal dialogic education with young people, removing space for “professional judgement” and evading professional youth

work terminology while still “drawing largely on youth work’s history and ideas”.⁸¹ Similarly, Davies (2019) also questions the constraints placed upon practice by the top-down demands of NCS programme prescriptions, and how this can undermine the worker’s educational response to the ‘here and now’ needs of young people.⁸² However, de St Croix (2017) points out that there will still be spaces for “critical conversations and transformative experiences” within NCS. Indeed, even the most vocal critics of NCS have acknowledged the benefits, the enjoyment and achievements by “the workers, local organisations, young participants, or so-called ‘alumni’ of NCS” (de St Croix, 2017); for de St Croix, such successes are bound-up within a long tradition of “residential experiences and social action” that have pre-existed within youth work and that NCS programmes have drawn upon.

The various benefits and constraints of working on the NCS programme were experienced, and reflected upon, by a manager on a local NCS programme (i1). This individual recalled that during the mid-2010s a temporary contract had been won - via Serco and the National Youth Agency (NYA) - for a local team to deliver NCS within a city (and a few years later that cluster of contracts would be “outbid” and lost). Although it was a pre-set programme, the local NCS delivery team - who were separate from the city youth service - sought to run the scheme with a youth work

⁸¹ In the earliest days of NCS, de St Croix (2011) also drew attention to the “outdated” terminology of “leaders” for its face-to-face staff - this, her critique goes, conjures up images of social hierarchy rather than democratic education within youth work.

⁸² Considering these critiques of NCS staffing arrangements and its model of practice, a survey (Fitzpatrick et al., 2019) of NCS participant perceptions of the Team Leaders is worth exploring in more detail. Participant responses to this survey were generally positive. Nevertheless, the survey’s findings hint towards the limitations of short-term casualised staffing and pre-set programme demands - these would appear to have an impact upon staff knowledge, expertise and nuance of practice. The survey’s findings were of positive participant responses to staff supportiveness (73%), though participant perceptions were lower about staff knowledge of the programme (50%) and lower on staff interest in personal development of participants (47%). Fitzpatrick et al. (2019) surmise that seasonal employees are more focused on the programme demands rather than the immediate needs of participants, and seasonal staff need further training to develop their expertise.

ethos, and an experienced youth work practitioner was involved with overseeing the local delivery. Typically, there were multiple groups of 15 young people who were worked with over 4-week periods during the summer months. For each group this included a 1-week residential away from the city, a 1-week residential in the city, and 2-weeks of planning and implementing a social action project.

Contrary to the manager's expectations, in this situation the "upfront" residential worked remarkably well.

Local Manager: I've got to say that that was the first time in my career that I've worked with young people and taken them on a residential upfront right at the beginning of work, where the rest of my career pretty much would be working with young people and offered an incentive as a means of motivation to take young people on a residential at the end of a piece of work. So I was fascinated to see how that difference panned out.

Interviewer: Yeah, I'd guess if it was happening later on, there'd be the opportunity for more relationship building... to occur... if it was to happen later on.

Local Manager: Well, that's, that was our thinking. But in fact, throughout my career, taking people on residential enhances a working relationship, that profound essentially life changing relationship between adults and young people where that voluntary relationship takes place. The work is far more positive after a residential, and why we haven't thought of that earlier. So actually taking young people on a residential right upfront it's helped develop that relationship much quicker, much faster and cemented good positive relationships right at the beginning, and the concerns about dealing with behaviour, and all those things, they ironed themselves out in that that first week - they [young people] weren't as frightened as we all first thought.

In terms of the staff team on this local programme, it included "teaching assistants, teachers who wanted work over the summer, there were social work trainees, and of course, youth workers in the mix." Due to the tight timescales and various

backgrounds of the staff, there was “a rapid training package for all the staff that were going to be involved in NCS to introduce them to... a youth work approach to working with young people.” Joint training was provided by the city youth service with NYA, and afterwards the staff team said that the training was “remarkable”.

The manager summarised the overarching ethos and philosophy that was encouraged within the local team as follows:

the youth work approach was to be non-authoritarian, to be empowering, to be absolutely listening to the young people's views and their wants and needs, to be restorative in their approach to working with young people and non-judgmental. And, for the staff to really use that group work approach, and to understand that group dynamics of young people coming together for the first time and to absolutely explore and understand the change in dynamics as the four weeks progressed...

So we adopted that, and we most certainly adopted an approach of working with young people rather than doing something, you know to them or, you know, at them.

This ethos, however, was not applied to NCS programmes nationally, as different organisations would win contracts, and each would adopt their own style of working with young people. There was also no guarantee that the subsequent contract providers would deliver the programme with the same ethos. The local manager could easily see how another delivery partner might adopt a more “military” or “regimented approach”, and how the NCS “could be delivered in an instructive way prescribing to young people exactly what's gonna happen, when it's gonna happen, and ‘here you go’”. However, that was not the approach on this local programme at this time, and the NYA were also encouraging the application of a youth work approach within the NCS in various localities. In this local delivery team, the approach was based upon dialogue with young people, and staff were encouraged

to “let young people flourish, rather than to slot them into a programme or projects just to get a throughput.” The young people were “engaged, and were happy”, and the staff were also “appreciative” of that approach - though there was “some difficult, some hard work to be done in terms of putting in a lot of time over the four weeks.”

The local manager acknowledged difficulties in maintaining the relationship-based approach, as there still was “a large throughput” of young people. Overall, there were hundreds of young people on the local programme, and this involved

ferrying them on to coaches, taking them away, it was difficult to maintain that approach of, you know, trying to get to know the young people as soon as possible, that was difficult. It wasn't, it wasn't ideal.

There were other pressures for delivery, including targets:

we were then delivering to some targets, we would [be] target driven by the National Youth Agency, who were also target driven by Serco, and often these targets can be distracting from you know the process or the job at hand.

An example of that would be where, you know, a group of fifteen was the aim to go through the programme, but if there was less than ten (or twelve) then we were financially penalised. So staff felt under pressure to do a bit of a sales pitch while we were doing this ‘keeping warm’ activity, as opposed to ‘well, nevermind if little Jimmy's dropped out, we'll still go anyway’... So that was a bit sad that we had this commercial element to the work.

Thus, such an example provides a localised illustration of the social logic of targets and outcome measurement for accountability purposes within the NCS programme. However, at a local level, these targets might be negotiated some way by, for example, combining groups, or providing an individual young person with extra flexibility - and discretion - on when they joined:

we'd find a way to ensure that young people, particularly those young people we know were going to benefit most, we found a way to try and ensure that those young people were able to [participate]... to ensure that people didn't miss out.

The manager felt uncomfortable with the sales tactics that were expected within the programme. These included “keeping young people warm” by writing to them and getting them “to come along and play some fun activities” in order to maintain their involvement during the interim period, as though “they’ve been sold a piece of work... a commodity”. A related tactic was

to pick up the young people's kit bags on the night before [a residential] - all kinds of tactics to try and ensure that we didn't drop below that... key number of twelve young people - that if we had their luggage the night before, then we're more likely [to guarantee numbers]... yeah, because we got their luggage they would turn up the next day.

The manager's own alternative practice was premised more upon young people being involved “because they genuinely want to come along and be with the staff that they've got to trust and value”, and so there was a tension and clash of philosophies in this respect. The manager found some of these sales tactics unpalatable, “but we did them because we were under contract to do those ‘keeping warm’ activities.”

When it came to the social action component that came after the residential, another NCS staff member (i2) stated that they were unaware of a particular requirement to focus solely on volunteering as ‘the’ NCS brand of social action and citizenship:

I don't necessarily think it's a policy intention or kind of design aspect of NCS that says, ‘You know fundamentally when we say citizenship, it means volunteering as such’.

However, during the 2010s, with the rapid expansion of NCS, there were certain demands and requirements that further illustrate the social logic of targets and outcome measurement that impacted service delivery and on-the-ground practice.

There was

the pressure on volumes and numbers and engagement and kind of systems work, and the [limited] time with which... you've got to work with young people, it leads people to almost those kind of slightly easier, shortcut models of what social action could be. Whether that's volunteering in the sense of you know, 'here's a predefined role that somebody needs doing, and you just go and do that for them'.

And some of the examples [that various research studies have pointed to, have included]... the one about painting the rugby club wall. But it had been painted the last year, and it was this reliance on the same project over again. So those kind of models, and frankly sometimes the fundraising models where the teams of young people don't really have any kind of connection with or passion for that thing, but it's an easy model to do: something good to raise money to pass on to other people.

This staff member's view was that there were certain interpretations of what social action for NCS should be and "sometimes there are things that are unspoken or assumed by certain people," including that young people on NCS should only be involved with apolitical forms of social action. For instance, one contracting manager disapproved of young people in Brixton, London wanting to take social action to protect a local college that was under threat (with connections to government policy). However, the NCS staff member's view was that "NCS more broadly as a platform for young people's voices absolutely has to allow those spaces for that political education, that campaigning."

Meanwhile, the local NCS manager (i1) was impressed by the young people's decisions for many of their social action projects. Examples recalled of these projects suggested a level of group solidarity and generosity "that was astonishing", such as a group deciding to renovate rooms in a community centre in another part of the city far away from where the majority of the group lived, but it was where one of their group members was from. Another example was of a group deciding to create a memorial for a black young person who had been attacked and killed in the city:

that was completely their decision, nobody brought that idea to the table. So some really inspiring decisions made by the young people about what they want to do, how they want to raise money... [including] some decisions based on, you know, their own consciousness or their own conscience should I say.

Arguably, it is significant to note that these specific examples had emerged through groups of young people working with a staff team who were adopting a youth work approach of relationship building, facilitating space for small group discussions and shared decision-making opportunities in a democratic manner, and staff who were encouraged to be aware of individual needs as well as group dynamics.

Returning to the recruitment video (where image 7 is from), it calls out to prospective workers to join NCS. As the voiceover and titles explain, the Team Leader role is crucial for "INSPIRING", "CHALLENGING" and "DEVELOPING" young people - this position is key for the "empowerment" and "adventure" aspirations of the NCS programme (Catch 22, 2021a). However, there is a notable silence on delivery staff in, for example, the Annual Business Plan for 2021-22 (NCS, 2021b).⁸³ There is a

⁸³ Silence is a relevant theme identified by de St Croix (2011).

brief mention of an Employees Voice Forum (p. 20), but beyond that there is a no meaningful acknowledgement or reference to the staff. The delivery staff are noticeable by their absence in this document, yet the NCS Trust's board are prominently listed (see p. 13). A list of "Enablers" is provided that makes no direct reference to the role of the workers, though the NCS "Operating Model" is listed more generally (p. 22). Another enabler identified in this list is "Our brand" (p. 22), thus emphasising the significance of "omnichannel" marketing as a dominant social logic in the engagement of young people, though with a notable silence on the significance of staffing for delivery.

Wales: Service Delivery and Professionalisation

Image 8 is from the cover for a guidance document for employers about the registration of youth workers and support workers (whether qualified or in-training) in Wales. It includes a logo representing the pages of a book, an archetypal symbol of learning and wisdom, that is depicted in the red, white and green of the Welsh flag. The imagery of this book is flanked by the bilingual naming of the organisation: *Cyngor y Gweithlu Addysg/Education Workforce Council*. This organisation was set up in 2015, essentially replacing the General Teaching Council for Wales (GTCW) (see Education [Wales] Act, 2014). It has broadened the GTCW's remit to oversee - beyond teachers - the registration and conduct of the wider educational workforce in Wales, including youth workers. This image and its source text provide further insight into - a contrasting - social logic for service delivery in Wales, which is the registration and professionalisation of youth workers.

Image 8 and the logo, however, taps into a range of matters relating to staffing and practice in Welsh youth services, not simply registration alone. For instance, the bilingual nature of the logo in the national colours can also be viewed as symbolising the distinctive national context of Wales, including the role played by Welsh medium practice and bilingual educators. The bilingualism of the logo itself can itself be viewed as a product of the political struggle for Welsh language rights, including for the promotion and protection of Welsh language through public bodies and beyond them too (see Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg, 2022). On this matter, however, the Welsh education inspectorate has highlighted wider problems across all of Wales' youth services on Welsh language matters. Estyn (2018) identified "no effective strategy to ensure that Welsh and English languages are treated equally" in service delivery, "few Welsh or bilingual services" other than through the voluntary sector, and "a lack of specialist support services through the medium of Welsh" (p. 5). Such points have been taken up by the IYWB (2021) in its calls to enhance delivery with an "increase of youth work services through the medium of Welsh", and for "strategic planning" and workforce planning - for further developing and promoting Welsh-medium provision - to be backed up by "sufficient funding" (p. 26). Historically, there have been material constraints and limitations to the political support for youth services, nationally and locally. Nevertheless, constructive recommendations, requiring sufficient funding and political will to implement them are - once again - put forward. As such, a projected social logic of sufficiency standards can be discerned through such an example.

Furthermore, the role of Welsh language youth work is highlighted within Tomos' (2021) discussion of the recent history of Welsh language campaigning, including for

education, as part of a broader international movement for the language rights of minority ethnic and national groups. For instance, Tomos comments upon how the Plaid Cymru-ruled Gwynedd County Council's support for Welsh language goals is undermined by its local acquiescence and enactment of the "Tory policies of economic cuts" (p. 108). Tomos explains:

Every week, a hundred teenagers come to the local youth club [in Dyffryn Nantlle]. They talk Welsh naturally to one another. It's a Language Commissioner's dream. Gwynedd's policy [of the county council]? We cannot support youth clubs in Gwynedd, there is no money there... Schools, post offices, libraries, youth clubs - all the organic, working-class public sphere where Welsh is being used as a natural medium of communication, exactly the right conditions you need to produce your vital percentage of the million Welsh speakers [as per the Welsh Government's target for 2050], they are all under threat. (p.109)

As has been the situation on the streets of Haringey (as Chavez and Erika testified in 2011 - see image 1) and in the neighbourhoods of the Rhondda (as documented in the Valleys Kids video - see image 2), the politics of austerity is evident in Dyffryn Nantlle, Gwynedd too. In this instance, a local argument is that youth service cuts are undermining the natural flourishing of the Welsh language within local community settings where young people would have had spaces and opportunities to gather communally and convivially. However, in the national strategies for youth work (Welsh Assembly Government, 2007; Welsh Government, 2014; 2019) it is repeatedly stated that youth services have a key role for supporting the everyday use of the Welsh language, including within open-access, informal and social settings. The education inspectorate, Estyn (2018), have stressed this as well.

The youth club in Dyffryn Nantlle was part of Gwynedd's youth service, which was facing a £270,000 cut and 'efficiencies' (Gwynedd County Council, 2017, p. 2).

However, the outcome of a remodelling exercise included a shift away from youth clubs and towards school-based provision within localities, as well as an emphasis upon support for 16-25 year olds “facing barriers to education, training or work” (p. 4). The council closed its 39 youth clubs and cut existing funding to voluntary sector organisations, and such community provision was ‘outsourced’ with a grant available for alternative providers (Wyn-Williams, 2019). A defence of the remodelling decision came from a county councillor:

‘Shouldn’t the service be concentrating on where it can make a difference or are we expected to find a bottomless pit? Is it wrong to have a service based on the financial constraints we face?’ (as reported by Wyn-Williams, 2019).

In this instance the ideological framing - and fantasmatic logic - of austerity as the only option and inevitable (see chapter 4) becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, as the logic of cuts is transposed and integrated within local decision-making structures. In the councillor’s above statement, the ideal of sufficient funding for youth services is posed as the problem of a “bottomless pit”. The cuts are more calmly formulated as “financial constraints”, and so the council’s decision is thus framed as reasonable in contrast to alternative options that are unreasonable. Furthermore, the case put forward for the remodelled service is for it to be able to do a better and more focused job. Though this latter point omits to mention the outsourcing of local community provision, with potential new providers now facing the very same challenges - that the council had faced before - of limited funding and a limited offer to attract part-time staffing (see Gwynedd County Council, 2017; Wyn-Williams, 2020). However, with this example in 2018, the Auditor-General’s conclusion was that Gwynedd County Council’s reorganisation to the youth service was “mostly driven by financial

constraints rather than an understanding of long-term service demand” (Wyn-Williams, 2019).

A long-standing dilemma and challenge facing many youth services in Wales, even before austerity, has been the balance to be reached between dispersing youth work delivery across local neighbourhoods of a county, versus its concentration within certain locations and projects. For example, a senior youth worker (i5) raised similar debates about the local planning of service provision and delivery for a different local authority in Wales. For this other county’s youth service there were also various challenges. As well as austerity pressures, many of the youth clubs were “getting a bit tired and a bit old and we didn’t have internet in them, and people were using them less and less” - so a number of the clubs were being closed down with funds then used on other initiatives, including the recruitment of school-based youth workers.

The senior youth worker also pointed out difficulties in recruiting to the part-time positions that were used to staff the evening youth clubs in local neighbourhoods. Reducing the number of youth clubs even further had become a very real possibility. There was an increasing feeling that “the ‘one night a week youth club in the village hall’ it had sort of run its course.” However, any such plans were put on hold as circumstances changed. Notably, following various lockdowns and social distancing requirements in early 2020s, the practitioner noted that “there’s a shift more back to local youth clubs because they’ve never been as popular, and there’s so much demand for them.”

The senior youth worker explained:

One of the things that we noticed after we re-opened our clubs last September - after the pandemic - was there was a massive influx of people coming into youth clubs, and youth clubs have never been busier. People beforehand were saying, 'Oh, we meet people online, we do this, we do that'. Now... what they really, really want to do is come out and meet people face-to-face and talk to people face-to-face.

So we're having to have a bit of a rethink... because the youth clubs have never been as popular as they are at the moment... for many, many, many, many years.

While youth club numbers and sessions had already reduced across the county, there was also a decision not "to go for that sort of 'we'll have two or three [centralised] hubs, and everyone can come into the hub', because we know that doesn't work where we are" - not least due to transportation barriers for young people. Instead, there was an emphasis upon doing "as much youth work in communities as possible." The senior youth worker elaborated,

I believed in youth clubs, and having a youth club where people are at in their own communities rather than bussing people in... So you know my whole philosophy is youth work where young people are at, and it looks like we could well be going along those lines a bit more, because there's so much more need for it.

Such an approach was characterised by this staff member as, "the traditional youth work of young people getting youth work within the communities in which they live. You know youth work in people's communities." This illustrates, not only the social logic of community engagement that is still maintained within youth services in Wales (though not without its challenges and adaptations), but also the commitment to forms of community-based delivery, in local neighbourhoods as well as schools and other settings.

Returning to image 8 and the EWC logo, as well as tapping into practical debates about bilingualism and the various community locations of youth work delivery, it also visualises the political and legislative commitment to the registration of youth work practitioners in Wales.⁸⁴ The logo is on a document from 2017 in which the EWC sets out guidance for the registration of relevant workers (qualified or in-training) in Wales. As such there is a dominant norm established for registration - and the process of professionalisation - within Wales. Youth workers and support workers are required by law (based upon the Education [Wales] Act 2014) to register with the EWC if they are to be employed by local authorities, schools, colleges or voluntary organisations. As well as a register, there is a code of practice, and to ensure 'fitness for practice' the workforce council investigates cases of serious misconduct, incompetence, or offences (EWC, 2022).⁸⁵ This is in sharp contrast to the NCS staffing model that has lacked an equivalent approach to registration, and has lacked a comparable framework for the training and qualifications of its youth sector workforce on a national level across England. NCS leaders in England, for example, have not had an essential requirement to be qualified or in-training or registered - this is in contrast to expectations for youth workers in Wales, and thus image 8 illustrates how staffing and delivery frameworks differ in Wales to the English

⁸⁴ This also entails a related commitment to the relevant qualification frameworks for these practitioners. These are the JNC-recognised and ETS-endorsed qualifications that (a) have been set at HE diploma level pre-2010 and at degree level post-2010 for the professional youth worker, and (b) have included level 2 and 3 qualifications for youth support workers (see ETS Wales, 2022).

⁸⁵ Importantly, Sercombe (2010) points out that professionalism and professional ethics for youth work "is not primarily about *prohibition*... It is about *identity*, what we claim, what constitutes us" (p. 3). Furthermore, an emphasis is placed upon professionalism being grounded upon a personal and shared "ethical commitment to serve" a particular constituency, rather than professionalism being defined by a set of external attributes or social characteristics, as those are there to "protect the... integrity" of the ethical commitment and associated relationships (pp. 10-11).

context. In Wales, there is a dominant social logic of registration and professionalisation of youth workers.

The standard logic of this Welsh approach is put forward by the chief executive of the EWC:

Simply put, would you be happy to be treated by an unqualified doctor or receive advice from a solicitor who has been dismissed for malpractice? The answer is no.

Why, therefore, should learners, parents and the general public accept anything less from teachers, lecturers and other educators? (Llewellyn, 2015)

Nicholls (2012) has also argued that the process of professionalisation is needed as without such registration (or a regulatory body) youth work is too easily categorised as a sub-profession. In contrast to anti-professionalism critiques, this argument is that professionalism is not elitist or a form of mystification, rather it “asserts real value and social role” of the youth worker’s specialised knowledge, expertise and judgement to do a job well (p. 104). From this perspective, the professionalism of youth work is rooted in its ethical commitment to serve young people and in the professional judgement applied within the relationships that are developed (Sercombe, 2010). The argument goes that professionalism is especially important for a marginalised domain such as youth work, as it involves “collective self-definition” (Nicholls, 2012, p. 109) and “collectivisation of shared interests” (p. 106). It bestows a degree of recognition in the public sphere, and collective control over practice and practice standards. While the process of professionalisation is clearly evident in the Welsh approach, it is absent from the NCS structure. Arguably, the NCS approach in this area bears a resemblance to forms of deprofessionalisation that are rooted more in “employers’ demands for a deregulated cheap labour market”

(Nicholls, 2012, p. 103). Certainly, while Wales has been developing regulatory and training frameworks designed to reflect and protect the ethical commitments of youth workers, such an approach to professionalisation has been lacking within the NCS.

With the Welsh approach to registration, the voluntary sector officer (i8) identifies aspects of it in need of further strengthening, but also stresses a need for caution. *Firstly*, there have been notable gaps with faith groups and housing projects not having to register, but “that will change, that will come into force that you will have to register if you are a youth worker in those spaces.” However, it was noted that there was still some “confusion and ambiguity” about the youth support worker category and their registration.⁸⁶ *Secondly*, while societal recognition for youth workers was viewed as important, the voluntary sector officer speculated about “getting the balance right between strengthening youth work to be valued and understood and respected, but also [to] allow for that creativity and flexibility.” This individual shared a concern that the fluidity of youth work might be lost if, for example, “too many structures for registering” were placed on individuals. For example, this voluntary sector officer felt that if someone wanted to volunteer for “a few hours in a week in your local youth centre or your local youth provision”, then there should still be “room for people to be in that space” without losing too much fluidity or creativity. Arguably, a subtle tension is being identified here between the wider notion of professionalism as the ethics of being committed to serve young people, with the wider social frameworks seeking to protect this professional arena and their relationships.

⁸⁶ For example, as per the JNC Agreement (2016) for youth and community workers in England and Wales, the pay and grading structure has a support worker range and a professional worker range (pp. 17-21). It is through such agreements that the sub-categories of professional youth worker and youth support worker are derived.

An insight into the ethics of commitment from professional youth workers to young people in Wales, especially those young people in marginalised and vulnerable situations, is provided within an account shared by the grassroots youth worker (i7). This person described how they are prepared to “try whatever approach works” with young people to engage and support them, and as an illustration of this a story was shared of a recent boxing initiative, including how it supported various groups as well as specific individuals. This included “a group of LGBTQ young people”, groups of young people from the youth justice service who had asked for “10 week blocks of it”, and there has also been a generic group of “16-25 year olds, twice a week - they can come the gym and do this programme with us.”

As background, it was explained this programme is one used across the country, and it originated from a boxing gym in Bristol in conjunction with boxing coaches, a sports psychologist, and a young people’s support worker. In summary, within this programme, for “every boxing session you do, you have a personal development point and - it's quite simple really - and a boxer of the week.” This involves, for example, looking at addressing mental health issues, matters of anger and self-esteem, “and all things like that through the sport of boxing” and through the lives and experiences of boxers. Furthermore, it’s “all non-contact, learning the skill of boxing, we don’t spar or nothing like that.”

The format of a typical session was outlined, including the personal development and wider social and political issues - as well as personal reflection opportunities - that might be addressed in conversations with young people.

Grassroots Youth Worker: So an average session we’ll go in and you know we’ll do warm up, start to warm up all that kind of thing, and then I’ll put - after they’ve had a little sweat and a

drink - we'll sit down, I'll put a little video - we've got like a telly in there - a little video of the boxer of the week. It might be - I dunno, one we looked at the other week was Jack Dempsey. So he was a fighter from like the early part of the last century, and he was homeless by fourteen. He was going around on rail carts. He'd have to fight for his dinner and things like that. And we were just looking at how he was a drinker, how he turned his life [around] - we'd just look at something like that and discuss the boxing, and then see if they got any similarities and things like that.

Interviewer: Tyson Fury and his mental health battles?

Grassroots Youth Worker: Yeah, yeah, we've had Tyson Fury and his mental health, we've looked at Muhammad Ali with his civil rights movement struggle, all stuff historically - and we'll all have a chat about it - people like Jack Johnson, who was barred from boxing for being black and he was criminalised and the authorities hounded him, this was like the turn of the century, he was nearly getting lynched when he was beating all these white fighters you know. Yeah, he had to escape the arena from getting killed and things. And we'd looked right from Tyson Fury down to Anthony Joshua being on tag for selling weed and then going the gym and being disciplined and things like that.

After a period of stretching, discussions about these personal development points - such as managing emotions - would then develop while sitting down inside the ring.

As an example of these discussions,

we'd read a statement out like, 'do you think a boxer will fight good when they're angry or calm?' And a loads of them will go 'when you're angry' and then we'll discuss why that's not the case, and then about decision making when you're angry or calm... obviously that doesn't mean they're going to go away and go 'I'm not going to be angry', but... some of them have been coming, doing it now for nine or ten months, and it's made massive changes in some of their lives, do you know what I mean... Whether that's through handling situations better, or just through being healthier and a better lifestyle.

For some young people, through accessing the boxing programme they then began to access other parts of the local youth provision and other support services. This included one young man who was in a particularly difficult situation including multiple and overlapping problems and personal issues concerning homelessness, substance use, police troubles and mental health. The local police, for example would say, “we don't know what to do with this young man”. Lots of other services had been close to giving up on him - with prison or more serious harm a real possibility - and were unsure how to work effectively with him. It is through his engagement through the boxing programme, however, that he then started to engage with other support from youth workers as well as from health services, housing agencies and training providers too.

There had been deeper community roots for engaging this young person with the boxing programme, as the youth worker explained:

I just happened to know him, again this is the link about being in the community. I knew him from years ago when he was a kid, you know. You know on the streets he knew me [e.g. through detached youth work]. So he's ended up coming to our boxing gym. There's been other people involved as well, not just our part. But the boxing has been good, he loves it, it gives him something to aim to work towards. And he's, for the first time in years, he's been off alcohol for a long period of time...

He has bad days obviously, he's a really good example of how that worked well for him that structure of boxing, the training, the credibility of boxing as well... whatever you think of that, to some young men you know what I mean.

It was from here that other conversations - and forms of support unfold - such as shifts to a healthier diet and planning household budgets. This was partly prompted by the youth worker's conversational approach such as

I'd drop little things in there about, like 'if a boxer is training for a fight this is what you have to do, that you have to do this, this and this'.

Another young person with anxiety issues "was just totally isolated in his flat", and he also developed his own self-confidence through this boxing programme. Since getting involved now "he says 'I eat things like vegetables I didn't know there was, now I wanna be healthier. I train in my own time as well just in the flat'". Summing up the delivery of these boxing sessions, the youth worker, observed

So its been a good programme really... [including] because of the vulnerability of the young people who've been coming and what they've got out.

It was shared how providing youth work support for a wide range of young people, including those in especially vulnerable and marginalised situations, can be extremely difficult (and without guarantees), especially with many pressures, demands and constraints for this work. A local charity manager (i6), however, explained that the commitment and support to young people can be transformational, especially

when we're given the space and the time and the freedom to build those sorts of relationships with young people. Those are the sorts of differences that we can make, because we have time to hear young people, and to really understand what's going on for them, rather than trying to slot them into a system of appointments and rules and regulations, you know.

It's having a little bit more of a relaxed and informal way of working with them, it allows us to sort of build those relationships in a much more meaningful and authentic way. So you can understand and help that person identify for themselves what they need and what's going to work for them.

Part Two: Delivery Demands and Governance

Part one of this chapter has shared accounts about the benefits for young people of service delivery in both cases. It also highlighted how there has been a dominant social logic of casualisation underpinning delivery of the NCS in England, and how this contrasts to the dominant social logic of professionalisation for delivery within the Youth Service in Wales. Images 7 and 8 have been visualisations of these logics.

Part two of this chapter now focuses upon a specific aspect of delivery, as well as matters of governance. With reference to images 9 and 10, there is a focus on the delivery approaches and staff navigations of the youth transitions agenda and targeting demands placed upon service delivery. With images 11 and 12 there is then a focus on the respective approaches to service governance, including similarities and differences in each case.

Images 9 and 10: Youth Transitions and Service Delivery

Image 9: Social Mobility



(Source: NCS, 2021c)

Image 10: Skills and Employability

(Source: Wales Audit Office [WAO], 2019)

The above images (image 9 and image 10) provide insight into policy demands placed on service delivery, notably they visualise the agenda for enhancing “work and life skills” of young people (NCS, 2021c) and “employability”, especially for young people who are classed as NEET (Wales Audit Office, 2019). Image 9 is from a webpage about the objectives and impact of NCS, while image 10 - with the wrench and screwdriver bringing echoes of the hammer and sickle of solidarity across (industrial and agricultural) workers - is from a report about the Welsh Government’s work to enhance “young people’s skills and chances of finding work” (WAO, 2019, p. 4).

From Lost Generation to Generation COVID

During the timeframe of this study (2007-2022), the long-running youth policy concern with young people who are - or at risk of becoming - unemployed, ‘status zero’ or NEET (see MSC, 1977; Rees et al., 1996; Coles, 2000) was reiterated following the 2007-2008 financial crash and the COVID-19 pandemic of the early

2020s. Many services for young people, including the NCS in England and the Youth Service in Wales, have been expected to contribute to this youth policy agenda, including through their support offered to enhance life opportunities and progression for the *Lost Generation* (see Bivand, 2012) and *Generation COVID* (see Hutton, 2020).

Firstly, commonalities can be seen with the impacts from service delivery in England and Wales. The practice examples shared above (in part one of this chapter) have illustrated how both these services help develop well-being and confidence within young people. In particular, they have been effective at engaging young people who may be outside or 'on the margins' of education, training and employment. On the NCS main programme in England, for instance, there were the personal and social benefits - and support - for the young person who had become withdrawn and isolated with mental health issues. In Wales, there were signs of significant transformations for the young person who had been navigating very complex life circumstances, and that person's involvement with a non-contact boxing project facilitated by youth workers was a key contributory factor. The NCS staff member (i2) observed that the personal and social benefits through such initiatives should not be underestimated,

the things that people have traditionally called the softer skills are like anything but soft to me... such fundamental things to make sure that people can access opportunities, and those opportunities are kind of inclusive to more people.

This is further illustrated by case studies from NCS (2020a) of Kai as well as Casey and Waj (both pictured in image 9). Kai had left school without any GCSEs, and he said, "my Mam pushed me to do NCS... It was the leaders that guided me - for the

first time I felt that someone had faith in me” (p. 10). He has since been employed with NCS and is going on to do a college course in youth work. Meanwhile for Casey and Raj, both from Rotherham, it was an example of social mixing and intercultural learning. They got to meet and “bonded” despite coming from “different backgrounds”, but also because they started discussing “our differences” (p. 10). These are just a few individual stories, but other research and publications have long documented such benefits for young people (see McKee et al., 2010). These stories also provide insight into the processes that underpin the statement on image 9 that “70% of participants felt more confident of getting a job”.

Secondly, commonalities can be seen across these cases with there being both: (a) targeted schemes that are set up to directly address policy concerns surrounding youth transitions such as progression into work, education, and/or training; and, (b) more general youth provision that will also address such policy concerns, though more fluidly and informally. From within the NCS, for example, a staff member (i2) highlighted a specific initiative in the north east of England, that was in partnership with an offshore windfarm, “to explore the issue of women working in STEM jobs.” As a result, there were “really, really high levels of engagement, fabulous ideas and people ended up kind of getting jobs with this organisation” (see Sofia Offshore Wind Farm, 2022). With NCS, the more generic non-formal aspects of NCS work with young people have also been linked to a framework of the Skills Builder Partnership (see NCS, 2020c) - as the NCS staff member explained, this has included mapping out the use of “the kind of essential skills we all need for all our walks of life - whether it's team working, working with other people, you know, creativity and problem solving.”

Meanwhile, the local manager with NCS (i1) shared their observations that young people's experiences, interactions and discussions on the core programme will have had a significant impact, especially for those in most need of the extra support. For instance, on the main programme

there's a benefit there of the social mix without a shadow of a doubt, there's a benefit for those young people in terms of grasping at the age of sixteen that planning - not just planning your homework, not just planning... how to get into university or into college, but planning for life was a big realisation.

Some of the games, some of the social education... introducing young people to the idea of society and... social mobility [with reference to image 9]... what does social mobility mean, what does moving from one social group to another - defining that social mobility - mean? [All this] was a massive eye opener, in fact upsetting for some young people, seeing that they were around peers whose life chances were different to theirs.

Arguably, pre-established youth services have been particularly effective at building confidence and well-being of young people through targeted and generic provision and delivery, as reflected in the DCMS (2022) review indicating a shift back towards reallocating (a greater proportion of) resources for year-round "youth infrastructure" and youth centres, including in "left-behind" places", in England. Thus, highlighting how alongside NCS delivery, a projected social logic has developed in England for a sector-wide reallocation of funding to more year-round provision and delivery with local youth infrastructure.

In Wales, a local authority's senior youth worker (i5) also discussed the respective contributions of targeted and more generic provision. It was highlighted how a team

of staff have recently been deployed for targeted work with young people who had gone 'off radar' and who were 'isolated' from wider social networks and services, while other colleagues were working on homelessness prevention initiatives. As well as working to build relationships and address underlying issues, both teams were also focused on brokering education, employment and training opportunities with these young people. Commenting upon the availability of jobs for young people, including within the hospitality sector, the youth worker noted:

Pretty much everything is on zero hours contracts. So it's where the people think to themselves, 'Do I need money?', in which case we can help them into a job... They're not very well paid, everything's minimum wage, really, and chances are it will be zero hours. But if people need a little bit of money, then... we can get people and young people into jobs.

But our emphasis is trying to get people to... look really, you know, a little bit further ahead and have a bit more... long-term plan to maybe go to college, get some qualifications and get something that is not a zero hours contract. That's kind of the emphasis that we do. But we take people from where they are, and what it is that they want to do. Going to college isn't for everybody, and some people just need the money straight away.

Also, in more generic youth centre settings, the young people will also be engaged in conversations on such matters:

in youth clubs, 'know your rights' is a session that we run. We talk often about zero hours contracts because it's things that young people talk to us about. A lot of them say 'what is a zero hours contract? Why is that bad? Why is that good?' We explain what it is, the pros and cons of both - the gig economy's another thing that young people talk about now, because it's just something that's on people's lips. So you know we talk to them about that.

As well as discussion upon the issues that young people raise, there will be signposting, working with other services and supporting young people to make informed decisions:

Senior Youth Worker: Youth workers do youth work based on what young people come to them with. So if somebody's talking about a job, then we'll talk to them about the jobs in the local area, we'll talk to them about jobs further afield. We can get them in to see Careers, signposting people to Careers who can give much better careers advice... and we talk generally about some of the political things that happens, such as the gig economy... But what we don't do is go in and start lecturing people on what it is that they should be thinking... sessions that run in youth clubs are usually young person led, so when they come up with these questions those are the things that we give them.

Interviewer: Yeah, so the emphasis is on dialogue, isn't it?

Senior Youth Worker: Absolutely dialogue all the time, and finding out where people are, what people want, and you know, giving them as much information as they can, so they can make an informed choice.

A historical perspective of youth work on such matters was provided by the policy campaigner from England (i4). In both England and Wales, there has been a

a long, long tradition of wanting to do better for young people and to empower their political voice, and to enliven their experience of the pre-adult years. And so give them lots of opportunities to explore ideas and identities and political opinions and all of that.

This tradition “goes way back into the 19th century, and before into some of the dissenting churches and the early trade unions that wanted young people not to be working up chimneys and down coal mines all day” but to have educational opportunities and then “an opportunity to have social mobility to advance and get these jobs and to make a valuable contribution.” Part of this tradition is about supporting the political education of young people with awareness of rights and responsibilities, including “when in employment”. This also applies for those young people who

have been underemployed or exploited or unemployed... then it's a question of making them aware of their wider citizenship rights. The right to work is a fundamental one, the right to decent rewarding work is integral to that as well - so I think that the whole question of consciousness of rights is an important contribution that youth work can make.

Constraints vs. Openness

The above accounts of delivery reveal the significant contribution that these services - and youth work approaches - make to the various policy agendas of supporting young people's access to employment, education and training opportunities. There is a degree of caution identified, however, not only with the form of problem posing of such policy agendas (see part 3 of chapter 2) but also with the ways that these demands might constrain and limit aspects of practice.

In Wales, the voluntary sector officer's (i8) view was that the austerity agenda had exacerbated tensions in this area, especially when youth work delivery

began to be targeted, so groups of young people were targeted. Young people who are not in education or employment known as NEETs, which I find quite offensive, but were given targets - almost like we began to stereotype young people, and give young people labels in order to justify the shrinking funding pot... it was almost like they had to tick boxes to get funding. It was almost like a priority.

One of the problems identified with these labels such as NEET is that, "It feels like here we're trying to fit young people into a space [or a box to be ticked], rather than it being led by young people." In this context, an alternative vision - a projected social logic - can be discerned, one of protecting a space for more open and accessible youth work. The interviewee recalled the 'findings' from talking to young people about youth provision:

the top themes that continue to come out is that youth work gave them an opportunity for a safe space, and to be able to be themselves, to meet other young people, and to have fun. Now I think that should be a human right for every young person across Wales, not [only] if you're NEET or not [only] if you're homeless or not [only] if you're not in school. It's a basic human right and entitlement for everyone to feel safe that they have those opportunities to thrive... So we have to get back to basics of it I think so that youth work again is valued and understood.

This interviewee, while recognising the need for working and ensuring inclusivity with a wide range of underrepresented groups (e.g. in terms of gender, ethnicity, sexuality and disability), simultaneously saw a need for “equality of access to youth work” for every young person and without a postcode lottery. This projected social logic is for a rebalancing to more open forms of youth work in Wales. In England, a similar vision can also be identified (e.g. see IDYW, 2009, 2011, 2018) though - as discussed in the previous chapter - this is more of political counter-logic due to the more marginalised position of such youth work discourse within English policy frameworks of this period.

Furthermore, a youth charity manager in Wales (i6), shared their perspective on how open-ended youth work can be particularly effective - acting as a building block or conduit - through which other benefits may follow more organically:

the thing that makes any work that you do with young people is about the relationships that you're building with those young people, and it's taking the time to understand and to know the young people that you're working with.

And I think often these very finite [targeted] projects that have a very singular focus [such as reducing NEET numbers or tackling county lines] because they're just focused on this thing, they miss all of the myriad of other things that going on in people's lives, and it's too, it's too predetermined, and it necessarily then narrows your focus, and you miss some of the crucial

things that are going on for people, and it also assumes that things are very two-dimensional.

Instead, rather than having pre-set and narrow expectations, the alternative logic put forward is that:

always the engagement with the young person is about helping them to progress in whatever that means for them. So, without sort of again pre-determining what progression might involve, or might look like for them.

Arguably, a key point that can be drawn out of these local accounts of everyday practice of youth workers is one that has been made very clearly and succinctly by Spence et al. (2006):

One of the reasons youth work is effective in engaging with young people who might be defined as problematic, is because it does not define them in these terms. Centring the young people themselves is crucial to the process of winning their voluntary engagement but the focus on social exclusion centres problems rather than people. (p. 136)

Images 11 and 12: Governance

Image 11: NCS Board

Our board



**Brett Wigdortz
CBE**
Chair, Founder & Honorary
President of Teach First and
CEO of tinetyco



Mark Gifford
CEO, National Citizen Service



Paul Ciesi OBE
Non-Executive Director and
Advisor to organisations
including Guy's & St Thomas
NHS Trust, Kingston University,
Sainsbury's and the Premier
League



**The Rt Hon
Nick Hurd**
Former Conservative MP for
Builsp, Northwood and Pinner
and served as Minister for Civil
Society from May 2010 until
July 2014



Ian Livingstone CBE
Co-Founder of Games
Workshop and Non-Executive
Director of Sumo Group PLC



John Maltby
Has a portfolio of Non-Executive
roles including Chair of Alica
Bank, Nordia Bank and
Simplyhealth PLC and former
chair of Good Energy Group PLC



Tristram Mayhew
Founder, Chief Gorka and
Chairman of Go Ape



**Lord McNicol of
West Kilbride**
Former General Secretary of
the Labour Party



Jacquie Nnochiri
Head of Department and Head
of Year 11 at a West London
Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)



Ndidi Okezie
CEO, UK Youth



Ashley Summerfield
Global Leader, Board
Consulting Practice, Egon
Zehnder



Deborah Tavara
Held executive roles in Legal
& General, Williams & Glyn
Bank, Resolution, Swiss Re and
General Electric



Ahmed Ibrahim
Co-Chair, NCS Youth Voice Forum



Hannah McLellan
Co-Chair, NCS Youth Voice Forum

(Source: NCS, 2021b)

Image 12: Board Recruitment in Wales

Youth Work Strategy Implementation Board



Information pack for applicants

**Youth Work Strategy
Implementation Board**

Appointment of Board Members

Closing date: 4 July 2022

(Source: Applicant Pack in 2022 for Wales Youth Work Strategy Implementation Board)

The above images (image 11 and image 12) are visualisations of respective approaches adopted to governance within each case. Image 11 is from a full-page profile of the NCS Board that is within the business plan for 2021-2022 (NCS, 2021b, p.13). It provides portrait photographs with names and titles of board members, indicating their respective backgrounds and roles. Image 12 is from a cover to an information pack for applicants (in 2022) to the Youth Work Strategy Implementation Board in Wales. This board was recruiting members with the goal of working to implement recommendations from the IYWB (2021) report.

Board Membership

With reference to image 11, the NCS staff member (i2) noted that there had been a push to develop an extra “diversity of voice into that space, and to get more insight from the youth sector... and the inclusion of the 2 youth voice reps is a relatively

recent development". However, what is noticeable in image 11 is that there are 14 board members. At that point in time (in 2021) it included: 2 older young people, 2 members from the youth and education sector, 2 members with political party affiliations (Conservative and Labour), and 8 members (if including the CEO) with significant corporate and commercial backgrounds. Expertise from the youth sector itself - in terms of numbers of board members - is overshadowed by the allocation of board places to members from corporate roles within the private sector. Through the NCS board and its various iterations (see NCS, 2019c, 2020a, 2021b, 2022) a dominant social logic can be discerned of private sector dominance upon this management board.

A youth worker activist from England (i3) commented:

it's not to say that there's not the odd person who's good in these lists of board members who knows something about youth work. But, in general, very few - both this list and in general - very few people who know anything about youth work, that doesn't seem to be valued. Or at least even if someone there knows something about youth work, very, very few who've actually come from a, what I call, an open youth work background, so years spent in youth clubs and/or detached work.

According to this interviewee, one consequence of board membership without substantial youth work input is that it is neglecting the value of an open youth work approach,

but it should be learning from that methodology at the at the very, very least, because otherwise you continue with these set of assumptions, which is about programmatic work rather than long term relationships and support.

For this person NCS needs to "big up community-based youth work", though

you're not going to get that with a board full of people with business experience... realistically, you can kind of almost see that that its dominated by industry people, and it's not an accident. Because that's who, that's the values... that are imbued and embedded in these programmes and these organisations, that's the expertise that's kind of not only valued, but is, is almost needed... especially from government... to be seen as a kind of trusted partner to be able to deliver.

Upon seeing this image, a youth charity manager (i6) also observed that when compared to Wales, the NCS in England:

does look an awful lot more corporate and looking at some of the interests of the individuals, and where they come from. There's a lot of people from the financial sector it seems.

The NCS Board could be further reviewed, for example, in terms of its representativeness of gender or ethnicity or class. Also, though conscious of it being a potentially “superficial” point about image 11, the youth charity manager was struck by:

the way that they've... visually represented the board. One immediately looks at it as some sort of hierarchy, and that's problematic. Then when you look at this, all those, those guys then at the top - in the main, but not entirely white fellas - all taking up the sort of what would be potentially the higher part of the hierarchy. And then the women and the people of colour - by and large - are down, lower down the rankings there, and I don't know if that's just coincidental... subliminally it sort of speaks to perhaps people's positions within the organisation and the value of those people, and where the power is.

Overall, as various comments above illustrate, image 11 provides a visualisation of *the social logic of incorporating private sector actors into youth sector governance*, and the ideological stance - and fantasmatic logic - that trust is to be achieved primarily through marketised governance and oversight. The prominence given to

the ideas and practices of the market throughout the NCS suggest an ideological fantasy that such marketisation is the only appropriate option available. As well as its branding, commercial contracts, commodification and casualisation, there is a majority of NCS board members from the private sector overseeing its governance - indeed, the roots for this can be traced back to envisioning within the NCS 'Green Paper' (see image 3 in chapter 4). This privileging of commercial actors as 'the key trusted partners' for governance is described as a fantasmatic logic because it cloaks the contingency of this situation, and it blocks off the alternative options that are available. For instance, the Wales approach illustrates that alternative approaches are available for governance - the Welsh approach is premised upon recruiting board members with relevant lived and professional experience of youth work, moreso than from positions within 'the market'.

Interestingly when compared to the NCS Board, the board in Wales was openly recruiting - not with trust and faith in the market - but with direct reference to "expertise in and understanding of statutory and voluntary youth work provision" (i.e. an essential criterion in the applicant pack). Public trust was to be generated with board members required to have a sound knowledge and understanding of youth work (e.g. through lived and/or a professional experience), in conjunction with recruitment guided by principles and standards for public life, and commitments to diversity and the Welsh language (all listed in the applicant pack). Image 12 is thus an alternative visualisation of the *social logic of incorporating youth work expertise into governance bodies*, and within an alternative framework of trust premised upon field expertise as well as public standards, diversity and cultural context.

When discussing image 12, however, one general tension identified by the voluntary sector officer (i8) was how best to involve young people in such decision-making bodies. For instance, typical rules for public bodies are that “you’ve got to be over 18 to be part of the board”, but young people (including those under 18) will be saying, “We want a space on the board”. Youth committees (or forums or advisory groups) and/or co-opting young members to boards are various practical measures that have been taken - nevertheless, the interviewee felt “it’s really important that you have diversity and representation on any government appointment, especially youth work!” It was also noted that, obviously, there is a need for “people with governance, with leadership, experience of strategy development, and you also want people with lived experience.”⁸⁷

Alternative Visions: National Bodies, Legislation and Evaluation

In both nations, alternative visions for governance and legislation can also be identified within the youth services sector. Wales has had a succession of provisional advisory boards and reference groups (on youth work) to the relevant minister within the Welsh Government, however, there have been calls for a more permanent body to be established. Jervis (2018), for example, recommended that a “National Body for Youth Provision should be established”, as it was felt there had been an “unhelpful vacuum” since the demise of the WYA in 2006 (p. 20). The IYWB (2021)

⁸⁷ Beyond, or as well as, youth participation on national boards, a typical youth work approach would also focus upon fostering the direct involvement of young people in local, everyday decisions. For example, the local NCS manager (i1), who oversaw a staff team that had adopted a youth work ethos, stated that “certainly on the local level, we were able to give young people a whole bunch of choices”. In this instance, the staff team “were giving young people autonomy as much as possible, obviously within the constraints... and the boundaries” of the programme structure, such as decision-making about different residentials, residential activities, and social action projects (with “guidelines if they wanted to choose their own” as well as a “menu” of options). This decision-making in the small groups used a “consensus approach... so all along the way young people were able to see that they were, their decisions were taken seriously.”

also made the same recommendation for “a national body for youth work services”, as “no national organisation exists to lead, coordinate, champion and develop youth work services in Wales” (p. 14).⁸⁸ In terms of the “manner” of young people’s involvement in such a body, that “would need to be defined by young people themselves” and continued in other governance structures, locally and regionally (p. 9). Such points were echoed by the voluntary sector officer (i8). While not necessarily wanting a new national body to directly “replicate” the WYA, this person saw a real need for the development of a new national body and for the renewal of the “leadership of youth work in Wales”:

when it [the WYA] did disband it left a gap, a huge gap in terms of workforce development, in terms of training, in terms of youth information, in terms of this sector-led approach in terms of all kinds of governance arrangements, funding, for example.

In addition, to a new national body in Wales that is permanent, there have been calls for extra legislation. This interviewee also saw a need “to strengthen the legislative base for youth work in Wales” - for instance, this could help “strengthen the understanding and access in terms of rights to a quality of that provision”, and being clearer on definitions of the youth work services and the expectations for local spending upon it. The IYWB (2021) proposes, for examples, a Youth Work Wales Act to address matters such as the definition, scope, entitlements, infrastructure, funding and governance of youth work services in Wales (pp. 10-12). Thus, projected social logics for governance in the Welsh context include a new legislative base and a new permanent body for youth work and youth services.

⁸⁸ Potentially the envisioned National Body could also “become the funder of youth work services in Wales” (p. 15).

For the youth services sector in England, Choose Youth (2013) have also called for a National Youth Services Advisory Board, this was also included within Labour's (2019) envisioning paper for youth services in England. The policy campaigner (i4) in England discussed such actions in response to austerity politics:

we launched a very powerful campaign - to not just try and stop the demolition (of youth services), but to advocate for statutory funding, and I suppose the highlight of that was achieved in the 2017 election when I mean, although we're a non-party political campaign group, we were pleased the Labour Party took up our proposals for a new government structure for the youth service. And there is a very comprehensive policy document behind the Labour Party manifesto called 'Only Young Once' which set out - in terms which is still entirely relevant - the funding, the government structure, the management mechanisms and the purpose for a modern youth service.

Due to that fact that local government had frequently "let down the youth service in England", it was said that,

we would have to bypass local government, we would have to establish a new national body, which would incorporate young people, representatives of local government, the voluntary sector, and so on - which would be the governmental channel for funding, and funding will be allocated to local areas on the basis of youth strategies, submitted by local consortia of local government, the voluntary sector and so on. So, we said if it was to be statutory, there needs to be a new statutory national body, which would allocate the funding according to rigorous examination of effective proposals at local level.

Notably, such a vision contrasts significantly to the existing (highly commercial) board of the NCS in England, rather this alternative vision - and political counter logic - is premised upon the members of a new national body being

representative of the field, which will be representative of the trainers, of local authority and voluntary sector delivers, of youth workers themselves, and of young people. And, if you want a good, effective educational delivery mechanism you choose the people who know most about

the work and do it... you've got to have some synergy between what is delivered and who is managing it.

Similarly, as in Wales, there have also been proposals for a new alternative legislative base for youth work services in England. While statutory powers already exist (under the Education and Inspections Act 2006) for local authorities “to secure positive activities for young people” and to consult with young people on their services in England, Choose Youth (2013) have campaigned for new powers that go beyond this. This includes a need to be setting out the details of a statutory youth service and the standards for a local offer and what this entails, with “clear arrangements” for quality insurance, inspection and further action when required. Again, when positioned as an alternative to the NCS legislative framework that has developed in England, this vision can be characterised as a political counter-logic.

Noticeably, especially for the English context, a key piece of recent legislation affecting the NCS directly - and the wider youth services sector in England - has been the NCS Act 2017. This sets out the oversight and funding of the NCS Trust, the provision and promotion of the NCS programmes, as well as the business planning and reporting requirements. While an opposing camp (including a coalition of youth work organisations and an opposition political party) can be discerned who advocate for a different legislative framework for a statutory youth service in England, it is insightful to also identify additional perspectives on the NCS legislation. From within the NCS, a staff member (i2) suggested that the legislation can be taken as a ‘mixed blessing’. *On the one hand*, there is the argument that it “enshrines you in a way that is helpful as a body as a kind of offer to young people” - it says the

NCS is needed as a national institution “to coordinate a citizen movement or set of offerings to young people.” *On the other hand*, however, the NCS is a “little bit constrained by the Act” from responding to demands of the DCMS (2022) review, with new offers and different services being sought. For instance, the NCS may want to work in more varied ways with local organisations who work with a wider age range of young people than NCS had - originally - been set up to do,

Now, what the Act does - this is an example of a constraint - the Act really set a much narrower age range of NCS because it was conceived of as something of that moment in time.

The NCS had been set up to work with young people “coming out of year 11 when you’re hitting 16”, but local organisations will say that they “don’t just slice out at 16-17” as they work with a broader age of young people. And so

the Act is really worded around to some extent that original conception. So it says that NCS can work with 16 to 17 year olds. Some older end of 15, and then from time-to-time young people can also mean 18 to 24 [for example, if there are educational needs or disabilities].

So, an alternative vision - a projected social logic - for the NCS could be for it to work in new ways with local organisations with a broader age range of young people - so beyond just its core programmes for young people of school leaving age. The existence of this Act then means that - to potentially offer such provision to a broader age range - “you have to go back and get legal advice on the wording of the Act and what it means.” Furthermore, if ever the wording was to change on age-range, for example, that would be an extremely lengthy process involving work with the relevant government department and the “realities of the legislative timetable”.

One further aspect of governance - for which there has been alternative envisioning in both national contexts - has been the evaluation and review of, and within,

services. From interviewee accounts of delivery and practice from within the two nations, the pressures and demands of targets and metrics were raised. In both case contexts, there has been a dominant social logic of targets and outcome measurement for accountability. As the NCS had developed and grown, for example, it was explained by the NCS staff member (i2) that “expectations on evidence... are high, really high”, and at a different level to “other parts of the youth sector.” NCS was being expected to be operating at the highest levels for evidential standards whereby “pre-post [evaluation] is good, pre and post evaluation with a control group and quasi- experimental is better, RCT is gold standard.” This would mean that NCS programmes were, in a large part, being designed “to meet these evidence requirements.” As part of this process, external independent evaluators - such as Ipsos MORI and Kantar - were being commissioned by government departments to undertake impact evaluations, with pre and post surveys, and control groups of young people - which is “an expensive model”. Thus, indicating a dominant social logic within NCS governance of service evaluation through external consultants. It was noted that this would generate high standards of evidence - even a “gold standard” - and this could inform ‘value for money’ calculations by the Treasury. However, it was noted that this approach was less effective at generating an understanding of “the process of what’s going on, and what are the things that are driving these impacts.” For the NCS post-2022, however, it was explained that there was a “rebalancing” towards more in-house and locally-led evaluation - and not simply an “independent body appearing out of nowhere, and giving them [local delivery partners and young people] surveys.” This would also include more “process evaluation and qualitative approaches” focusing upon learning, and “not just about proving our impact to government to retain funding.” As such a projected social logic

can be discerned, one with aspirations for a modification of the metrics approach in order for there to be extra space for qualitative and in-house evaluation for more learning, not simply evaluation as accountability.

With some parallels to the NCS experience, a key thread within recent government strategies (see Welsh Government, 2014; 2019) has been to commission various evaluations and reviews of youth work and youth services in Wales. Thus, a dominant social logic has been to commission reviews through external consultants. Typically, these have been with academic institutions and smaller consultancy firms rather than larger businesses,⁸⁹ and with some - though not all - calling for higher standards of evidence to demonstrate impact (see part 4 of chapter 2). However, various practitioners and managers have also shared contrasting and alternative visions to the culture of targets and metrics that typically has been created around (often short term) funding. The alternative envisioning - and projected social logic - for evaluation, especially at a more grassroots level, has been premised upon reflective practice with longer-term evaluative cycles. At a grassroots level, for example, the youth charity manager in Wales (i6) shared a vision for there to be a “greater appreciation” of youth services. This is so there is a more widespread recognition

that youth work has an intrinsic value anyway, that doesn't have to be measured by a metric... there's an element of that [intrinsic valuation] that already exists within the Welsh Government, and their thinking. I would like to see that embedded more... [for the voluntary sector as well as local authorities] across the Welsh landscape really.

⁸⁹ Arguably, this might be viewed as a hybridised version of the ‘big con’ of neoliberal consultancy (Mazzucato, 2023)

In turn, it was envisaged that an enhanced valuation of youth work would - in turn- provide a more stable base upon which service provision could “grow and maintain a period of longevity” - this would allow

projects to prove their [intrinsic] worth really and to go through those cycles of evaluation and improvement... at the moment the Welsh Government, along with any other funders, they're still too bound up in the short-term thinking around things, and attaching certain agendas to pieces of work.

On the practicalities of undertaking monitoring and evaluation, the youth work activist (i3) emphasised a potential role - though not without its own problems - for young people and youth workers to be having “a relationship” with funders to develop two-way “trust”. Typically, this alternative envisioning stressed a need for evaluation with qualitative data to be on a par - at least - with quantitative data, and for more space for evaluation with “youth work methods” especially with dialogic conversations as a valuable approach. The role of “creative methods” were also viewed as useful as well as “light touch and really quick” activities, especially as young people involved in youth projects are ‘not in school’.

Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter has further explored the phases of neoliberalisation - as well as responses to this - within the youth services sector in both England and Wales. It has organised its analysis around six images that have embodied and visualised aspects of service delivery and governance in both the English and Welsh cases. The chapter has identified benefits and features of service delivery within each case, as well as identifying dominant rules, norms and patterns - and additional envisioning and contestations - within the nodes of service delivery and governance.

Neoliberalisation, however, has not unfolded the same way in both nations, with the logic of the market appearing to be more acute in the NCS. For example, the NCS has been characterised the casualisation of delivery staff, while its main board has been dominated by figures from the private sector. In the Youth Service of Wales, by way of contrast, there is a dominant framework for the registration and professionalisation of youth workers for service delivery, and the recruitment of board members - for a national governance body - prioritises expertise and/or lived experience of youth work. The key findings of this chapter are summarised in Table 16 (see below). What follows now is further discussion and analysis of this table and this chapter's findings.

Table 16: Comparison of Delivery and Governance

	NCS in England	Youth Service in Wales
Service Delivery	<p>Personal and social benefits for young people through short-term delivery of programmes</p> <p>Pressure of demands and targets</p> <p>Social logic of casualisation and deprofessionalisation for delivery staff</p> <p>Political counter-logic of delivery through trained and qualified youth workers</p>	<p>Personal and social benefits for young people through year-round delivery of services</p> <p>Pressures of resourcing, of targets and of short-termism</p> <p>Social logic of registration and professionalisation for youth workers</p> <p>Projected social logic of sufficiency standards</p>
Service Delivery and 'Youth Transitions' Agenda	<p>Well-being and confidence benefits for young people, especially those at margins</p> <p>Addressed with targeted initiatives and main programmes over short periods</p> <p>Projected social logic of sector-wide reallocation of funding to more year-round provision with local youth infrastructure</p> <p>Political counter logic of supporting open youth work in youth services sector</p>	<p>Well-being and confidence benefits for young people, especially those at margins</p> <p>Addressed with targeted initiatives and generic youth provision that typically year round</p> <p>Projected social logic of shift towards more open provision</p>

Governance	<p>Social logic of private sector dominance on management board of NCS</p> <p>Fantasmatic logic of trust through marketisation</p> <p>Social logic of targets and outcome measurement for accountability</p> <p>Social logic of service evaluation through external consultants</p> <p>Projected social logic of modified metrics for more qualitative and in-house evaluation for more learning, not simply accountability</p> <p>Projected social logic of NCS amended legislation to offer provision to a broader age range</p> <p>Political counter-logic of a National Youth Services Advisory Board and strengthening legislation for a statutory youth service</p>	<p>Social logic of youth work expertise and experience for board membership</p> <p>Social logic of targets and outcome measurement for accountability</p> <p>Social logic of commissioning service reviews</p> <p>Projected social logic of dialogue and reflection as core within evaluation</p> <p>Projected social logic of a new legislative base for youth work services</p> <p>Projected social logic of a new permanent national body for youth work services</p>
-------------------	---	--

Firstly, there will be further elaboration of the set of logics that this chapter has identified and characterised (as summarised in Table 16). In particular, it is contended that these logics develop insight, understanding and support comparative analysis of the neoliberalisation phases in each case context, as well as navigations and resistances. These logics have been characterised as including:

- *Social logics* with dominant rules, norms and patterns for service delivery and governance within each case. This helps to identify points of divergence that are exacerbated through - especially in England - the 'roll out' phase of neoliberalisation. Within the NCS programme in England, a dominant social logic identified has been that of developing a highly casualised workforce for its service delivery, and this is at the expense of pre-established pay and qualification frameworks (e.g. the JNC) within the youth services sector. Thus, a family resemblance can be discerned here with the historic Thatcherite

critique of public professions. Additionally, in terms of governance, the board of the NCS in England has functioned with a dominant social logic of embedding private sector actors in key positions. Thus far, these social logics identified for the NCS programme provide insight into how 'roll out' phase of neoliberalisation is unfolding within the nodes of service delivery and governance. With the Youth Service in Wales, by way of contrast, there is no such 'roll out' phase of neoliberalisation occurring through the expansion of a new service. Rather its nodes of service delivery and governance are characterised by the dominant social logics of: the registration and professionalisation of youth workers for delivery, and embedding actors with experience and expertise of youth work within new governance mechanisms. While 'roll out' neoliberalisation process are more overt within the NCS programme, a social logic of targets and outcomes for accountability is identifiable across both services. Thus, marketised systems of surveillance and metrics - with associated performativity pressures and impact measurement expectations – reach into the nodes of service delivery and governance for both cases.

- *Projected social logics*: within the Youth Service of Wales there has been service delivery through a mix of targeted and generic youth work, however, a projected social logic has been identified for a shift towards more open youth work - with open youth work providing the roots for relationship-building with young people, including those at the 'margins'. There is also a projected logic of sufficiency within services and their delivery. In England, a projected social logic has been identified (e.g. through English youth funding reviews and NCS planning for the post-2022 period) for service delivery to occur more on a

year-round basis and in more local settings. In terms of governance, within Wales the projected social logics identified have included: new legislation and a new permanent body for youth work services, and more space for dialogue and reflection in evaluation. Within the NCS, projected social logics identified for its own governance include: more qualitative and in-house evaluation for learning, and (potentially in the future) amendments to its age restrictions within legislation. Additional counter-visions are also identified in relation to the NCS, and these are characterised as political counter-logics.

- *Political counter-logics*: as discussed in the previous chapters, when compared to England, alternative envisioning has had a stronger ‘foothold’ within youth service policy discourse of Wales and the Welsh Government. As stated in England, youth work and youth service advocacy has been placed in a more oppositional - and marginalised - position following the rise of the NCS and its highly marketised service. As a result, calls for a shift towards delivery through trained and qualified youth workers, and through universal, community-rooted and open forms of youth work are identified as a political counter logic. Additionally, within England, legislation for a statutory youth service and a national youth services board are also more oppositional - and are political counter-logics - within the English policy context.
- *Fantasmatic logics*: as part of the wider political struggles surrounding NCS and its highly marketised service model, a fantasmatic logic of trust in the role of the market and private sector actors within governance is identified. For instance, the privileging of private sector representatives as ‘trusted partners’ on the NCS board is cloaking the contingency of this arrangement, and it blocks-off the possibility of alternative options (e.g. such as the foregrounding

of alternative membership criteria and constraints being placed upon the role of market ideals and practices within governance).

Secondly, having elaborated on the set of logics that have been identified, further clarification will now be provided on the characterisation and foregrounding of these respective logics as social, political and fantasmatic. As noted in the previous chapter, social, political and fantasmatic logics can all be “operative at any one time, each being in a relation of over-determination with the others” (Glynos, Speed et al, 2015, p. 48), nevertheless the characterisation and foregrounding of specific logics can occur to support analysis. In this chapter, for instance, while casualisation of delivery staff and private sector dominance on the board are identified as dominant social logics within NCS, they do have political and ideological dimensions as well. Nevertheless, the norms, role and patterns for the advertisement and recruitment of delivery staff and the formation of the NCS board lead to these being characterised as dominant social logics. Meanwhile dissenting positions - such as visions for a national workforce of trained and qualified youth workers, and alternative legislation and a new national body for a statutory youth service in England - are identified as political counter-logics. Additionally, the ideological dimension is characterised through the fantasmatic logic of trust in marketisation, with the normalisation of private sector representatives as ‘trusted partners’ on the board cloaking the contingency and possibility of alternatives to this arrangement.

Additionally, this chapter’s characterisation and foregrounding of specific logics as social logics helps to generate insight and analysis of the dominant social norms, rules and patterns for each case context - thus enabling points of divergence and

convergence to be further discerned on these matters. The dominant social logics for delivery and governance highlight the contrasting approaches to: staffing within each service (e.g. with casualisation and deprofessionalisation being juxtaposed to registration and professionalisation); and, board membership for each case (e.g. with embedding social actors from the market being juxtaposed to embedding social actors from the youth work field). Additionally, this logics approach helps identify similarities despite the differences (e.g. the pressures of targets and outcome or impact measurement - and marketised metrics - for accountability). Thus while neoliberalisation appears more acute in the NCS, it is unfolding within each case in differing ways.

Meanwhile, these dominant social logics are accompanied by the characterisation and foregrounding of specific logics as either projected social logics, political counter-logics or fantasmatic logics in order to also discern the variations - and similarities - across the two cases with regards service envisioning, contestations and struggles. For instance, while delivery through trained and qualified youth workers in England is a political counter-logic, that is a dominant social logic in Wales. Meanwhile a fantasmatic logic of trust in marketisation is characterised and foregrounded to discern the downplaying and cloaking of the possibility of alternatives to the market's dominance upon the NCS board and its membership. However, in Wales the dominant social logic is for a board membership premised upon youth work experience and expertise. Additionally, in England the envisioning of alternative legislation and a new national body for a statutory youth service is also characterised as a political counter-logic in England (e.g. gaining the backing of a coalition of youth organisations and the opposition political party, while being

positioned as a critique of the NCS programme and the Conservative Party's youth policy). In Wales, such envisioning for new legislation and a new national body for youth work services is characterised as a projected social logic - while not yet realised in concrete practices, it has a stronger 'foothold' in Welsh youth policy (e.g. such recommendations placed on the Minister of Education's table by their advisory board). Overall, the rationale of such characterisation and foregrounding is to enrich understanding and analysis of service delivery and governance for each case, and to further analysis of the respective forms of neoliberalisation, contestation and resistance within each case context too.

Thirdly, having elaborated on the characterisation and foregrounding of the respective logics within this chapter, further discussion will now be provided on the points of divergence and concurrence that have been identified, including the conditions that contribute to the respective outcomes in each case. For instance, there is divergence across each case with service delivery and governance: NCS in England has developed a highly marketised approach with dominant social logics of the casualisation of delivery staff and market dominance on the NCS board; and, for the Youth Service in Wales there are dominant social logics of registration and professionalisation of youth workers, and youth work dominance of the relevant board. Broadly, the contributory factors and conditions - as highlighted in the previous chapter - shaping such points of divergence include:

- *Institutional and governance differences*: youth service policy in Wales is a devolved area of government with strategic developments being overseen by various youth work service units and boards (post-WYA) reporting to the Education Minister, whereas NCS policy framework in England has been

overseen by the UK Cabinet Office and DCMS (and in conjunction with the NCS Trust's board);

- *Differences of political culture and political ideals:* youth service policy in Wales has been overseen by a Welsh Labour-led administration with certain post-devolution ideals of civic municipal socialism, whereas NCS policy in England has clear roots in the Conservative Party and its 'Big Society' ideals of the early 21st century; and,
- *Differences to the engagement of professional youth work discourse and the youth work field:* youth service policy in Wales has been open to integrating youth work discourse within its strategic planning through consultation and engagement with pre-established youth service partnerships and the wider field, whereas the historic development of NCS policy in England has been premised upon privileging private and voluntary sector involvement, while marginalising professional youth work discourse, pre-established youth service partnerships and the wider youth work field.

The above contributory factors and conditions have resulted in England experiencing greater levels of neoliberalisation 'roll out' within its youth services sector - key politicians, including the Prime Minister (from 2010-2016), were strongly behind the envisioning, development and expansion of the NCS which included (a) the marketisation of NCS service delivery and governance, and (b) the silencing and marginalisation of pre-established services and the wider youth work profession. Meanwhile, the respective Minister(s) overseeing youth service policy in Wales have (a) rejected the NCS model and its expansion in Wales, (b) prioritised delivery and governance drawing upon the professional frameworks of youth work and the wider

education workforce, and (c) engaged and actively consulted with the wider youth work profession. Within such conditions, the 'roll out' phase of neoliberalisation has encountered more buffers within the youth services sector of Wales, especially when compared to England.

The above contributory factors and conditions have also resulted in more acute 'political frontiers' developing in England's youth sector. For instance, the level of cutbacks and marginalisation to pre-established youth services and the youth work profession have fed into the emergence of a set of political counter-logics in England. As well as critique and opposition to the dominance of the NCS model of service delivery and governance in England, there have been counter-hegemonic visions and alternative proposals that foreground pre-established youth services and the professional frameworks of youth work. These include: (a) service delivery through trained and qualified youth workers; (b) delivery through universal, community-rooted and open youth work opportunities for young people; and (c) governance through stronger legislation and a new national body for a statutory youth service in England. By way of contrast, such visions have a stronger 'foothold' within the government youth work strategies in Wales. While the JNC framework is central to the youth service workforce in Wales, the agency and advocacy of the youth work field has also fed into projected social logics for more open youth work, stronger legislation and a new permanent body for youth work services. While such visions have not fully materialised, they are less oppositional than in England and a common theme within government policy documentation as well as through advocacy channels.

Additionally, as well as the variations there have been similarities across the cases. While 'roll out' of neoliberalisation has not been as marked in the Youth Service in Wales as it has been in the NCS in England, there are still commonalities across the cases including the dominant social logics of targets, outcomes and impact measures for accountability. Broadly, a contributory factor and condition shaping this area for concurrence is the *common public management culture of performance monitoring and impact measurement*. In national and sub-national government institutions, funding bodies and service management circles of both England and Wales a historical pattern of adopting market-based logics and business mechanisms (such as metrics) has been characterised as 'New Public Management', and such a culture has embedded itself across a range of institutions.

To conclude, this chapter has used the selected images and wider research data to discuss service delivery and governance across the two cases. The chapter has used a logics approach - and identified a set of logics - to generate insight and to further comparative analysis of the two cases and the forms - and conditions - of neoliberalisation and resistance within them. Points of divergence and concurrence across the cases are identified and analysed, including the role of institutions, political cultures, and professional discourse within each case.

7. Post(-)neoliberal Subjectivity, Alternatives and Counter-Logics

Introduction

The previous three chapters have been setting out and analysing the two case studies of services for young people from England and Wales (2007-2022). They have analysed neoliberalisation - as well as social, political and fantasmatic logics - within each of the publicly funded service chains and their forms of service provision, distribution, delivery and governance. The research and analysis has identified similarities between the cases such as the 'roll back' phase of neoliberalisation occurring for existing services in both nations. Meanwhile a difference has been the 'roll out' phase of neoliberalisation, with a new service, occurring only in England not Wales. This chapter now moves on to further analyse the negotiations, resistances, alternatives and counter-logics to neoliberalisation within these cases. To aid and frame the analysis of this chapter, the alternative norms and counter-practices - and the associated struggles of subjectivity - will be characterised as components of an unfolding post(-)neoliberal platform and strategic outlook. The post(-)neoliberal theoretical framework and terminology will be further elaborated upon and applied within this chapter's discussion.

Format, Structure and Argument

Part one of this chapter will further discuss and explain the post(-)neoliberal theoretical framework, as this terminology will be used to inform (a) the typological framing of alternatives within and beyond neoliberalism, and (b) the characterisation of struggles to challenge and move beyond neoliberal subjectivity. In part two of this

chapter, this post(-)neoliberal framework will be applied to foreground a set of alternative norms and rules - from within the English and Welsh youth work and youth services field - to those of neoliberalisation. This set of alternatives will be framed as an ongoing and unfolding post(-)neoliberal platform and strategic outlook within this sector. Principally, part one draws upon publications highlighted within the literature review and interview data, and part two draws upon documentary sources and dialogic data from the research interviews.

Overall, this chapter will identify and foreground a coherent set of alternative norms and counter-practices to neoliberalisation within the youth services sector of England and Wales. This ongoing and unfolding post(-)neoliberal platform and strategic outlook advances substantial transformations to transgress and push beyond the neoliberalised norms and rules of the market. It articulates a clear demand and vision for the remaking of policy, services, practice and subjectivities in this domain, both in the present and for the future. Nevertheless it will be argued that a distinction needs to be drawn between a post(-)neoliberal strategic outlook and those neoliberal recalibrations that act to embed neoliberalisation rather than move beyond its logics.

Part One: Post(-)neoliberal Framework

Part one of this chapter will further elaborate upon the post(-)neoliberal theoretical framework, and how it builds upon and relates to existing literature and experiences in this field. In summary, a case will be put forward for articulating the post(-)neoliberal as a combination of both: (i) the postneoliberal - typically pointing towards an ethos and a reimagining device in the neoliberal present that aids counter-conduct, and (ii) the post-neoliberal - typically denoting a more leftist 'social-

collectivist' break (to varying degrees) from neoliberalisation in both the present and the future. Furthermore, while it also holds a family resemblance with conceptual devices such as alter-neoliberal critique, it will be distinguished from recalibrated and softer forms of neoliberalisation.

Building upon Insights of the Postneoliberal/Post-neoliberal

In their account of the historical terrains of youth work, Bradford and Cullen (2014) acknowledge the diversity of youth workers in England and Wales (e.g. “from part-time volunteers to experienced professionals with post-graduate qualifications”) and the diversity of providers and approaches (pp. 93-94). Additionally, they argue the historically “marginal” and “ambiguous” identity of the professional youth worker is increasingly destabilised and contested within the neoliberal policy context of austerity Britain, and the next form of its identity “‘shape-shifting’...is yet unknown” (pp. 100-103). Indeed, the future terrain for the identity - and subjectivity - of practitioners is an ongoing concern of academia, policy and practice.⁹⁰ For example, for the Irish youth work context, Kiely and Meade (2018) advocate for “the re-imagining of youth work for a postneoliberal postevidence-based practice world” as a way of moving beyond neoliberalised austerity and governmental rationalities (p. 36).

With Kiely and Meade’s (2018) argument, it is noted that the unhyphenated term ‘postneoliberal’ is adopted for framing an alternative set of imaginings to those of neoliberalism. Certainly, critiques and countering of the neoliberal practice world and

⁹⁰ Arguably, the practical relevance of such analysis could be identified within Nicholls’ (2012) partisan and politicised assertion that: “A new form of youth work is needed. Youth workers must assert its progressive nature and reconnect with its origins in an alternative socialist education... socialist commitment must shape this new practice” (p. 215).

austerity impacts are not lacking in the youth work field (e.g. see de St Croix, 2016; Unison, 2016; Davies, 2019). Various envisioning publications and manifestos are plentiful too (e.g. see Nicholls, 2012; Choose Youth, 2013; Davies, 2015; IDYW, 2018; YMCA, 2020). Nevertheless, it is noted that the term 'postneoliberal' is specifically used by Kiely and Meade as an envisioning device, and this particular usage contrasts with some other usages of the term (as outlined below). In this instance the 'postneoliberal' is used as an inspiration for a reimagining that builds upon "counter-conduct" and "resistance" (p. 35), and it "affirms practice that occurs outside or despite the dominant" frameworks of neoliberalism (p. 36). Notably, the form of practice that is reimagined is "open-ended and deliberative" (p. 35) in contrast to those outcome-based and performance managed forms of practice. Building upon the flow of this argument, an imagining of the prospective 'postneoliberal subject' could be extrapolated, potentially one (partially) shaped by such open-ended and deliberative forms of practice and one ready to transgress neoliberal strictures.

Elsewhere in literature, the 'post-neoliberal' is simply another phase whereby the market and capital continue their encroachment into educational structures and subjectivities (i.e. rather than as a reimagining device for subjects to resist and move beyond market logics). In Ball's (2012c) history of state education, he uses the term 'post-neo-liberal' to describe the so-called 'Third Way' policy phase of Tony Blair's New Labour, with the state as a "market-maker" (p. 95). This usage of the term then holds a certain resonance with McGimpsey's (2013) account of 'post neoliberalism' - and in later work (2017) a 'late-neoliberal' phase - in current youth policy, one that is characterised by a demand for finance capital to obtain measurable returns on social

investment in youth provision. Rather than applying the prefix 'post' in such contexts, an alternative characterisation is Quiggin's (2018) 'soft neoliberalism' that contrasts the 'Third Way' to the 'hard neoliberalism' of Thatcher. As Quiggin identifies, soft neoliberals agree with hard neoliberals on privatisations, anti-union policies, "uncritical acceptance" of the power of the finance sector, and efforts to "halt or reverse" public sector growth; though this is combined with attempts to soften and "mitigate the growing inequality" that results (p. 148). Some similarities can be identified here with Garrett's (2019, p. 196) depiction of "rhetorically recalibrated neoliberalism" that asserts greater inclusiveness (e.g. during the 2010s in UK), and Fraser's (2017) account of a form of 'progressive' neoliberalism in USA that has embraced emancipatory movements. In both of these examples, the authors (Fraser, 2017; Garrett, 2019) are highly sceptical of such efforts to make neoliberalism appear more palatable, as the function can be to disarm, cloak, sidestep and co-opt critique of neoliberalism.

Other meanings for the 'post-neoliberal' are also identifiable, including both 'right' and 'left' variations. For instance, *on the one hand*, there is the emergent post-neoliberal future of "oligarchic capture" (i.e. "upward concentration of wealth and power" [p.166]) with "neo-reactionary movements" and "anti-democratic identifications" (Means & Slater, 2019). *On the other hand*, there has been the use of the term to represent a break - though partial and incomplete - from neoliberalism, e.g. based upon Latin American new left experiences (Ruckert et al., 2016). There the strongest breaks from neoliberalism were seen within social programmes, i.e. where there was a role for the state and increased spending combined with a strengthening of citizen engagement and links with social movements (Ruckert et al.,

2016). In the UK, during the late 2010s Corbynism has also been presented as a platform for post-neoliberalism, one characterised by heterodox economics, alternative models of ownership, and new grassroots links to policy making (Berry, 2017; Berry and Guinan, 2019).

Thus far, the 'postneoliberal' is presented as a tool to aid reimagining beyond the neoliberal, and it is distinguishable from: the 'post-neoliberal' (or 'post-neo-liberal') as an updated 'softer' and 'recalibrated' version or a later phase of neoliberalism; the 'post-neoliberal' as an emergent neo-reactionary future; and, the 'post-neoliberal' as a leftist-type 'social-collectivist' break from neoliberalism - at least to a certain extent, though incomplete. In particular, Springer's (2015) discussion on hyphenation is pertinent here. When unhyphenated, 'postneoliberalism' is not implying "a condition arising after neoliberalism" (p. 11). For Springer, it is difficult to draw "a complete qualitative break" (as would be signified by a hyphen) from the neoliberal - or at least "a little premature" - due to neoliberal continuities (p. 10). Instead, the unhyphenated version suggests "a critical theoretical standpoint where we can position ourselves" to critique neoliberal discourses, disrupt its dominance, and open-up spaces to go beyond it (p. 11). Up to a point, this has a certain parallel to the meaning of 'postcolonialism', without a hyphen, as "critique of colonial discourses and their relentless... legacies" (p. 10). However, it is not only the 'neoliberal' (with the market-led logics and subjectivities that it produces) that is a source of antagonism and focus of critique. As indicated by Means and Slater (2019), 'post-neoliberal' re-imaginings are also a site of struggle in themselves, for example there are both "emancipatory dreams and reactionary visions" (pp. 173-174) that are emerging with the potential to shape political identifications and educational futures.

Conjecture of the Post(-)neoliberal Framework

When applied to the conditions of youth services and the subjectivities of youth workers - in the timeframe and geographical parameters of this study - a case could be made that the notion of the 'postneoliberal' is useful, i.e. in the vein of Springer's (2015) argument. In part, this is because it is not implying a complete break from neoliberalism (though that complete break may be desired, it would be unconvincing and 'premature' as neoliberal rules and norms continue - and frequently dominate - in this field and beyond). Additionally, it could be contended that, this term's usefulness is its suggestion of a critical viewpoint upon the neoliberal, that in turn has potential to open-up spaces for reimagining and moving beyond - and disrupting - the neoliberal structures and subjectivities from within.

With such critiques from within - and envisioning beyond - neoliberalism, parallels can also be identified here with Soudias' (2021; 2023) articulation of alter-neoliberal critique, developed with reference to activist experiences from the Greek economic crisis and resistance to austerity politics of the 2010s. For Soudias (2023), the demystifications of *anti-politics* and the "radical imagination" of *alter-politics* are the "foundation for an alter-neoliberal critique" (p. 241). *Firstly*, this critique opposes, for example, the competitiveness, quantifications, individualisation and selfishness of neoliberal rationalities (p. 256) - it is responding to and is against the neoliberal discourses of "the orders of power" (p. 253). *Secondly*, in seeking to avoid co-option (and seeking to minimise neoliberal reproduction [p. 240]), it asserts the role of common spaces for critique of neoliberalism, while proposing an alternative and contrasting set of principles based on "mutual respect, autonomy and self-governance, self-organization, and solidarity" (p. 256). Furthermore, it acknowledges

that a “radical imagination” opens the future to alternatives from the neoliberal status quo, while not prescribing a pre-set plan for the future (p. 10).

While there are merits to unhyphenated ‘postneoliberal’ terminology (that also hold parallels to that of alter-neoliberal critique, that also has its merits as well as its own complexities),⁹¹ this thesis, however, makes a case for a subtle post(-)neoliberal variation (i.e. with a hyphen positioned within parentheses). For instance, a usefulness of the post(-)neoliberal is that it articulates, builds upon and synthesises existing analyses that can bring insight to the cases under consideration. While this post(-)neoliberal terminology is related to other similar terms and conceptual frameworks, it is not supplanting but complementing them.⁹²

While, acknowledging that the unhyphenated postneoliberal version captures a discomfort (of many) within the neoliberal present and the fact that there is not yet a significant break from neoliberalism, it can also be argued that the hyphenated post-neoliberal version (symbolising a ‘break’ of sorts) is still useful. It also captures an internal fissure and partial breaks or interruptions with alternative spaces (within the neoliberal present), and it cultivates an imaginary (for the future) that also warrants further articulation. Furthermore the ‘post-neoliberal’ envisioning encountered within this youth work field is more suitably categorised as pursuing a more leftist ‘social-

⁹¹ The prefix ‘alter’ (and/or the modifier ‘alt’) are not without their own varied usages and complexities - see footnote 24.

⁹² Arguably, the post(-)neoliberal terminology is one with potential to complement (not to supplant or replace) various other - non-exclusive - mobilising terms, devices, tools and imaginaries, whether framed as postneoliberalism, alter-neoliberalism, de-neoliberalisation, counter-neoliberalism, ‘class struggle’, ‘anti-racism’ or as other counter-hegemonic or liberatory struggles shared by education workers and communities of practice. However, the post(-)neoliberal is not articulated as a panacea, and it is not articulated without limitations, contestations or antagonisms entailed within it (e.g. see Appendix D).

collectivist' (if partial) break from neoliberalism (e.g. see Table 5 in chapter 2), and as such this position also presents a buffer to neo-reactionary and far right alternatives. Exiting or breaking from the 'neoliberal present' and from 'neoliberal subjectivity' - in order to call forwards a new subjectivity - requires reimagining and resistances in the present, but also structural changes that will draw upon such existing prototypes that create conditions for new subjectivity to be more hegemonic in the future. Therefore, in this instance, a case is put forward for a use of the post(-)neoliberal as a combination of both: (i) the postneoliberal - indicating an ethos and a reimagining device in the neoliberal present that aids counter-conduct, and (ii) the post-neoliberal - signifying (to varying degrees and drawing upon various alternative prototypes) a leftist 'social-collectivist' break from neoliberalisation in both the present and for the future. This terminology also holds a family resemblance to that of alter-neoliberal critique, and - as stated - it is complementary rather than seeking to displace other similar terms and analytical devices. In this context a post(-)neoliberal ethos - and post(-)neoliberal subjectivity - is within and against neoliberalism. It is seeking to limit, transgress, operate outside, and move beyond the impact of neoliberal logics within this field. It envisions a new alternative terrain beyond the neoliberal era for policy, services and practice; it partly creates this, partial breaks may appear, but is not fully there - yet it 'sows the seeds' that may, or may not, continue to grow and develop in the future. It expresses a will and commitment for laying the foundations - or planting seeds and growing saplings - for an alternative future in this field that, as part of its ontological condition, is contingent, unfixed and that will be an ongoing site of struggle.

Conjecture on a Post(-)neoliberal Typology

The post(-)neoliberal framework can be applied to aid the analysis, framing and characterisation of negotiations, resistances and alternatives to neoliberalism within this field. It can provide insightful - and analytically productive - characterisations that are pertinent for this practice field, and it usefully builds upon and extends existing youth work knowledge about typological frameworks, analyses of subjectivity and future re-imagining. For instance, the typological construction of the 'post(-)neoliberal subject' in this instance can bring insight - and be analytically productive - when compared alongside characterisation of the 'neoliberal subject'. It can hold a practical usefulness, for example, when integrated within typological frameworks that are then applied as an educative device within professional formation programmes.

The post(-)neoliberal (however it is presented) is currently under-analysed in youth work literature, yet it holds potential for being deployed - as a framework for analysis, as a reimagining device, or even as an educative or organising tool. As such the post(-)neoliberal framework is currently under-utilised and under-articulated within typological framing and/or for the analysis of subjectivity. If, for instance, youth workers have become 'performative professionals' and 'neoliberal subjects', then could a certain set of navigations, resistances, and alternatives be characterised as the seeds and saplings - and antagonisms - of an emergent post(-)neoliberal subjectivity (see Table 17)?

Table 17: Post(-)neoliberal Typology

Shifting Terrains of Professional Practice (abridged version of Bradford, 2015)			An Emergent - Yet Incomplete and Unfixed - Terrain of Professional Practice (for the Present and the Foreseeable Future)
<i>The Incipient Professional (during World War Two)</i>	<i>The Welfare Professional (during post-war period)</i>	<i>The Performative Professional* (during and after Thatcherism)</i>	<i>The Post(-)neoliberal (or Alter-neoliberal) Professional*</i>
The emergence of a transformative and reflective professional identity (i.e. alongside pre-existing youth worker roles that shaped by mutual aid, philanthropy and voluntarism).	Growth of full-time professional workforce (alongside a large no. of volunteers and part-time workers) with a growing body of professional knowledge and pedagogic repertoires.	Professional identities connected to performativity with increasing mechanisms of accountability and measurement. [*And also a 'neoliberal subject']	Professional identities connected to antagonism - and existential struggle - within and against neoliberal measures of austerity and marketisation, with alternative prototypes of service provision and practice advocated and developed. This shift linked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Envisioning of campaign coalitions and practice networks • Devolved nation and local/regional commitments to youth work services • Everyday practice and local projects rooted in informal pedagogies and liberatory traditions within youth work • Grassroots navigations to create space for open and community-rooted forms of youth work practice • Traditions and roots of more open-ended, deliberative and reflective forms of practice • Ethical commitment to youth work with young people in local communities [*And also an emergent post(-)neoliberal subject]

Up to a point, this emergent typology acknowledges the various inner-challenges - psycho-social and 'existential struggles' - that many subjects, individually and collectively, will have been experiencing within this field. This typological characterisation of the 'post(-)neoliberal subject' is one that is forward-looking and it goes beyond the neoliberal subject 'as it is', while also not simply wanting to go back to an over-idealised or romanticised past. To a degree, this facilitates a sidestepping

of the trap of rose-tinted “nostalgic self-delusion” (Kelsey, 2006, cited by Ball, 2012b, p. 26), i.e. if or when accused of just seeking a return to a pre-neoliberal welfare past.

The grassroots youth worker (i7), for instance, when advocating for more community spaces for young people in the future, was self-conscious about (potential accusations of) sounding like a “stuck record” or “a bit of a dinosaur”, and would clarify “I don't mean like have a youth club from the seventies or something.” Other inner-struggles, that various subjects in this field may have experienced, include:

- the anger and sadness at losses (e.g. of austerity measures)
- various reservations (e.g. with aspects of what went before, and that want to avoid again in the future)
- the stresses and pressures (e.g. of organisational and service changes)
- the uncertainty (e.g. of how the future will unfold)
- the deep investment and ethical commitment (e.g. to young people, youth work and youth services), and
- hope (e.g. for contributing to the future).

Hope, ethical commitment and envisioning still occurs despite the challenges, and further illustrations of these affective dimension are provided in Appendix Table 4 (in Appendix D). There are signs of a ‘resilience’ while there are significant challenges to be encountered, and there are signs of a strong ethical commitment while acutely conscious of the fragility and contingency of the future.

Part Two: A Post(-)neoliberal Outlook and Platform

Following on from part one's conjecture on the use of a post(-)neoliberal theoretical framework and its application through an emergent typology, part two of this chapter will identify a coherent set of logics and characteristics that are characterised as post(-)neoliberal. Various practical negotiations, resistances, alternative norms and counter-practices have been identified in this field, as highlighted in chapters 4-6.

This set of alternatives is framed as an ongoing and unfolding post(-)neoliberal platform and strategic outlook within the youth services sector of England and Wales.

The post(-)neoliberal platform and outlook, however, is framed as being separate and distinct from neoliberal logics and softer recalibrations of neoliberalisation.

Post(-)neoliberal Logics vs. Neoliberal Logics

Post(-)neoliberal logics within this domain can be discerned through instances of pragmatic navigation, practical resistance, acts of envisioning, alternative practices and spaces, and partial breaks that are developed in response to - and regardless of - the ascendancy of market-based logics rooted in neoliberal discourse. This is further illustrated with the comparison that is set out in Table 18. This table positions post(-)neoliberal logics alongside neoliberal logics, and it builds upon the logics-based nodal framework analysis within chapters 4-6. It includes comparisons across the nodes of service provision, distribution, delivery and governance for each case.

Table 18: Comparison of Neoliberal and Post(-)neoliberal Logics (within Nodal Framework)

	Neoliberalisation (Roll-back, Roll-out and Recalibrated Neoliberalisation)		Post(-)neoliberal Seeds and Saplings	
	<i>England</i>	<i>Wales</i>	<i>England</i>	<i>Wales</i>
<i>Service Provision</i>	<p>Social logic of austerity for pre-established youth services of local authority and voluntary sector</p> <p>Social logic of investment in a new service with key role for private sector</p> <p>Social logic of consultation with private sector and voluntary sector actors</p> <p>Social logic of market competition for providers</p> <p>Social logic of market-based contracts for provision</p>	<p>Social logic of austerity for pre-established youth services of local authority and voluntary sector</p> <p>Pressures of targeting segments of youth population</p>	<p>Political counter-logic of investment in youth services of local authorities and voluntary sector</p> <p>Projected social logic of year-round service provision for a wider age range</p>	<p>Social logic of continuity of existing partnership model for local authorities and voluntary sector</p> <p>Social logic of consultation with local authorities and voluntary sector actors</p> <p>Political counter-logic of sufficiency of investment in pre-existing youth services of local authorities and voluntary sector</p> <p>Social logic of partnership for local authority and voluntary sector providers</p> <p>Projected social logic of sufficiency for provision</p> <p>Projected social logic of stronger partnerships</p>
<i>Distribution</i>	<p>Social logic of marketing and branding to attract users</p> <p>Social logic of targeting narrow age range (i.e. school leaving age)</p> <p>Constraints of legislation with a narrow age-range</p>	<p>Social logic of more targeted services (i.e. upon 'at risk' segments of youth population)</p> <p>Pressures of targeting segments of youth population</p>		<p>Social logic of community-based engagement</p> <p>Projected social logic of universal, community-rooted open forms of provision as core</p>

<i>Delivery</i>	<p>Pressure of demands and targets</p> <p>Social logic of casualisation and deprofessionalisation for delivery staff</p>	<p>Pressures of resourcing</p> <p>Pressures of targets and short-termism</p>	<p>Political counter-logic of delivery with trained and qualified youth workers</p> <p>Projected social logic of sector-wide reallocation of funding to more year-round provision with local youth infrastructure</p> <p>Political counter logic of supporting open youth work in youth services sector</p>	<p>Social logic of registration and professionalisation for youth workers</p> <p>Projected social logic of shift towards more open forms of youth work</p>
<i>Governance</i>	<p>Social logic of private sector dominance on management board of NCS</p> <p>Social logic of service evaluation through consultancy for accountability</p> <p>Social logic of targets and outcome measurement</p>	<p>Social logic of targets and outcome measurement</p>	<p>Political counter-logic of a National Youth Services Advisory Board and strengthening legislation for a statutory youth service</p> <p>Projected social logics of evaluation with dialogue, reflection, and qualitative data for in-house learning, as well as public accountability</p>	<p>Social logic of youth work expertise and experience for board membership</p> <p>Projected social logic of a new permanent national body for youth work services</p> <p>Projected social logic of dialogue and reflection as core within evaluation</p> <p>Projected social logic of a new legislative base for youth work services</p>

While in Table 17, there is conjecture of an emergent, incomplete and unfixed post(-)neoliberal terrain, in Table 18 there is the characterisation of neoliberal and post(-)neoliberal logics. Admittedly, neoliberal recalibration and hybridisation can occur in these terrains and logics characterised as post(-)neoliberal. Nevertheless, both of these tables are premised upon an exploration of spaces for agency (individual,

collective, institutional and professional) that contest and/or operate despite and beyond the constraints and demands of neoliberalisation. This includes spaces of agency for:

- *Devolved government (in Wales)* such as the decisions and practices of supporting pre-establishing youth service partnerships, developing national youth work service strategies, actively collaborating with the youth work field, and rejecting the roll-out of a new private-voluntary partnership for new service provision. Thus the available decisions and practices - for the devolved government in Wales - are not delimited or reduced to furthering austerity realism, marketisation, targeting and datafication, though these aspects of neoliberalisation do occur, and neoliberal recalibration and hybridisation occur as well.
- *Local state and non-state actors* (notably, local authorities and local government associations, voluntary sector organisations, professional networks, trade unions, practitioners, and young people in both England and Wales) for advocacy and/or campaigning for - as well as maintaining - pre-established service partnerships, greater sufficiency of service provision, national frameworks for pay and qualifications of practitioners, more open and reflective forms of youth work practice with informal and liberatory dimensions, and suitable national bodies and legislation to further this sector. Furthermore, the available decisions and practices - for local state and non-state actors in both England and Wales - are not delimited to austerity realism, marketisation, deprofessionalisation, targeting and datafication

As such, this account adds to - and extends - the literature of neoliberalisation through its comparison of spaces for institutional and professional agency, and their

role in contesting neoliberalisation and contributing to respective outcomes and terrains.

Acts of Envisioning and Instances of Everyday Practice

The above set of alternative logics (i.e. the 'seeds and saplings' in the two right hand columns) are characterised as a key component within an ongoing and unfolding post(-)neoliberal platform and strategic outlook. Further discussion and characterisation of such a platform for the youth services sector now follows, and this draws upon additional interview data about acts of envisioning and instances of everyday practice. This also illustrates spaces for institutional and professional agency for resisting, envisioning beyond and constructing everyday alternatives to neoliberalised norms and practices.

Firstly, a post(-)neoliberal stance would be informed and shaped by acts of alternative envisioning of services and their funding in both England and Wales. Some of this envisioning has been influencing party political policy and/or ministerial plans, as will be illustrated. At a grassroots level, the youth charity manager in Wales (i6) had shared a vision for an intrinsic valuation of youth work, and for this to be accompanied by longer term planning for "consistent, available, good-quality youth provision for young people". It was felt that this would also fit alongside "protective" and preventative strategies. Similarly, a local authority senior youth worker in Wales (i5) quipped:

'invest in youth work, invest in young people so you invest in the future', 'you take away from youth work, you take away from young people, you take away from everyone's future' - but you know they're just the old adages, but you know they're so true.

The local manager from England (i1) also echoed such points by stressing how - historically, and despite a decade and more of austerity - the directors in their local authority have valued youth work as contributing to protective and preventative strategies to keep children, young people and families safe and supported. Speaking about the - relative - retention of local authority youth services in their city on such grounds, this manager reflected:

So we've kept that legacy. So that's been good that there's a positive understanding. Again, whether it's on a financial basis or not, it's still a positive understanding of why youth work is valuable.

Another important dimension identified in this English city, as well as the local support from senior management, has been the political base that is supportive of youth services:

the local councillors... have valued youth work. They value youth work in their communities. They see also that there's an advantage to them having parents who vote for them, having a youth service in their constituent areas. So we're lucky... to have a political base that supports youth work.

When compared to the wider national picture in England (despite regional variations), a higher level of governmental support for youth work and pre-established youth services can be discerned in the Welsh Government (i.e. during the 2007-2022 timeframe of this study). To further enhance this support in Wales, the voluntary sector officer (i8) emphasised the rights-based discourse of the Welsh Government as rooted in the UNCRC, rather than the market. This person stressed a vision for further setting out the right to youth work services irrespective of postcode:

it should not be about where you live, it should be a right and entitlement for every young person, and we have to be clear about what that right is and what that funding needs to look like, and what that needs to be, what that expenditure looks like.

Part of such a vision would be to further develop and define “statutory protection, so that it doesn't matter if you live in Blaenau Ffestiniog or Blaenau Gwent, you have the same equality of access to youth work.” Such a vision has also been echoed within various reviews and recommendations to the education minister in Wales (e.g. see IYWB, 2021). With parallels to these recommendations to further strengthen youth work services in Wales, the policy campaigner in England (i4) drew attention to the ‘Only Young Once’ (Labour Party, 2019) envisioning document for statutory youth services. Such a vision for strengthening a statutory youth service in England was contrasted - “in terms of the purpose, the access and the staffing” - to the dominant approach that had been adopted by the NCS during the 2007-2022 period:

So it's local, its locally based as the first thing - you don't have to ship people away to a summer camp somewhere. A second thing is that it's permanent, it's 365 days a year - it's there when young people need it, they can choose when to access their youth worker or their local youth service activities. And then, thirdly, it's of course staffed by professionals who have been trained in the informal education method... very skilled in the face-to-face work of empowering young people through seizing educational moments and educational opportunities and developing exciting stimulating informal education programmes.

Secondly, in addition to the envisioning of service provision and service funding, a post(-)neoliberal stance would be informed and shaped by the everyday practice of youth workers and youth projects. *On the one hand*, the youth worker activist (i3) identified how - especially since the austerity politics of 2010 onwards, but before then too - there has been “grassroots resistance”, including where “young people

and youth workers came together to defend their youth services, and to do that critically and to do that thoughtfully.” As well as campaigning activities, whether local or more national, often involving networks such as IDYW and Choose Youth, there have also been ongoing grassroots efforts

to create youth work in the gaps and in the spaces, and to try and have critical conversations... and to try and support each other to just live at the moment, you know, because that's a challenge as well.

Fragility and uncertainty is highlighted for the prospects for such struggles for youth work, however despite this

young people and youth workers are keeping the flame alive in local areas. There is really amazing youth work still going on... and that's sometimes in regions or organisations or areas that have had a real strength of youth work, and youth work that's critically reflected on

Often there may be a network of practitioners or even “a few key people who really believe in open forms of youth work and critically reflective youth work”, and sometimes it might just be occurring “in the cracks” - but as well as that “there's areas, there's local governments that have kept youth work going, there's voluntary sector youth organisations that have kept really amazing youth work going.”

As a couple of specific examples from English cities, this interviewee highlighted a youth project in Manchester that's

really supported young people who are being criminalised and imprisoned for having association with other people, and for listening to certain types of music, and for very, very, very, very, very weak evidence of anything.

In Manchester, Kids of Colour (2022) blend youth spaces and sessions for young people with advocacy and campaigning. There is a similar organisation in London

that works “in service of young people from the ends, who need dignity, safety, belonging and the freedom to imagine” (4Front, 2022). Of such examples, the interviewee reflected,

I think it's no accident that those are black-led organisations, those are black youth workers working with predominantly black young people coming from an anti-racist perspective. They're really inspiring and so resistance is happening.

These various examples of grassroots resistance - whether for survival from austerity logics (and wider violence), or for asserting open spaces and greater autonomy for practice and liberatory traditions - are being viewed as embodying post(-)neoliberal characteristics within this sector. As the interviewee (i3) reflected, the broader questions influencing such practice has involved “critically engaging” with questions such as “what is this work we’re doing, who are we doing it for, and in whose interests?”

On the other hand, as well as grassroots resistances, there are alternatives of everyday practice being constructed and put forward. The alternatives of everyday practice may well build upon the various liberatory traditions and the potential of informal pedagogies within youth work. An illustration of this is provided through the youth charity manager’s (i6) account of practice whereby “on an ongoing basis [the staff team were working] to engage as many young people as we can within a very deprived community.” Whether through centre-based open sessions, detached work, specialist support groups, outdoor education, or sports or media projects, such work would frequently reach

young people who might be considered to be on the margins of other mainstream provision, either that those provisions aren't reaching them effectively enough, or they're not speaking to them, or they don't feel accessible to them for various reasons.

One particular focus for this youth charity was upon creating environments and spaces conducive to building relationships with young people - as this would enable practitioners to build an understanding of the "the needs of the young people, because we know them very well", and "it enables us to have a perhaps more enriching experience with them I would say."

Another practitioner, the grassroots youth worker (i7), recalled how when with a local authority youth service there had been *a high degree of autonomy* to respond - and reflect - upon an intervention with very large groups of young people hanging out on the streets and not having much to do on a Friday night:

I know it seems very traditional thing... so we started a Friday night football league... So we got the local pitch with loads of floodlights, and we started this football league. And we were getting about 150, mainly young males - that was one of the weaknesses though, we got about 20 young females.

While the youth worker *critically reflected upon certain aspects of this work*, they also felt it was very positive.

It's like having the freedom to go, 'Wait there. We've got a problem. We've got an issue with this. Young people are going to get in trouble. They might get themselves hurt and that. How can we solve it? We can do something open access this evening what they want to do.' It was just good being able to have that freedom to work where young people were at, that's what they needed and what they wanted at that time. And it worked well then.

This freedom and autonomy to respond to young people's situations and needs - and to reflect upon this - through everyday practice was what this practitioner valued.

Alongside this, the practitioner stressed the role of creating space and time for voluntary associations and relationship building with young people,

we have community, we need to create a sense of community, but we're in a world now that has been...but even more so since social media and COVID, it's become very atomised, and not community and not social... They're one of the sections of society that still do all gather in groups and stuff... on a regular basis night by night. Let's give them safe spaces to do that and spaces we can provide education for them whilst they're doing that.

For this interviewee, a viable service infrastructure for open youth work as core practice then creates a stronger basis - and platform for relationship building - for other forms of support and opportunities to then flow and develop as off-shoots. As a local manager from England (i1) pointed out, sometimes it can be difficult to communicate the complexities of youth work - nevertheless, it is also important to maintain a strong sense of collective self-respect and self-valuation for youth work: "You know youth work's a concept, it's not like a widget, it's not like a commodity that you can demonstrate. It's a tough gig."

Overall, a post(-)neoliberal stance would be informed and shaped through such examples of envisioning and lived alternatives. The envisioning cuts across - and has been occurring within - local communities and youth services of England and Wales, the sphere of devolved government in Wales as well as various local authorities in England, local projects in both countries, and within the organising of campaigning coalitions and practice networks. These envisionings - and alternatives - are seeds and saplings that accentuate the more-than-just-neoliberal, the other-than-neoliberal and the non-neoliberal with regards to policy, services, practice and subjectivities. They are a collection of bodies, a localised bloc within this domain,

that can be viewed as articulating various strands within this broader platform and strategic outlook. For certain social actors this may well be an intentional response to neoliberal assaults and constraints, but it may also be an approach that would be developed regardless of neoliberalisation - and one influenced by long-running historic traditions and pre-existing alternative (non-neoliberal) discourses with youth work and youth services. When viewed together, however, this collection of post(-)neoliberal saplings are field-rooted, and they share an umbrella approach of thinking and acting to operate aside from, move away from and shift beyond the neoliberal.

A Post(-)neoliberal Outlook vs. Recalibrated Neoliberalisation

Those logics and practices characterised as post(-)neoliberal are set within the realities and constraints of neoliberal discourses that are encountered and negotiated, prompting efforts to also envision alternatives beyond them. A post(-)neoliberal platform and outlook, however, would be separate and distinct from various forms of recalibrated neoliberalism. Post(-)neoliberal rules and norms can be set apart - and differ - from neoliberal logics as well as those hybridisations that operate to recalibrate, soften and further embed neoliberalisation within this domain. These recalibrations occur, not to move beyond neoliberalism, but often to make it more palatable - to absorb or co-opt critique of neoliberal logics, while adopting a more progressive and softer veneer.

Within the NCS in England, for example, the NCS 2.0 strategy (see image 5) was such an attempt to recalibrate the commercial contracting as a response to political scrutiny and wider criticism. This recalibration involved new plans to fine-tune its commissioning, and it emphasised the involvement of more small and local

community organisations. In part, the NCS was then responding to recommendations - such as those from the NAO (2017) to “think innovatively about the best way to manage the supply chain” (p. 11) - to improve its market of providers, rather than move beyond such market-based logics. Such changes and plans are an example of neoliberal recalibration.

Looking forward - i.e. beyond the 2007-2022 timeframe of this study - there are further signs of NCS planning to further soften and again recalibrate its market-based approach. There are new institutional changes that are unfolding as NCS adapts to changing circumstances, notably the DCMS (2022) youth review.

Interviews (e.g. i2) and documentary sources (e.g. see NCS, 2022) have indicated further refinements and new plans to incorporate more year-round and community-based provision alongside the core summer programme, and embed a new grant scheme alongside its commercial contracts. Other recalibrations include plans to: make more use of existing staff within delivery partners (not just a pool of casualised seasonal workers); evaluate more in-house (with less expensive consultancy) and with more evaluation for learning (not simply for accountability purposes); and adapt its core programme and marketing to a reduced funding envelope (e.g. holding shorter summer programmes and not buying-in thousands of branded T-shirts for summer camps). When reviewing such plans, there certainly appears to be reforms and adjustments underway within NCS.

An insightful account of such a hybridisation process was provided by the NCS staff member (i2). It was observed that the blending of two discourses - that of managing

neoliberalised contracts and that of enhancing quality learning opportunities - was taking on a new shape for the post-2022 period:

when you've operated in this commercial contracting model, it's like you're trying to build two cultures because you've got one model that's really focused on managing those contracts, and that drives a certain set of relationships and behaviours. But then, over here, you have to drive that honest space for reflection... on practice and learning together. And actually the new model that we're moving to, just creates much more space. It's a much more... relational model that we're trying to build with providers.

While these shifts appear to represent significant and fascinating internal adjustments within NCS, such developments are not (at this stage) being characterised as post(-)neoliberal - they are not (yet) a sign for a shift beyond a market-based approach. However, spaces for agency to mitigate neoliberalisation (and to even loosen some of the neoliberal 'grip' and alter some of the market-based ideas and practices) are identified within this highly neoliberalised setting of NCS. But, arguably, the neoliberalisation is being further hybridised and softened rather than there being a more significant challenge to its market-based logics. Overall, within the NCS, its nodes of service provision, distribution, delivery and governance are still highly neoliberalised (as illustrated by the disproportionate representation of commercial figures in key governance roles upon the NCS Board - see image 11). Rather than a significant shift beyond neoliberal logics, these internal reforms appear to be furthering the palatability of neoliberalisation. The overall market approach is being repositioning and further hybridised in a softer and a more carefully re-tuned manner.

Conclusion

Firstly, this chapter has elaborated upon the theoretical framework and terminology of the post(-)neoliberal, including its application to the subjectivity of youth workers. It has conjectured a subtle combination of both: (i) the unhyphenated postneoliberal - as an ethos and a reimagining device in the neoliberal present that aids counter-conduct, and (ii) the hyphenated post-neoliberal - as a 'social-collectivist' break from neoliberalisation (to varying degrees and with various alternative prototypes) in both the present and the future. This terminology also holds a family resemblance to that of alter-neoliberal critique, and other associated variations. The post(-)neoliberal framework, however, is intended to complement not supplant. In particular, it is put forward to aid the analysis, framing and characterisation of negotiations, resistances and alternatives to neoliberalism within this field. It is contended that it also holds a practical usefulness, for example, when integrated within typological frameworks that are then applied as an educative device within professional formation programmes (e.g. for distinguishing the post(-)neoliberal subject from the neoliberal subject).

Secondly, this chapter has also applied the post(-)neoliberal framework to characterise a set of logics that are further illustrated through acts of envisioning and instances of everyday practice. Together these are foregrounded as components that inform and shape a post(-)neoliberal platform and strategic outlook within this sector. Post(-)neoliberal logics are contrasted to neoliberalised logics within the nodes of service provision, distribution, delivery and governance for each of the case studies. Within this discussion a distinction is also identified that separates a post(-)neoliberal platform and outlook from neoliberal recalibrations.

8. Conclusion

This concluding chapter will provide a final summation and review of the thesis in four ways. *Firstly*, it will recap on the overarching focus and research approach. *Secondly*, it will provide an overview of the key findings and argument. *Thirdly*, it will provide an account of the key contributions that this thesis brings to existing knowledge and literatures. *Fourthly*, there will be a final reflection upon various components of this study and potential avenues for further research and investigation.

Thesis Focus and Research Approach

Drawing on poststructuralist theory and frameworks associated with the Essex School of Discourse Analysis, this thesis has developed a case-based research strategy to critically compare the NCS in England and the Youth Service in Wales during the 2007-2022 period. Within these socio-spatial domains and during this timeframe, it set out to explore how youth workers - their practice, services and subjectivities - have been impacted by neoliberal discourse and neoliberalisation, and how this has been happening, how it has been driven forward, partially accepted and normalised, but also how it has been problematised, navigated and challenged. An associated research puzzlement surrounded if, or how, youth workers and the youth services sector (as the specific focus of this study) could move away from the neoliberal, outside and beyond it - for instance, towards the post(-)neoliberal, and what this might entail and whether such a post(-)neoliberal theoretical framework could be insightful.

To achieve the objectives of this study the approach of a methodological bricoleur has been adopted to gather documents, imagery and interview data relating to the two cases, and a logics-based nodal framework for analysis has been deployed. The research materials that have been compiled, and the research practices that have been applied, have facilitated analysis of: policy and practice discourses shaping services and subjectivity of youth workers (objective 1); segments within the publicly-funded service chain for each case (objective 2); and, field accounts of policy, service and practice developments (objective 3) as well as individual and collective agency (objective 4).

Key Findings and Line of Argument

This thesis has argued that neoliberalisation processes - such as those during the 'roll-back' phase of austerity - have massively impacted youth workers, their practice and the youth services sector in both England and Wales. Neoliberalisation, however, has been more pronounced in the youth services sector of England, especially with the market-based 'roll-out' and recalibrations of the NCS. In Wales there have been stronger (yet incomplete) buffers to such neoliberalisation, including through the devolved government's collaboration with youth service organisations and people with expertise from the youth work field. It has also argued that a post(-)neoliberal framework is insightful for analysing resistances, envisioning and building of alternatives, and agency.

Neoliberalisation Processes, Conditions and Contestations

Building upon the analysis of a series of paired images, associated case documents and interview data, this thesis has identified significant variations between the

English and Welsh services and their contexts, though with similarities despite the differences. The similarities have included a dominant (neoliberalised) social logic of austerity for cutting back on pre-established youth services of local authorities and the voluntary sector, and a dominant social logic of targets and outcomes for accountability. The 'roll back' phase of neoliberalisation, occurring in both England and Wales, was supported by the ideological cloaking - and a fantasmatic logic - of austerity as the only serious policy option and therefore unchallengeable. Broadly, the contributory factors and conditions shaping these points of concurrence include: *the shared political programme of austerity through the UK Government's policy choices from 2010 onwards; and, the common public management culture of performance monitoring and impact measurement.*

Differences between the cases have included *a dominant (neoliberalised) social logic - in England, not Wales - to invest in a new service (i.e. the NCS) with a significant role for the private sector.* In Wales, however, there was a contrasting social logic of prioritising and maintaining existing youth service provision - nationally - through the partnership of local authorities and the voluntary sector.

It has been argued that - as part of the 'roll out' and recalibration phases of neoliberalisation in England - the NCS was developed with a set of social logics that included:

- market competition and commercial contracts for service provision;
- marketing and branding to attract service users as a key part of service distribution;

- the casualisation and deprofessionalisation of staff as a key part of service delivery; and,
- private sector dominance on the NCS board as a key part of service governance.

To defend and entrench these social logics, an ideological cloaking of alternative options has occurred with the fantasmatic logics of market efficiency as ‘the norm’ and incontrovertible, and ‘trust’ in the market and in the privileged role of private sector partners in governance.

A contrasting approach has been identified in Wales with a set of (other-than-neoliberal) social logics that has included:

- partnership and consultation with local authorities and the voluntary sector on service provision;
- community-based engagement with young people as a key element of service distribution;
- registration and professionalisation of practitioners as a key part of service delivery;
- and, field expertise and lived experience on ministerial advisory board(s) as a key part of service governance.

Broadly, the contributory factors and conditions shaping the points of divergence include:

- *Institutional and governance differences* for overseeing youth service policy in each nation (e.g. with youth service policy a devolved area of government in Wales with various youth work service units and boards established that

advise the Education Minister, while in England NCS was - historically - supported and expanded through the UK Cabinet Office and then DCMS in conjunction with the NCS Trust's board);

- *Differences of political culture and political ideals* of the main governing parties overseeing youth service policy in each nation (e.g. with youth service policy a responsibility of a Welsh Labour-led administration that has espoused ideals of civic municipal socialism, while the NCS programme has been a flagship youth policy of the Conservative Party in England especially when it advocated its 'Big Society' ideals); and,
- *Differences to the collaboration and engagement of professional youth work discourse and the youth work field* within national youth service policy developments and governance (e.g. youth service policy and national strategic planning in Wales has collaborated more actively with the youth work field and pre-established youth service partners, while in England professional youth work discourse, the pre-established youth service partnerships and the wider youth work field have been much more marginalised).

Furthermore, this thesis has contended that the background conditions shaping divergent neoliberalisation processes have also contributed to different forms and strategies of contestation in each nation. In England, the conditions and circumstances have shaped counter-hegemonic campaigns and envisioning for reviving pre-established youth services and open youth work practice (typically characterised as 'political counter-logics'). In Wales, the conditions and circumstances have contributed to the envisioning and advocacy for youth work and youth services (typically characterised as 'projected social logics' when not yet

realised) being channelled into national policy frameworks that have more openly engaged the youth work field and pre-established youth services when compared to the recent changes within England.

A Post(-)neoliberal Outlook and Spaces of Agency

Overall this thesis has also identified and detailed a field-rooted response - characterised here collectively as a post(-)neoliberal outlook - to the neoliberalisation of services, practice and subjectivity in this sector.⁹³ This characterisation has been premised upon case-based analysis of neoliberal contestations and spaces for agency (institutional and professional), and this has included instances and spaces for resisting, envisioning beyond and constructing everyday alternatives to neoliberalised norms and practices. These have included spaces of agency for: the devolved government in Wales; and, for the local state and non-state actors in England and Wales. The devolved government in Wales, for example, has rejected the 'roll-out' of the highly marketised NCS with its private-voluntary partnership model, it has actively collaborated with the youth work field, maintained a pre-established youth service partnership and developed national youth work strategies. Meanwhile, the local state and non-state actors in England and Wales (notably, local authorities and local government associations, voluntary sector organisations, professional networks, trade unions, practitioners, and young people) have advocated and campaigned for pre-established youth service partnerships, greater sufficiency for provision, national frameworks for pay and qualifications of practitioners, more open and reflective forms of youth work practice with informal

⁹³ The post(-)neoliberal entails counter-neoliberal navigations, resistance and envisioning within the neoliberal present, while also working towards breaks and constructing alternative spaces beyond the neoliberal within the present and for the future. Chapter 7 discussed this terminology and typology in more detail.

and liberatory dimensions, and suitable national bodies and legislation to further this sector. The available decisions and practices for such actors are not delimited - and cannot be reduced - to austerity realism, marketisation, deprofessionalisation, targeting and datafication. However, these aspects of neoliberalisation do occur, and neoliberal recalibration and neoliberal hybridisations do occur as well.

Building upon such analysis of contestation and agency, it has been argued that a post(-)neoliberal theoretical framework is analytically productive in shedding light on a series of negotiations, resistances and reimaginings - for publicly-funded youth service provision, youth work practice and youth worker subjectivity - in this domain, and across both nations. The theoretical and analytical device of the post(-)neoliberal also holds a practical usefulness, for example, when integrated within typological frameworks that are then applied as an educative stimulus within professional formation programmes. This framework can also be applied to the articulation of a post(-)neoliberal platform and a strategic outlook for this sector, which includes a coherent set of alternative norms and counter-practices with relevance for policy, services, practice and subjectivities.

It has been argued that a collection of actors and bodies from the youth work field - with their allies - have been scattering seeds and growing saplings for a post(-)neoliberal terrain that foregrounds alternative other-than-neoliberal logics. While there are also institutional strategies identified that operate to soften and recalibrate neoliberalisation, such strategies are separate from a post(-)neoliberal outlook that accentuates alternative envisioning and more autonomous spaces beyond and outside of market-based logics.

Principal Argument

Rooted in the research findings and analysis, the thesis identifies and foregrounds a coherent set of alternative norms and counter-practices to those of neoliberalisation, and these emerge from within the youth services sector of both England and Wales.⁹⁴ Across both nations, these include:

- *For service provision* - sufficient re-investment and resourcing of youth work service infrastructure through local authorities and the voluntary sector, and premised upon stronger partnership between local authorities and the voluntary sector (rather than market competition, commercialised contracting and private sector partnerships).
- *For service distribution* - year-round local youth work services for engaging young people (with wider age ranges than currently through the NCS in England), and built upon community-based engagement with young people (rather than upon marketing and branding).
- *For service delivery* - open youth work as core, staffed with trained and qualified youth workers (drawing upon informal education pedagogies, including the relationship focused, community-rooted and liberatory traditions within youth work), and with the registration and professionalisation of practitioners (rather than the casualisation and deprofessionalisation of staff).
- *For service governance* - a renewal of dialogue, reflection and learning within evaluation, a new legislative base for youth work services in each nation, and new and permanent national youth work service boards with field expertise

⁹⁴ These 'post-neoliberal' logics, however, are in an ongoing struggle with neoliberalising logics (that recalibrate to adapt the way that the ideas and practices of the market are put forward, advanced and hybridised).

and lived youth work experience upon such boards (rather than private sector dominance upon them).

These alternatives to neoliberalising norms and practices are characterised as both illustrating and nurturing a post(-)neoliberal platform and strategic outlook. They articulate a clear demand and vision for the remaking of policy, services, practice and subjectivities in this domain, beyond neoliberalisation, in the present and for the future.

Thesis Contributions

Key contributions - substantive, methodological, and theoretical - that this thesis makes to existing literatures and bodies of knowledge will now be highlighted.

Firstly, substantively, this thesis adds to the literature of neoliberalism and neoliberalisation with its account - and comparison - of variations, commonalities, contestations and spaces of agency within - and across - these two cases. For example:

- It provides a nuanced account of neoliberalisation, its localised variations and the hybridisations within these two cases. It identifies and analyses the points of divergence - and concurrence - across these cases, and the conditions for the respective outcomes;
- It identifies and analyses 'family resemblances' and wider patterns - and phases of neoliberalism - across these cases, as well as the broader conditions for these commonalities;

- It provides an account of how neoliberalisation processes have unfolded and extended or been constrained - or opposed - by state and non-state resistances, and the conditions shaping the respective outcomes and contestations. This includes how such contestations have shaped neoliberal, hybridised or alternative outcomes with these cases, and how in turn these outcomes have shaped the contestations; and,
- It provides an account of how neoliberalisation practices have been furthered by state and non-state actors, yet it also identifies wider spaces for agency of these state and non-state actors (and the conditions and outcomes shaping forms of agency). The wider spaces of agency include available practices and strategies to facilitate resistances and alternatives to neoliberalisation, not simply to mitigate, hybridise or recalibrate.

Through this account, the thesis is addressing and moving beyond the identified limitations and 'critical deficits' within existing account of neoliberalism and neoliberalisation, notably how certain existing explanations - while insightful - can be lacking in their analysis of such variations, commonalities, contestations and/or spaces of agency. Thus, this thesis provides analysis of neoliberal variegation without structuralist overgeneralisations obscuring neoliberal variations, and without heterogeneity obscuring neoliberal commonalities. Additionally, it provides an analysis of neoliberalisation without neoliberal dominance obscuring contestations, and without neoliberal practices obscuring agency. Furthermore, it extends the analysis of spaces for agency within neoliberalisation processes to include institutional and professional agency with devolved government, local state and non-state actors also engaging in practices and strategies to build alternatives and

resistances, and not simply reduced to enacting austerian realism or instituting norms and practices that foster and reproduce neoliberal subjectivity.

Additionally, through exploring points of divergence and convergence in the post-devolution period, this study adds to and extends existing cross-national comparisons of youth policy and youth services in England and Wales. For the literatures of youth work and youth policy studies, it addresses a reported gap in academic literature for comparisons of youth services policy in England and Wales, notably comparative analysis during the post-New Labour period. Furthermore, it adds detailed and contextualised case studies of these two services to the literature on the geographies of youth work. For example, it adds to geographical youth work research - as well as adding to neoliberalisation research - with the detailed and contextualised analysis of these cases, and with cross-national comparisons entailing both “spatial differentiation and temporal evolution” (Peck et al., 2018, p. 10).

Secondly, methodologically, the bespoke image-based research strategy, and its application with a logics-based nodal framework, is a novel addition to the body of empirical studies conducted within the Essex School of Discourse Analysis. This bricolage approach - while incorporating triangulation to add depth and generate insights - has also facilitated creativity and enabled flexibility when producing knowledge and gaining insights, especially during the challenges of COVID-19 and the periods of (relative) ‘data scarcity’. For instance, the innovative editorial policy and evaluative framework for the bricolage has guided and bolstered the creative research practices - and situated research judgements of the researcher - for the

repurposing and recombining of imagery that has been 'at hand' and deemed 'handy' for the purposes of the study. Additionally, the application of the logic-based nodal framework enriches the comparative analysis of points of divergence and convergence - and the conditions shaping respective outcomes - for the body of research into youth service policy in England and Wales. Thus, it is making methodological contributions to youth work research through the PDT logics approach and its analytical steps for generating insights.

Thirdly, this thesis adds to, and extends, typological literature on the youth worker as a neoliberal subject. It does this with conjecture for an emergent, incomplete and contingent categorisation of the post(-)neoliberal subject - this holds potential to disrupt and move beyond the typological characterisation of the youth worker as a neoliberal subject and performative professional. When integrated and applied within such typological frameworks, the categorisation of the post(-)neoliberal subject holds potential to be an educative stimulus within professional formation programmes. This post(-)neoliberal framework contributes to the identification and characterisation of alternative norms and counter-practices in the youth work field, and it does this in a way that extends, refines and reframes existing accounts within youth work and neoliberalism literatures. In particular, it develops this theoretical framework through analysis of the spaces of agency for local state and non-state actors in both England and Wales, as well as the devolved government in Wales. As such, this post(-)neoliberal framework is premised upon extending analysis of neoliberalism and neoliberalisation into the varied national and sub-national conditions and spaces of agency (institutional and professional) that resist, envision beyond and construct alternatives to neoliberalised norms and practices. While adding new syntheses and

applications to the existing theorisation of post-neoliberalism and postneoliberalism, it also identifies parallels with the emerging literature of alter-neoliberal critique. This is done to complement and enrich (rather than supplant or replace) various other existing terms, devices, tools and imaginaries.

Final Reflections

Throughout this thesis there have been reflections upon key steps and decisions in the research and analytical process, for example, concerning the methodological approach, the theoretical and analytical frameworks drawn upon, and the envisaged contributions of this thesis. This concluding section will offer a final reflective account on key steps and decisions taken, as well as on potential areas of further research.

Firstly, in terms of the research strategy, while COVID-19 presented a challenge to the research planning (as discussed in the opening impact statement of this thesis), the approach adopted of ‘researcher as a methodological bricoleur’ has enabled a bespoke blending of research materials and research practices for the purposes of the study. This approach was adopted, in part due to the circumstances of a pandemic, but also because it has allowed for the creative use and combination of resources, and it is a fruitful approach that brings contextual depth, breadth and richness to the study with fresh forms of insight. It has generated a blend of ‘handy’ data that has enabled the research question, aim and objectives to be addressed, thus overcoming the challenges posed for fieldwork by public health measures and risk assessments that constrained travel and in-person encounters.

Furthermore, in order to demonstrate rigour and trustworthiness and reduce risks of 'haphazardness', the evaluative framework of Pratt et al. (2020) has been drawn upon while developing this bricolage approach. This has bolstered the bricolage approach alongside the innovative editorial policy that has been developed to guide and frame the researcher's situated judgement in the selection and use of data. As a result, throughout this thesis, there has been the communication of: *competence* with the approach adopted and methods deployed; *integrity* with an internal coherence of the research strategy and an overall consistency with the theoretical approach; and *benevolence*, during the research and theorising processes, with care and respect given to research participants and their shared knowledge.

The 'insider' position of the researcher has also warranted reflection, including the complexities and nuances of the 'insider-outsider' classification. While biography and positionality are inescapable matters for any researcher, the 'insider' position for this research - and the fluidity of that 'insiderness' - is acknowledged, reflected upon and self-problematized (it is not side-lined nor suppressed). It has been identified and acknowledged how this 'insider' position has provided roots and motivations for this specific study, and how 'insider research' - in general - brings both opportunities (e.g. underpinning knowledge and pre-existing field contacts) and potential risks (e.g. such as a risk of taking aspects of cultural knowledge for granted or potential critiques of 'bias'). While there is transparency on the 'insider' position of the researcher, there has also been systematic communication on rigour and trustworthiness for the choice of methods, data sources and data selection. This has included triangulation to generate a greater depth of insight for the study, and to draw out similarities and differences across data sources and case data to add depth

and nuance. Furthermore, the poststructuralist theoretical framework adopted makes a case for foregrounding and analysing 'subjugated knowledge' and counter-discourses, so as not to cloak the contingency of the status quo.⁹⁵ This thesis foregrounds counter-discourses, which is consistent - and demonstrating integrity - with the theoretical approach adopted.⁹⁶

Secondly, throughout this thesis there have been reflections upon - and explanations of - the various theoretical frames and frameworks that have been adopted. For instance, neoliberalism has been applied as a suitable frame for analysing the ideas and practices of the market, especially through the processes of neoliberalisation. It has also been recognised that these terms warrant unpacking and analysing. It has also been maintained that antagonisms generated by neoliberalisation, as well as potential alternatives to this, are both significant foci for analysis. Similarly, the usefulness of a post(-)neoliberal theoretical framework has been that it articulates, builds upon and synthesises existing analyses that can bring insight to the cases under consideration. A post(-)neoliberal framework can be applied, for example, to matters of subjectivity, logics, typology and strategic outlooks. This framework - and its terminology - has also been characterised as related - and complementary - to other frames and terms, not as supplanting them.

A related matter here is the use of typological frameworks within the thesis.

Typologies of youth work have, for example, been used here with caution (e.g. by acknowledging risks of oversimplifications in the construction of categories,

⁹⁵ This is distinguishable and separate from 'bias' - whether as a form of distortion or unfairness.

⁹⁶ For instance, a principal argument of this thesis is that it foregrounds a set of alternative norms and counter-logics to neoliberalisation.

likelihood of overlaps between and internal division within them), but while still acknowledging their practical usefulness (e.g. for educative purposes within professional formation programmes). It has been argued that the typological characterisation of a 'post(-)neoliberal subject' is insightful, and of relevance within programmes of practitioner formation, especially when compared and explored alongside the typological figure of the 'neoliberal subject'.

A key strength of this study is that it applies and translates logics-based nodal framework analysis to the youth services sector and youth work field, where there have been long-running political struggles to be analysed. For this study, the logics approach has been applied with careful analysis of - and the researcher's 'situated judgement' (see Glynos et al., 2021, p. 70) applied to - the field of study, the case circumstances and the empirical phenomenon. A key practical dilemma when applying the logics analysis has been which category to "foreground" in order "to help sharpen the analysis" of each logic (Glynos et al., 2014, p.).⁹⁷ For this study, a particular focus has been placed on illuminating the social logics to characterise dominant rules, norms and patterns of each case, while also drawing out projected social logics, political counter-logics and fantasmatic logics to characterise envisioning, contestations and struggles. The comparative analysis of these logics has furthered understanding of the points of divergence and concurrence, and contributory factors and conditions for the respective outcomes.

⁹⁷ Indeed, this is a particular tension when using the logics approach. For example, the subtle distinction between political and social logics is one that can be difficult to draw, especially when projected social logics are factored in as well.

The use of a nodal framework has also facilitated insightful analysis of service components of each case. To further this thesis' analysis, the node of service provision - and how it has been instituted - has been tailored to include specific sub-components of service funding and service envisioning. Additionally, the triangulated use of paradigmatic images (as visual signifiers) - alongside other data sources, notably interviews - has brought a depth of insight into the analysis of the nodes and their logics. This has included drawing out similarities and differences across the two cases, and nuances within them. While the particular use of the node of service provision (incorporating sub-components pertinent to the field of study) is a flexible development of the nodal framework, the insights generated through the methodological bricolage is an enrichment of it.

Thirdly, there will be a final reflective account upon what this research has *set out to do* and what it has *not set out to do*. It was intended - at the outset - that this thesis would contribute to existing knowledge by adding to - and enriching - existing accounts of neoliberalism and neoliberalisation processes, and by addressing a gap in the comparative analysis of youth policy and youth services across England and Wales (which this thesis has achieved). However, while not intending to produce a direct contribution to research into the 'evidence base' of the youth services sector, it does make a contribution - and hold applicability - through providing sector-based accounts and evidence of: existential threats and challenges - and logics - that harm and undermine services and 'good practice' and 'impacts' with young people; and, recommendations from the field on the infrastructure and the ethos - and logics - that all are crucial components to 'good practice' and 'impacts' with young people as

seen from the ground, with insightful examples on this from both the NCS in England and the Youth Service in Wales.

In terms of furthering research and building knowledge on themes such as neoliberalisation and the youth services sector of England and Wales, there are a range of expansions or variations that could follow. Future studies could occur with a different set of historical and/or geographical delimitations. This could include research into post-2022 developments, such as the unfolding of the service chain of the NCS in England and/or youth work strategy implementation in Wales. Potentially there could be more localised or regional studies of neoliberalisation - and post(-)neoliberal alternatives - within the youth services sector. There could be other comparative studies on a cross-national basis (such as developments from Scotland, from across the Irish Sea or elsewhere). Research could even extend into the wider field of education and/or other related welfare services, whether for stand-alone studies or for other cross-sector comparisons. Alternative research strategies could be used, for example, aiming for more participatory designs and in-person fieldwork. Outside of the restrictions of a pandemic, fieldwork that involves site visits and in-person encounters could occur - whether with service staff, young people as service users, or policy figures. Furthermore, there could be research with access to 'closed' documents from the field, as well as 'open' documents in the public domain. Future studies of neoliberalisation - and/or post(-)neoliberal alternatives - could 'zoom in' on specific components of the service chain, or on specific logics to be further explored. For instance, there could be further enquiry into the psycho-social dimensions within this field, such as the plurality of fantasmatic logics underpinning service developments and how they might tighten or loosen their grip upon subjects, or how

they might establish alternative relations. To conclude, as one research participant (i1) commented at the end of their interview: “We need to keep doing research. We need to keep looking and analysing.”

References

- 4Front. (2022). *The 4Front Project*. <https://www.4frontproject.org>
- Abbas, M., & Croft, A. (2011). *Cameron denies austerity drive caused UK riots*. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-riot-idUSTRE7760G820110811>
- Accenture. (2023). *Unlock your potential: Accenture song - thinking beyond the impossible*. <https://www.accenture.com/gb-en/services/song/unlock-your-potential>
- Anderson, G. L., & Cohen, M. I. (2018). *The new democratic professional in education: Confronting markets, metrics, and managerialism*. Teachers College Press.
- Arad Research. (2015). *Youth work in schools in Wales: Full report*. <https://www.gov.wales/review-youth-work-schools>
- Archibald, M. M., Ambagtsheer, R. C., Casey, M. G., & Lawless, M. (2019). Using Zoom videoconferencing for qualitative data collection: Perceptions and experiences of researchers and participants. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 18.
- Arnstein, S. R. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 35(4), 216-224.
- ArthurSteenHorneAdamson. (n.d.). *Client: YMCA*. <https://ashaandco.uk/work/ymca>
- Ashton, D. N., & Field, D. J. (1976). *Young workers*. Hutchinson.
- Bacchi, C. (2000). Policy as discourse: What does it mean? Where does it get us? *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 21(1), 45-57.
- Bacchi, C. (2018). "Situated knowledges" OR "subjugated knowledges". <https://carolbacchi.com/2018/09/03/situated-knowledges-or-subjugated-knowledges/>
- Bacchi, C., & Goodwin, S. (2016). *Poststructural policy analysis: A guide to practice*. Springer.
- Ball, S. J. (2003). The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity. *Journal of Education Policy*, 18(2), 215-228.
- Ball, S. J. (2012a). *Global education inc: New policy networks and the neo-liberal imaginary*. Routledge.
- Ball, S. J. (2012b). Performativity, commodification and commitment: An I-spy guide to the neoliberal university. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 60(1), 17-28.
- Ball, S. J. (2012c). The reluctant state and the beginning of the end of state education. *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, 44(2), 89-103.
- Ball, S. J. (2016). Subjectivity as a site of struggle: Refusing neoliberalism? *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 37(8), 1129-1146.
- Ball, S. J., & Olmedo, A. (2013). Care of the self, resistance and subjectivity under neoliberal governmentalities. *Critical Studies in Education*, 54(1), 85-96.
- Bamber, J., & Murphy, H. (1999). Youth work: The possibilities for critical practice. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 2(2), 227-242.
- Bamber, J., O'Brien-Olinger, S., & O'Brien, M. (2014). *Ideas in action in youth work: In theory*. Centre for Effective Services.
- Banks, S., Armstrong, A., Carter, K., Graham, H., Hayward, P., Henry, A., Holland, T., Holmes, C., Lee, A., McNulty, A., Moore, N., Nayling, N., Stokoe, A., & Strachan, A. (2013). Everyday ethics in community-based participatory research. *Contemporary Social Science*, 8(3), 263-277.
- Barnett, C. (2010). Publics and markets: What's wrong with neoliberalism. In S. J. Smith, R. Pain, S. A. Marston, & J. P. Jones III (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of social geographies* (pp. 269-297). Sage.
- Barnett, N., Griggs, S., Hall, S., & Howarth, D. (2021). Local agency for the public purpose? Dissecting and evaluating the emerging discourses of municipal entrepreneurship in the UK. *Local Government Studies*, 48(5), 907-928.
- Barthes, R. (2013). *Mythologies: The complete edition*. Hill and Wang.
- Batsleer, J. (2008). *Informal learning in youth work*. Sage.
- Batsleer, J. (2012). The history of youth work with girls in the UK - targets from below? *History of Youth Work in Europe*, 3, 215-224.
- Batsleer, J. (2013). Youth work, social education, democratic practice and the challenge of difference: A contribution to debate. *Oxford Review of Education*, 39(3), 287-306.
- BBC. (2006). *Tories favour 'oak tree revamp'*. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/4775291.stm
- BBC. (2011). *David Cameron and hug-a-hoodie phrase history*. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-politics-13669826>
- BBC. (2020). *Cardiff recording studio keeps young people 'off the streets'*. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-wales-51393003>

- Beasley-Murray, J. (2010). *Posthegemony: Political theory and Latin America*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Bell, D., & Blanchflower, D. (2010a). UK unemployment in the Great Recession. *National Institute Economic Review*, 214(1), 3-25.
- Bell, D., & Blanchflower, D. (2010b). *Young people and recession: A lost generation?* Fifty-Second Panel Meeting on Economic Policy, Einaudi Institute for Economics and Finance.
- Bello, W. (2020). The far right: Formidable but not unbeatable. *Agrarian South: Journal of Political Economy*, 9(3), 388-398.
- Belton, B. (2009). *Radical youth work: Developing critical perspectives and professional judgement*. Russell House Publishing.
- Bennett, A. (2007). *Big interview: The youth work examiner*. Children & Young People Now. <https://www.cypnow.co.uk/other/article/big-interview-the-youth-work-examiner>
- Berry, C. (2017). *The making of a movement: Who's shaping Corbynism?* Brave New Europe. <https://braveneweuropa.com/christine-berry-the-making-of-a-movement-whos-shaping-corbynism>
- Berry, C., & Guinan, J. (2019). *People get ready! Preparing for a Corbyn government*. OR Books.
- Berry, S. (2021). *London's youth service cuts 2011-2021: A blighted generation*. https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/sian_berry_youth_services_2021_blighted_generation_final.pdf
- Birch, K. (2015). Neoliberalism: The whys and wherefores... and future directions. *Sociology Compass*, 9(7), 571-584.
- Birch, K. (2017). *A research agenda for neoliberalism*. Edward Elgar Publishing Limited.
- Bivand, P. (2012). *Generation lost: Youth unemployment and the youth labour market*. Trades Union Congress. https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/generation_lost_touchstone_extras_2012.pdf
- Blanco, I., Griggs, S., & Sullivan, H. (2014). Situating the local in the neoliberalisation and transformation of urban governance. *Urban Studies*, 51(15), 3129-3146.
- Bowman, S. (2016). *Coming out as neoliberals*. Adam Smith Institute. <https://www.adamsmith.org/blog/coming-out-as-neoliberals>
- Bradford, S. (2015). State beneficence or government control? Youth work from circular 1486 to 1996. In G. Bright (Ed.), *Youth work: Histories, policy and contexts* (pp. 22-37). Palgrave.
- Bradford, S., & Cullen, F. (2012). Introduction. In S. Bradford & F. Cullen (Eds.), *Research and research methods for youth practitioners* (pp. 1-4). Routledge.
- Bradford, S., & Cullen, F. (2014). Positive for youth work? Contested terrains of professional youth work in austerity England. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 19(S1), 93-106.
- Bradley, H., & Devadason, R. (2008). Fractured transitions: Young adults' pathways into contemporary labour markets. *Sociology*, 42(1), 119-136.
- Brand, U. (2016). Postneoliberalism. In S. Springer, K. Birch, & J. MacLeavy (Eds.), *The handbook of neoliberalism* (pp. 583-591). Routledge.
- Brenner, N., Peck, J., & Theodore, N. (2010). Variegated neoliberalization: Geographies, modalities, pathways. *Global Networks*, 10(2), 182-222.
- Broucker, B., De Wit, K., & Verhoeven, J. C. (2018). Higher education for public value: Taking the debate beyond New Public Management. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 37(2), 227-240.
- Buchroth, I., & Husband, M. (2015). Youth work in the voluntary sector. In B. G (Ed.), *Youth work: Histories, policy and contexts* (pp. 102-124). Palgrave.
- Butters, S., & Newell, S. (1978). *Realities of training*. National Youth Bureau.
- Byrne, C., Kerr, P., & Foster, E. (2014). What kind of 'Big Government' is the big society? A reply to Bulley and Sokhi-Bulley. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 16(3), 471-478.
- Cabinet Office. (2014). *National Citizen Service in Wales: 2014 pilot specification*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-citizen-service-in-wales-2014-pilot-specification>
- Cahill, D., Cooper, M., Konings, M., & Primrose, D. (2018). Introduction: Approaches to neoliberalism. In D. Cahill, M. Cooper, M. Konings, & D. Primrose (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of neoliberalism* (pp. xxv-xxxiii). Sage.
- Cahill, D., & Humphrys, E. (2019). Rethinking the 'Neoliberal Thought Collective' thesis. *Globalizations*, 16(6), 948-965.
- Cairney, P. (2019). *Understanding public policy: Theories and issues*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Cameron, D. (2007). Foreword. In Conservative Party, *It's time to inspire Britain's teenagers - National Citizen Service for the 21st century: a six-week programme for every school leaver* (pp. 1-2). TPF Group.

- Campbell, J. L., & Pedersen, O. K. (2001). *The rise of neoliberalism and institutional analysis*. Princeton University Press.
- Cannella, G. S., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2012). Ethics, research regulations, and critical social science. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 163-178). Sage.
- Carroll, W. K., & Sapinski, J. P. (2016). Neoliberalism and the transnational capitalist class. In S. Springer, K. Birch, & J. MacLeavy (Eds.), *The handbook of neoliberalism* (pp. 39-49). Routledge.
- Castree, N. (2006). From neoliberalism to neoliberalisation: Consolations, confusions, and necessary illusions. *Environment and Planning A*, 38(1), 1-6.
- Castree, N. (2008). Neoliberalising nature: The logics of deregulation and reregulation. *Environment and Planning A*, 40(1), 131-152.
- Catch 22. (2021a). *Current vacancies*. <https://www.catch-22.org.uk/work-with-us/jobs-and-placements/vacancies/>
- Catch 22. (2021b). *Team Leader - National Citizen Service (NCS)*. [Job description and person specification from www.catch-22.org.uk].
- Chadderton, C., & Colley, H. (2012). School-to-work transition services: Marginalising 'disposable' youth in a state of exception? *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 33(3), 329-343.
- Children & Young People Now. (2005a). *Analysis: Policy - Wales: Why the agency lost its funding*. <http://www.cypnow.co.uk/ypn/news/1062579/analysis-policy-wales-why-agency-lost-funding>
- Children & Young People Now. (2005b). *Wales: Fears ignored over closure of agency*. <http://www.cypnow.co.uk/ypn/news/1055739/wales-fears-ignored-closure-agency>
- Choose Youth. (2013). *Choose Youth manifesto - Our vision for a new youth service*. https://www.chooseyouth.org/assets/documents/165649-5601_ChooseYouth_4ppA4_Finalweb_1.pdf
- Choose Youth. (2018). *Choose Youth response to Building a Statutory Youth Service - Labour Party Consultation 2018*. <https://indefenceofyouthwork.files.wordpress.com/2018/11/building-a-statutory-youth-service-choose-youth.pdf>
- Cieslik, M., & Simpson, D. (2013). *Key concepts in youth studies*. Sage.
- Clark, M., & Bell, A. (2013). Using quantitative methods: Designing surveys and evaluations. In S. Bradford & F. Cullen (Eds.), *Research and research methods for youth practitioners* (pp. 113-139). Routledge.
- Clennon, O. D. (2022). *Tackling racial injustice report*. Young Manchester. https://youngmanchester.org/images/downloads/ypfWebsite/Tackling-Racial-Injustice-Research-Report_Final.pdf
- Cohen, D. (2021a). *David Cameron's legacy of failure*. The Independent. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/david-cameron-national-citizen-service-b1822327.html>
- Cohen, D. (2021b). *Youth leaders criticise 'disproportionate' funding handed to David Cameron's failing legacy project*. The Independent. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/david-cameron-national-citizen-service-b1826574.html>
- Cohen, D. (2022). *David Cameron's legacy project has budget slashed after Independent expose*. The Independent. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/david-cameron-national-citizen-service-b2006983.html>
- Cohen, P., & Ainley, P. (2000). In the country of the blind? Youth studies and cultural studies in Britain. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 3(1), 79-95.
- Coles, B. (2000). *Joined-up youth research, policy and practice: A new agenda for change?* Youth Work Press.
- Coles, B. (2008). The transformation of the youth labour market in the UK. *Youth & Policy*, (100), 119-128.
- Coles, B. (2014, March 2014). *NEET as a 'wicked social problem' [Presentation]*. Keeping Young People in Employment, Education and/or Training: Common challenges - Shared Solutions, Palace of Parliament, Bucharest.
- Collini, S. (2017). *Speaking of universities*. Verso.
- Community and Youth Workers Union. (2005). *A manifesto for youth work and the youth service in Wales*. <http://cywu-nwales.blogspot.co.uk/2005/05/manifesto-2005.html>
- Connolly, W. (1995). *The ethics of pluralization*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Conservative Party. (2007). *It's time to inspire Britain's teenagers - National Citizen Service for the 21st century: a six-week programme for every school leaver*. TPF Group.
- Cooney, R. (2018). *National Citizen Service under fire from peer for high pay of senior staff*. Third Sector. https://www.thirdsector.co.uk/article/1457904?utm_source=website&utm_medium=social

- Cooper, T. (2012). Models of youth work: A framework for positive sceptical reflection. *Youth & Policy*, (109), 98-117.
- Cooper, T. (2013). Institutional context and youth work professionalization in post-welfare societies. *Child & Youth Services*, 34(2), 112-124.
- Cooper, T. (2018). Defining youth work: Exploring the boundaries, continuity and diversity of youth work practice. In P. Alldred, F. Cullen, K. Edwards, & D. Fusco (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of youth work practice* (pp. 3-17). Sage.
- Cooper, T., & White, R. (1994). Models of youth work intervention. *Youth Studies Australia*, 13(4), 30-35.
- Costley, C., Elliott, G. C., & Gibbs, P. (2010). *Doing work-based research: Approaches to enquiry for insider-researchers*. Sage.
- Council of Wales for Voluntary Youth Services. (2014). *Detached and outreach youth work: Method and resource handbook*. <https://www.cwvys.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/HB-Detached-and-Outreach-Youth-Work.pdf>
- Critchley, S. (2012). Is there a normative deficit in the theory of hegemony? In S. Critchley & O. Marchart (Eds.), *Laclau: A critical reader* (pp. 123-132). Routledge.
- Cullen, F., Bradford, S., & Green, L. (2013). Working as a practitioner-researcher. In S. Bradford & F. Cullen (Eds.), *Research and research methods for youth practitioners* (pp. 5-24). Routledge.
- Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg. (2022). *What is Cymdeithas yr Iaith?* <https://cymdeithas.cymru/what-is-cymdeithas-yr-iaith>
- Davies, B. (1979). *In whose interests? From social education to social and life skills training*. National Youth Bureau.
- Davies, B. (1999a). *From voluntarism to welfare state: A history of the Youth Service in England: Volume 1 1939-1979*. National Youth Agency.
- Davies, B. (1999b). *From Thatcherism to New Labour. A history of the Youth Service in England. Volume 2: 1979-1999*. National Youth Agency.
- Davies, B. (2005). Youth work: a manifesto for our times. *Youth & Policy*, (88), 5-27.
- Davies, B. (2011). Youth work stories: In search of qualitative evidence on process and impact. *Youth & Policy*, (106), 23-42.
- Davies, B. (2015). Youth work: A manifesto for our times - revisited. *Youth & Policy*, (114), 96-117.
- Davies, B. (2019). *Austerity, youth policy and the deconstruction of the youth service in England*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Davies, B. (2021). *Youth work: A manifesto revisited – at the time of COVID and beyond*. Youth & Policy. <https://www.youthandpolicy.org/articles/youth-work-manifesto-revisited-2021/>
- Davies, J. S., & Blanco, I. (2017). Austerity urbanism: Patterns of neo-liberalisation and resistance in six cities of Spain and the UK. *Environment and Planning A*, 49(7), 1517-1536.
- Davies, J. S., Blanco, I., Bua, A., Chorianopoulos, I., Cortina-Oriol, M., Feandeiro, A., Gaynor, N., Gleeson, B., Griggs, S., Hamel, P., Henderson, H., Howarth, D., Keil, R., Pill, M., Salazar, Y., & Sullivan, H. (2023). *New developments in urban governance: Rethinking collaboration in the age of austerity*. Bristol University Press.
- Davies, J. S., Bua, A., Cortina-Oriol, M., & Thompson, E. (2020). Why is austerity governable? A Gramscian urban regime analysis of Leicester, UK. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 42(1), 56-74.
- Davies, W., & Gane, N. (2021). Post-neoliberalism? An introduction. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 38(6), 3-28.
- de St Croix, T. (2011). Struggles and silences: Policy, youth work and the National Citizen Service. *Youth & Policy*, (106), 43-59.
- de St Croix, T. (2015). Volunteers and entrepreneurs? Youth work and the big society. In G. Bright (Ed.), *Youth work: Histories, policy and contexts* (pp. 58-79). Palgrave.
- de St Croix, T. (2016). *Grassroots youth work: Policy, passion and resistance in practice*. Policy Press.
- de St Croix, T. (2017). *Time to say goodbye to the National Citizen Service?* Youth & Policy. <https://www.youthandpolicy.org/articles/time-to-say-goodbye-ncs/>
- de St Croix, T. (2018a). Youth work, performativity and the new youth impact agenda: getting paid for numbers? *Journal of Education Policy*, 33(3), 414-438.
- de St Croix, T. (2018b). *Youth work beyond the measurement imperative? Reflections on the Youth Investment Fund Learning Project from a critical friend*. Centre for Youth Impact. <https://www.youthimpact.uk/latest/news/youth-work-beyond-measurement-imperative-reflections-youth-investment-fund-learning>
- de St Croix, T., & Doherty, L. (2022). 'Capturing the magic': Grassroots perspectives on evaluating open youth work. *Journal of Youth Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2022.2150540>

- de St Croix, T., & Doherty, L. (2023). 'It's a great place to find where you belong': Creating, curating and valuing place and space in open youth work. *Children's Geographies*, 21(6), 1029-1043.
- de St Croix, T., McGimpsey, I., & Owens, J. (2020). Feeding young people to the social investment machine: The financialisation of public services. *Critical Social Policy*, 40(3), 450-470.
- Dean, M. (2018). Foucault and the neoliberalism controversy. In D. Cahill, Cooper, M., Konings, M., Primrose, D. (Ed.), *The SAGE handbook of neoliberalism* (pp. 40-54). Sage.
- Denscombe, M. (2007). *The good research guide: For small-scale social research projects*. McGraw-Hill Education.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011a). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 1-20). Sage.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011b). Part III: Strategies of inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 243-250). Sage.
- Department for Culture Media and Sport. (2017). *National Citizen Service: Guidance for local authorities*.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/654628/NCS_Guidance_for_Local_Authorities.pdf
- Department for Culture Media and Sport. (2021). *Departmental spending: DCMS*.
<https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/commons/scrutiny/dcms-slides-2021-22.pdf>
- Department for Culture Media and Sport. (2022). *Youth review: Summary findings and government response*. [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/youth-review-summary-findings-and-government-response](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/youth-review-summary-findings-and-government-response/youth-review-summary-findings-and-government-response)
- Derrida, J. (2012). *Spectres of Marx: The state of the debt, the work of mourning and the New International*. Routledge.
- Design Week. (2006). *Ballot box branding*. <https://www.designweek.co.uk/issues/22-june-2006/ballot-box-branding/>
- DiNucci, D. (1999). *Fragmented future*. Print. http://darcy.com/fragmented_future.pdf
- Downe, J., & Taylor-Collins, E. (2019). *At the tipping point? Welsh local government and austerity*. Wales Centre for Public Policy.
- Dunkley, J. (2010). *Austerity cutbacks are an economic 'disaster', Nobel Prize winner Joseph Stiglitz warns*. Telegraph. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/economics/7987704/Austerity-cutbacks-are-an-economic-disaster-Nobel-Prize-winner-Joseph-Stiglitz-warns.html>
- Dunn, B. (2017). Against neoliberalism as a concept. *Capital & Class*, 41(3), 435-454.
- Education (Wales) Act 2014, anaw 5, <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2014/5/contents/enacted>
- Education Training Standards Wales. (2021). *The JNC*. <https://www.etswales.org.uk/the-jnc>
- Education Training Standards Wales. (2022). *Youth work qualifications*.
<https://www.etswales.org.uk/youth-work-qualifications>
- Education Workforce Council. (2017). *Guidance for employers: Employing qualified Youth Workers and Youth Support Workers*. Education Workforce Council.
- Education Workforce Council. (2022). Introduction to the EWC.
<https://www.ewc.wales/site/index.php/en/about-us/who-are-we/introduction-to-the-ewc>
- Estyn. (2018). *Youth support services in Wales: The value of youth work*.
<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2021-08/Youth%2520Support%2520Services%2520in%2520Wales.pdf>
- Evans, D., Smith, K., & Williams, H. (2021). Introduction: The Welsh way. In D. Evans, K. Smith, & H. Williams (Eds.), *The Welsh way: Essays on neoliberalism and devolution*. Parthian Books.
- Federation of Detached Youth Work. (2016). *Submission to Youth Inquiry*. https://293d4559-9054-438e-a1e2-2af9d51f24ed.filesusr.com/ugd/988023_70cfa9f8f7e24df0867651012e8975a2.pdf
- Feinstein, L., Bynner, J., & Duckworth, K. (2006). Young people's leisure contexts and their relation to adult outcomes. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 9(3), 305-327.
- Fergusson, R., & Yeates, N. (2013). Business, as usual: The policy priorities of the World Bank's discourses on youth unemployment, and the global financial crisis. *Journal of International and Comparative Social Policy*, 29(1), 64-78.
- Fergusson, R., & Yeates, N. (2014). The normative and ideational foundations of international governmental organisations' discourses on global youth unemployment policies. *Policy & Politics*, 42(3), 439-458.
- Finn, D. (2000). From full employment to employability: A new deal for Britain's unemployed? *International Journal of Manpower*, 21(5), 384-399.
- Fitzpatrick, A., Matthews, P., Hassan, A., Greene, O., Bates, J., Miller, J., & Conlon, G. (2019). *National Citizen Service 2019 summer evaluation*. Kantar & London Economics.

- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1015222/NCS_2019_Evaluation_Report.pdf
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2011). Case study. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 301-316). Sage.
- Foucault, M. (2002). *The order of things: An archaeology of the human sciences*. Routledge.
- Fraser, N. (2017). *The end of progressive neoliberalism*.
https://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/progressive-neoliberalism-reactionary-populism-nancy-fraser/
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Penguin.
- Friedman, M. (1962). *Capitalism and freedom*. University of Chicago Press.
- Furlong, A. (2006). Not a very NEET solution: Representing problematic labour market transitions among early school-leavers. *Work, Employment & Society*, 20(3), 553-569.
- Furlong, A., & Cartmel, F. (2007). *Young people and social change*. Open University Press.
- Furnham, A. (1985). Youth unemployment: A review of the literature. *Journal of Adolescence*, 8(2), 109-124.
- Garrett, P. M. (2019). What are we talking about when we talk about 'Neoliberalism'? *European Journal of Social Work*, 22(2), 188-200.
- Gayle, D. (2015). *Anti-austerity protests: Tens of thousands rally across UK*. The Guardian.
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/20/tens-thousands-rally-uk-protest-against-austerity>
- Gayle, V., Lambert, P., & Murray, S. (2009). School-to-work in the 1990s: Modelling transitions with large-scale datasets. In R. Brook (Ed.), *Transitions from education to work: New perspectives from Europe and beyond* (pp. 17-41). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Geddes, M., & Sullivan, H. (2011). Localities, leadership and neoliberalization: Conflicting discourses, competing practices. *Critical Policy Studies*, 5, 391-413.
- George, S. (1999). *A short history of neoliberalism*. Transnational Institute.
<https://www.tni.org/en/article/a-short-history-of-neoliberalism>
- Geras, N. (1987). Post-Marxism? *New Left Review*, (163), 40-82.
- Giddens, A. (1993). *New rules of sociological method*. Polity Press.
- Glyndwr University. (2018). *Review of the impact of the National Youth Work Strategy from 2014 to 2018*. <https://www.gov.wales/review-national-youth-work-strategy-2014-2018>
- Glynos, J. (2008). Ideological fantasy at work. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 13(3), 275-296.
- Glynos, J., & Howarth, D. (2007). *Logics of critical explanation in social and political theory*. Routledge.
- Glynos, J., Howarth, D., Flitcroft, R., Love, C., Roussos, K., & Vazquez, J. (2021). Logics, discourse theory and methods: Advances, challenges and ways forward. *Journal of Language & Politics*, 20(1), 62-78.
- Glynos, J., Howarth, D., Norval, A., & Speed, E. (2009). *Discourse analysis: Varieties and methods*. ESRC National Centre for Research Methods.
https://repository.essex.ac.uk/4026/1/discourse_analysis_NCRM_014.pdf
- Glynos, J., Klimecki, R., & Willmott, H. (2015). Logics in policy and practice: A critical nodal analysis of the UK banking reform process. *Critical Policy Studies*, 9(4), 393-415.
- Glynos, J., & Speed, E. (2012). Varieties of co-production in public services: Time banks in a UK health policy context. *Critical Policy Studies*, 6(4), 402-433.
- Glynos, J., Speed, E., & West, K. (2015). Logics of marginalisation in health and social care reform: Integration, choice, and provider-blind provision. *Critical Social Policy*, 35(1), 45-68.
- Goodwin, J., & O'Connor, H. (2005). Exploring complex transitions: Looking back at the 'golden age' of youth transitions. *Sociology*, 39(2), 201-220.
- Government Board of Education. (1939). *The service of youth: Circular 1486*.
<https://www.youthworkwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/The-Service-of-Youth.pdf>
- Government Board of Education. (1940). *The challenge of youth: Circular 1516*.
<https://www.youthworkwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/The-Challenge-of-Youth.pdf>
- Grassroots Cardiff. (2020). *Music production*. <https://www.grassrootscardiff.com/what-we-do/music-production/>
- Gwynedd County Council. (2017). *Background document: Re-modelling Gwynedd Council's Youth Service for the future*. <https://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/en/Council/Documents---Council/Have-your-say/Youth-Services-for-the-future-consultation/Background-Document-Re-modelling-the-Youth-Service.pdf>
- Hage, G. (2015). *Alter-politics: Critical anthropology and the radical imagination*. Melbourne University Publishing.

- Haraway, D. (1988). Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist Studies*, 14(3), 575-599.
- Harding, S. (1992). Rethinking standpoint epistemology: What is "strong objectivity?" *The Centennial Review*, 36(3), 437-470.
- Harrison, H., Birks, M., Franklin, R., & Mills, J. (2017). Case study research: Foundations and methodological orientations. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 18(1), 1-17.
- Hart, R. A. (1992). *Children's participation: From tokenism to citizenship*. UNICEF.
- Harvey, D. (2006). Neo-liberalism as creative destruction. *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, 88(2), 145-158.
- Harvey, D. (2007). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press.
- Hatton, D. (2020). Foreword. In YMCA, *Out of service: A report examining local authority expenditure on youth services in England and Wales* (p. 2). YMCA.
- Hayek, F. A. (1944). *The road to serfdom*. Routledge.
- Hayes, D. (2020). *Collapsed charity settles legal dispute with NCS Trust*. Children & Young People Now. <https://www.cypnow.co.uk/news/article/collapsed-charity-settles-legal-dispute-with-ncs-trust>
- Her Majesty's Stationery Office. (1960). *The youth service in England and Wales (The Albemarle report)*. <https://www.youthandpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/The-Albemarle-Report-Reproduction.pdf>
- Hirsch, D., & Millar, J. (2004). *Labour's welfare reform: Progress to date*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation. <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/labour%E2%80%99s-welfare-reform-progress-date>
- Holmes, A. G. D. (2020). Researcher positionality: A consideration of its influence and place in qualitative research. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, 8(4), 1-10.
- Horkheimer, M. (1975). *Critical theory: Selected essays*. Continuum.
- House of Commons. (2011). *Services for young people*. <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmeduc/744/744i.pdf>
- House of Commons. (2017a). *National Citizen Service - Committee of Public Accounts*. <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmpubacc/955/95502.htm>
- House of Commons. (2017b). *Public Accounts Committee - Oral evidence: National Citizen Service, HC 955*. <http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/public-accounts-committee/national-citizen-service/oral/46802.pdf>
- Howarth, D. (1995). Discourse Theory. In D. Marsh & G. Stoker (Eds.), *Theory and methods in political science* (pp. 115-133). Macmillan Press.
- Howarth, D. (2000). *Discourse*. McGraw-Hill Education.
- Howarth, D. (2013). *Poststructuralism and after: Structure, subjectivity and power*. Springer.
- Howarth, D., Glynos, J., & Griggs, S. (2016). Discourse, explanation and critique. *Critical Policy Studies*, 10(1), 99-104.
- Howarth, D. R., & Stavrakakis, Y. (2000). Introducing discourse theory and political analysis. In D. R. Howarth, A. J. Norval, & Y. Stavrakakis (Eds.), *Discourse theory and political analysis: Identities, hegemonies and social change* (pp. 1-23). Manchester University Press.
- Hughes, G., Cooper, C., Gormally, S., & Ripplingale, J. (2014). The state of youth work in austerity England - reclaiming the ability to 'care'. *Youth & Policy*, (113), 1-14.
- Hurley, L., & Treacy, D. (1993). *Models of youth work: A sociological framework*. Irish Youth Work Press.
- Hutchinson, J., Beck, V., & Hooley, T. (2016). Delivering NEET policy packages? A decade of NEET policy in England. *Journal of Education & Work*, 29(6), 707-727.
- Hutton, W. (2020). *An open letter: why we need a National Youth Corps*. The Guardian. <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/may/24/an-open-letter-why-we-need-a-national-youth-corps>
- Illich, I. (1971). *Deschooling society*. Marion Boyars.
- Imperial War Museums. (2020). *Madrid. The 'military' practice of the rebels. If you tolerate this your children will be next*. <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/1122>
- In Defence of Youth Work. (2009). *The open letter*. <https://indefenceofyouthwork.com/the-in-defence-of-youth-work-letter-2/>
- In Defence of Youth Work. (2011). *This is youth work: Stories from practice*. https://indefenceofyouthwork.files.wordpress.com/2010/11/20252-youth-stories-report-2011_4th-1.pdf
- In Defence of Youth Work. (2018). *Reviving youth work and reimagining a youth service: IDYW starting points*. <https://indefenceofyouthwork.com/2018/04/27/17512/>

- Interim Youth Work Board. (2021). *Interim Youth Work Board for Wales: Achieving a sustainable delivery model for youth work services in Wales - final report*. <https://www.gov.wales/interim-youth-work-board-report-time-deliver-young-people-wales-final-report>
- Jefferies, T. (2017). Youth work and informal education: Finding common ground. *Youth & Policy*, (116), 9-23.
- Jefferies, T., & Smith, M. (1999). The problem of 'youth' for youth work. *Youth & Policy*, (62), 45-66.
- Jefferies, T., & Smith, M. (2001). *Social exclusion, joined-up thinking and individualization: New Labour's Connexions strategy*. Infed. <https://infed.org/mobi/social-exclusion-joined-up-thinking-and-individualization-new-labours-connexions-strategy/>
- Jefferies, T., & Smith, M. (2005). *Informal education: Conversation, democracy and learning*. Educational Heretics Press.
- Jenkins, H. (2016). *Research into the National Citizens Service pilot (Autumn, 2014) in Wales*. Welsh Government.
- Jervis, M. (2018). *Our future: A review of Extending Entitlement*. https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-04/180316-our-future-a-review-of-extending-entitlement_0.pdf
- Jessop, B. (2002). The changing governance of welfare: Recent trends in its primary functions, scale, and modes of coordination. *Social Policy & Administration*, 33(4), 348-359.
- Jessop, B. (2004). From Thatcherism to New Labour: Neo-liberalism, workfarism and labour-market regulation. In H. Overbeek (Ed.), *The Political Economy of European Employment* (pp. 137-153). Routledge.
- Jessop, B. (2016). The heartlands of neoliberalism and the rise of the austerity state. In S. Springer, K. Birch, & J. MacLeavy (Eds.), *The handbook of neoliberalism* (pp. 410-421). Routledge.
- Joint Negotiating Committee. (2016). *Joint Negotiating Committee Agreement for Youth and Community Workers*. <https://uniteforoursociety.org/assets/JNC-Pink-Book-2016.pdf>
- Jones, G. (2009). *Youth*. Polity Press.
- Kidman, J. (2020). Whither decolonisation? Indigenous scholars and the problem of inclusion in the neoliberal university. *Journal of Sociology*, 56(2), 247-262.
- Kids of Colour. (2022). *Our work*. <https://kidsofcolour.com/our-work>
- Kiely, E., & Meade, R. (2018). Contemporary Irish youth work policy and practice: A governmental analysis. *Child & Youth Services*, 39(1), 17-42.
- Kincheloe, J. L., McLaren, P., & Steinberg, S. R. (2011). Critical pedagogy and qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 163-178). Sage.
- King, H. (2016). A comparison of youth policy in England and Wales under New Labour. *Social Policy and Society*, 15(3), 337-350.
- Klein, N. (2007). *The shock doctrine: The rise of disaster capitalism*. Macmillan.
- Krugman, P. (2015). *The austerity delusion*. The Guardian. <http://www.theguardian.com/business/ng-interactive/2015/apr/29/the-austerity-delusion>
- Labour Party. (2017a). *Alternative models of ownership*. <https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Alternative-Models-of-Ownership.pdf>
- Labour Party. (2017b). *For the many not the few*. <https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/labour-manifesto-2017.pdf>
- Labour Party. (2019). *Only young once: The Labour Party's vision for rebuilding youth services*. <https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Only-Young-Once.pdf>
- Lacan, J. (1993). *The seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book 3: The psychoses 1955–1956*. WW Norton & Company.
- Laclau, E. (1995). The time is out of joint. *Diacritics*, 25(2), 86-96.
- Laclau, E., & Mouffe, C. (1987). Post-Marxism without apologies. *New Left Review*, 166(11-12), 79-106.
- Learning and Skills Act 2000, c. 21, <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/21/contents>
- Ledwith, M. (2020). *Community development: A critical and radical approach*. Policy Press.
- Leitner, H., Sheppard, E. S., Sziarto, K., & Maringanti, A. (2007). Contesting urban futures: Decentering neoliberalism. In H. Leitner, J. Peck, & E. Sheppard (Eds.), *Contesting neoliberalism: Urban frontiers* (pp. 1-25). Guildford Press.
- Lewis, P., Newburn, T., Taylor, M., McGillivray, C., Greenhill, A., Frayman, H., & Proctor, R. (2011). *Reading the riots: Investigating England's summer of disorder*. London School of Economics and Political Science & The Guardian.
- Liddle, J., Shutt, J., & Addidle, G. (2022). Editorial: Levelling up the United Kingdom? A useful mantra but too little substance or delivery? *Local Economy*, 37(1-2), 3-12.

- Llewellyn, H. (2015). *Education Workforce Council will strengthen teaching profession, says chief exec*. WalesOnline. <http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/new-education-workforce-council-give-8464025>
- Local Government Association. (2020). *LGA: Devolve National Citizen Service funding to local youth services*. <https://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/lga-devolve-national-citizen-service-funding-local-youth-services>
- Lowe, T. (2013). New development: The paradox of outcomes - the more we measure, the less we understand. *Public Money & Management*, 33(3), 213-216.
- Lynas, M. (2021). *Michael Lynas' profile page [LinkedIn]*. <https://uk.linkedin.com/in/michaellynas>
- Lévi-Strauss, C. (1966). *The savage mind*. Weidenfeld and Nicolson Ltd.
- Lévi-Strauss, C. (1971). *The elementary structures of kinship*. Beacon Press.
- MacDonald, R. (2011). Youth transitions, unemployment and underemployment: Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose? *Journal of Sociology*, 47(4), 427-444.
- Mackie, G., & McGinley, B. (2012). Outcomes for youth work: coming of age or master's bidding? *A Journal of Youth Work*, (10), 7-22.
- Manpower Services Commission. (1977). *Young People and Work [The Holland Report]*. Manpower Services Commission.
- Mark Brierley Consulting. (2017). *Review of the impact of the youth work strategy support grant*. <https://www.gov.wales/review-impact-youth-work-strategy-support-grant>
- Marshall, T., O'Prey, L., Parkinson, A., Grunhut, S., Teifi, I., Usher, S., & Knight, E. (2021). *Research to inform development of the youth work strategy*. Welsh Government. <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2021-01/research-to-inform-development-of-the-youth-work-strategy.pdf>
- Marttila, T. (2015a). *Post-foundational discourse analysis: From political difference to empirical research*. Springer.
- Marttila, T. (2015b). Post-foundational discourse analysis: A suggestion for a research program. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 16(3), Art. 1.
- Marttila, T., & Gengnagel, V. (2015). Post-foundational discourse analysis and the impasses of critical inquiry. *Journal for Discourse Studies*, 3(1), 52-69.
- May, T. (2001). *Social research: Issues, methods and process*. Open University Press.
- Mazzucato, M. (2023). *The big con: How the consulting industry weakens our businesses, infantilizes our governments and warps our economies*. Allen Lane.
- McCready, S., & Loudon, R. (2015). *Investing in lives: The history of the youth service in Northern Ireland (1844-1973)*. <https://niopa.qub.ac.uk/bitstream/NIOPA/5711/1/HistoryYouthWork.pdf>
- McFarland, J., & Cole, M. (1988). An Englishman's home is his castle? A response to Paul Willis's 'Unemployment: the final inequality'. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 9(2), 199-203.
- McGimpsey, I. (2013). *Youth service assemblage [PhD]*. Institute of Education.
- McGimpsey, I. (2017). Late neoliberalism: Delineating a policy regime. *Critical Social Policy*, 37(1), 64-84.
- McKaskill, M., & McNeil, B. (2019). *What's in a word, part 2: What do we mean when we talk about outcomes?* Centre for Youth Impact. <https://www.ymcageorgewilliams.uk/latest/news/whats-word-part-2-what-do-we-mean-when-we-talk-about-outcomes>
- McKee, V., Oldfield, C., & Poultney, J. (2010). *The benefits of youth work*. Unite the Union.
- McNeil, B. (2018). *Thoughts on the Holy Grail*. Centre for Youth Impact. <https://www.youthimpact.uk/latest/news/thoughts-holy-grail>
- Means, A. J., & Slater, G. B. (2019). The dark mirror of capital: On post-neoliberal formations and the future of education. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 40(2), 162-175.
- Meriam-Webster. (2023). *Definition of 2.0*. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/2.0>
- Mills, S., & Waite, C. (2017). Brands of youth citizenship and the politics of scale: National Citizen Service in the United Kingdom. *Political Geography*, 56, 66-76.
- Mirowski, P. (2013). *Never let a serious crisis go to waste: How neoliberalism survived the financial meltdown*. Verso.
- Mirowski, P., & Plehwe, D. (Eds.). (2015). *The road from Mont Pèlerin: The making of the Neoliberal Thought Collective*. Harvard University Press.
- Mizen, P. (1995). *The state, young people and youth training: In and against the training state*. Mansell.
- Moffitt, B. (2023). What was the 'alt' in alt-right, alt-lite, and alt-left? On 'alt' as a political modifier. *Political Studies*. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/00323217221150871>

- Morgan, R. (2002). *Clear red water: Rhodri Morgan's speech to the National Centre for Public Policy, Swansea (11/12/2002)*. <https://www.sochealth.co.uk/the-socialist-health-association/sha-country-and-branch-organisation/sha-wales/clear-red-water/>
- Mulholland, H. (2010). *David Cameron unveils national service pilot scheme*. The Guardian. <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2010/jul/22/david-cameron-national-service>
- Murphy, S. F. (2017). The rise of a neo-communitarian project: A critical youth work study into the pedagogy of the National Citizen Service in England. *Citizenship, Social & Economics Education*, 16(2), 85-89.
- Murray, S., & Gayle, V. (2012). *Youth transitions: Survey question bank: Topic overview 8*. https://dam.ukdataservice.ac.uk/media/263007/discover_sqb_youthtransitions_murray_gayle.pdf
- Mycock, A., & Tonge, J. (2011). A big idea for the big society? The advent of National Citizen Service. *The Political Quarterly*, 82(1), 56-66.
- Nash, R. (2004). *Liberating scholarly writing: The power of personal narrative*. Teachers College Press.
- National Assembly for Wales. (2000). *Extending entitlement: Supporting young people in Wales*. Corporate Policy Unit.
- National Audit Office. (2017). *National Citizen Service*. <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/National-Citizen-Service.pdf>
- National Citizen Service. (2017). *NCS Trust Public Accounts Committee response: Governance, leadership and expertise*. <https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/commons-committees/treasury/Correspondence/2017-19/Correspondence-ncs-Governance-sep-17.pdf>
- National Citizen Service. (2018). *About us*. <http://www.ncsyes.co.uk/about-us>
- National Citizen Service. (2019a). *Delivering NCS 2.0*. <https://wearencs.com/delivering-ncs-2.0>
- National Citizen Service. (2019b). *Rebrand and No We Can campaign launch*. <https://wearencs.com/rebrand-and-no-we-can-campaign-launch>
- National Citizen Service. (2019c). *Business plan April 2019 - March 2020*. <https://wearencs.com/sites/default/files/2019-07/NCS%20Business%20Plan%20Apr-19%20-%20Mar-20.pdf>
- National Citizen Service. (2020a). *Business plan April 2020 - March 2021*. <https://wearencs.com/sites/default/files/2020-06/NCS%20Business%20Plan%20Apr%2020%20-%20Mar%2021.pdf>
- National Citizen Service. (2020b). *Mark Gifford is appointed as Chief Executive of National Citizen Service*. <https://wearencs.com/mark-gifford-appointed-chief-executive-national-citizen-service>
- National Citizen Service. (2020c). *NCS X Skills Builder journal*. https://wearencs.com/sites/default/files/2020-07/NCS%20X%20SKILLS%20BUILDER%20JOURNAL_.pdf
- National Citizen Service. (2021a). *Annual report 2019/2020*. https://wearencs.com/sites/default/files/2021-03/Annual%20Report%202019-2020_0.pdf
- National Citizen Service. (2021b). *Annual business plan April 2021 - March 2022*. <https://wearencs.com/sites/default/files/2021-06/NCS%20Business%20Plan%20Apr%2021%20-%20Mar%2022.pdf>
- National Citizen Service. (2021c). *What we've achieved*. <https://wearencs.com/our-objectives-and-impact>
- National Citizen Service. (2022). *Annual business plan 2022-2023*. <https://wearencs.com/sites/default/files/2022-06/NCS%20Business%20Plan%202022-23.pdf>
- National Citizen Service Act 2017, c. 15, <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/15/contents/enacted>
- National Citizen Service Royal Charter 2017, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/649129/National_Citizen_Service_Royal_Charter__26_April_2017_.pdf
- National Youth Agency. (2019). *Overlooked: Young people and rural youth services*. <https://www.nya.org.uk/overlooked-report/>
- National Youth Agency. (2022). *What is youth work?* <https://www.nya.org.uk/what-is-youth-work/>
- Nicholls, D. (2012). *For youth workers and youth work: Speaking out for a better future*. Policy Press.
- Noble, J. (2017). *What does 'impact measurement' really mean?* New Philanthropy Capital. <https://www.thinknpc.org/blog/what-does-impact-measurement-really-mean/>
- Noble, J. (2018). *Let's stop chasing our tails on impact measurement*. Centre for Youth Impact. <https://www.youthimpact.uk/latest/news/lets-stop-chasing-our-tails-impact-measurement>
- Norris, P., & Pugh, C. (2015). Local authority youth work. In G. Bright (Ed.), *Youth work: Histories, policy and contexts* (pp. 80-101). Palgrave.

- Norval, A. J. (2000). Future research in discourse theory. In D. R. Howarth, A. J. Norval, & Y. Stavrakakis (Eds.), *Discourse theory and political analysis: Identities, hegemonies and social change* (pp. 219-236). Manchester University Press.
- O'Reilly, T. (2005). *What Is Web 2.0*. <https://www.oreilly.com/pub/a/web2/archive/what-is-web-20.html>
- Onanuga, T. (2010). *Emergency budget: George Osborne's speech in full*. The Guardian. <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2010/jun/22/emergency-budget-full-speech-text>
- Ord, J., & Davies, B. (2022). Young people, youth work & the 'levelling up' policy agenda. *Local Economy*, 37(1-2), 104-117.
- Ostrowicka, H. (2019). *Regulating social life: Discourses on the youth and the dispositif of age*. Springer.
- Patel, P. (2019). *A new generation of Conservatives must learn from Thatcher's optimism*. Politics Home. <https://www.politicshome.com/thehouse/article/a-new-generation-of-conservatives-must-learn-from-thatchers-optimism>
- Peck, J. (2018). Preface: Naming neoliberalism. In D. Cahill, M. Cooper, M. Konings, & D. Primrose (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of neoliberalism* (pp. xxii-xxiv). Sage.
- Peck, J., Brenner, N., & Theodore, N. (2018). Actually existing neoliberalism. In D. Cahill, M. Cooper, M. Konings, & D. Primrose (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of neoliberalism* (pp. 1-15). Sage.
- Peck, J., Theodore, N., & Brenner, N. (2010). Postneoliberalism and its malcontents. *Antipode*, 41(s1), 94-116.
- Peck, J., & Tickell, A. (2002). Neoliberalizing space. *Antipode*, 34(3), 380-404.
- Peters, M. A. (2007). Foucault, biopolitics and the birth of neoliberalism. *Critical Studies in Education*, 48(2), 165-178.
- Phelan, S. (2014). *Neoliberalism, media and the political*. Springer.
- Phelan, S. (2018). Neoliberalism and media. In D. Cahill, M. Cooper, M. Konings, & D. Primrose (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of neoliberalism* (pp. 539-552). Sage.
- Phillimore, J., Humphries, R., Klaas, F., & Knecht, M. (2016). *Bricolage: Potential as a conceptual tool for understanding access to welfare in superdiverse neighbourhoods*. University of Birmingham. <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-social-sciences/social-policy/iris/2016/working-paper-series/IRiS-WP-14-2016UPWEB3.pdf>
- Pratt, M. G., Sonenshein, S., & Feldman, M. S. (2022). Moving beyond templates: A bricolage approach to conducting trustworthy qualitative research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 25(2), 211-238.
- Prime Minister's Office. (2011). *Supporting youth employment: An overview of the Coalition Government's approach*. HM Government.
- Puffett, N. (2011). *Rally to protest at 'targeted vandalism of youth services'*. Children & Young People Now. <https://www.cypnow.co.uk/news/article/rally-to-protest-at-targeted-vandalism-of-youth-services>
- Puffett, N. (2012). *Flagship NCS scheme to provide placements for youth work students*. Children & Young People Now. <https://www.cypnow.co.uk/news/article/flagship-ncs-scheme-to-provide-placements-for-youth-work-students>
- Puffett, N. (2020). *DCMS launches review into NCS governance*. Children & Young People Now. <https://www.cypnow.co.uk/news/article/dcms-launches-review-into-ncs-governance>
- Purcell, M. (2016). Our new arms. In S. Springer, K. Birch, & J. MacLeavy (Eds.), *The handbook of neoliberalism* (pp. 613-622). Routledge.
- Purcell, R., & Beck, D. (2010). *Popular education practice for youth and community development work*. Learning Matters.
- Quiggin, J. (2018). Neoliberalism: Rise, decline and future prospects. In D. Cahill, M. Cooper, M. Konings, & D. Primrose (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of neoliberalism* (pp. 143-153). Sage.
- Rear, D. (2013). *Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory and Fairclough's critical discourse analysis: An introduction and comparison*. https://www.academia.edu/2912341/Laclau_and_Mouffe_s_Discourse_Theory_and_Faircloughs_Critical_Discourse_Analysis_An_Introduction_and_Comparison
- Rees, G., Williamson, H., & Istance, D. (1996). 'Status Zero': A study of jobless school-leavers in South Wales. *Research Papers in Education*, 11(2), 219-235.
- Ritchie, D., & Ord, J. (2017). The experience of open access youth work: the voice of young people. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 20(3), 269-282.
- Roberts-Holmes, G., & Moss, P. (2021). *Neoliberalism and early childhood education: Markets, imaginaries and governance*. Routledge.
- Rodley, C. (2014a). *Post-Structuralism explained with hipster beards: Part 1*. BuzzFeed. <https://www.buzzfeed.com/chrisr414d8a71a/post-structuralism-explained-with-hipster-beards-xwzf>

- Rodley, C. (2014b). *Post-Structuralism explained with hipster beards 2*. BuzzFeed. <https://www.buzzfeed.com/chrisr414d8a71a/post-structuralism-explained-with-hipster-beards-2-xwfv>
- Rogers, C., & Ludhra, G. (2013). Research ethics: Participation, social difference and informed consent. In S. Bradford & F. Cullen (Eds.), *Research and research methods for youth practitioners* (pp. 43-65). Routledge.
- Rogers, R., Malancharuvil-Berkes, E., Mosley, M., Hui, D., & Joseph, G. O. G. (2005). Critical discourse analysis in education: A review of the literature. *Review of Educational Research, 75*(3), 365-416.
- Rogers, V. (2016). *An independent evaluation of youth work in schools in Wales*. <https://www.gov.wales/youth-work-schools-independent-evaluation>
- Rose, J. (2008). Youth policy in Wales. *Youth & Policy, 100*, 55-64.
- Rose, J. (2017). *The context for the papers 'Extending Entitlement revisited: The maintained youth service 2002-2007'*. Youth Work Wales. https://www.youthworkwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/extending_entitlement_papers_intro_jr.pdf
- Rose, J. (2020). *Summary of national policy for the provision of services to young people in Wales 1844-2020*. Youth Work Wales. <https://www.youthworkwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Youth-Policy-in-Wales-2020-1.pdf>
- Rowe, E., Lubienski, C., Skourdombis, A., Gerrard, J., & Hursh, D. (2019). Templates, typologies and typifications: Neoliberalism as keyword. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 40*(2), 150-161.
- Ruckert, A., Macdonald, L., & Proulx, K. R. (2017). Post-neoliberalism in Latin America: A conceptual review. *Third World Quarterly, 38*(7), 1583-1602.
- Sallah, M., Ogunnusi, M., & Kennedy, R. (2018). Intersectionality and resistance in youth work: Young people, peace, and global 'development' in a racialized world. In P. Alldred, F. Cullen, K. Edwards, & D. Fusco (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of youth work practice* (pp. 141-153). Sage.
- Sapin, K. (2012). *Essential skills for youth work practice*. Sage.
- Saunders, B., Kitzinger, J., & Kitzinger, C. (2015). Anonymising interview data: Challenges and compromise in practice. *Qualitative Research, 15*(5), 616-632.
- Saussure, F. M. (2011). *Course in general linguistics*. Columbia University Press.
- Savage, J. (2008). *Teenage: The prehistory of youth culture: 1875-1945*. Penguin.
- Scharff, C. (2016). Gender and neoliberalism: Young women as ideal neoliberal subjects. In S. Springer, K. Birch, & J. MacLeavy (Eds.), *The handbook of neoliberalism* (pp. 217-226). Routledge.
- Seawright, J., & Gerring, J. (2008). Case selection techniques in case study research: A menu of qualitative and quantitative options. *Political Research Quarterly, 61*(2), 294-308.
- Sercombe, H. (2010). *Youth work ethics*. Sage.
- Sercombe, H. (2015). In the service of the state: Youth work under New Labour. In G. Bright (Ed.), *Youth work: Histories, policy and contexts* (pp. 38-57). Palgrave.
- Sercombe, H., Sweeney, J., Milburn, T., Liddell, M., McLeod, R., & Denning, P. (2014). *Scottish youth work: Same, but different*. <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47262055/Scotland.pdf/42e52095-1621-4a25-b84d-7b1307d03b81>
- Sheffield, H. (2017). *The Preston model: UK takes lessons in recovery from rust-belt Cleveland*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2017/apr/11/preston-cleveland-model-lessons-recovery-rust-belt>
- Smith, M. (1988). *Developing youth work: Informal education, mutual aid, and popular practice*. Open University Press.
- Smith, M. (1997). *George Williams and the YMCA*. Infed. <https://infed.org/mobi/george-williams-and-the-ymca/>
- Smith, M. (2005). *Preface to 'From social education to social and life skills training: in whose interest?' (Davies, B.)*. Infed. <https://infed.org/mobi/from-social-education-to-social-and-life-skills-training-in-whose-interest/>
- Smith, M. (2007). *Young people, youth work, youth service. National youth service strategy for Wales*. Infed. <https://infed.org/mobi/young-people-youth-work-youth-service-national-youth-service-strategy-for-wales/>
- Smith, M. (2014). *The Connexions service in England*. Infed. <https://infed.org/the-connexions-service-in-england/>
- Sofia Offshore Wind Farm. (2022). *NCS enterprise challenge*. <https://sofiawindfarm.com/case-studies/education-and-skills/ncs-enterprise-challenge/>

- Solomos, J. (1985). Problems, but whose problems: The social construction of black youth unemployment and state policies. *Journal of Social Policy*, 14(4), 527-554.
- Soudias, D. (2021). Subjects in crisis: Paradoxes of emancipation and alter-neoliberal critique. *The Sociological Review*, 69(5), 885-902.
- Soudias, D. (2023). *Paradoxes of emancipation: Radical imagination and space in neoliberal Greece*. Syracuse University Press.
- Spence, J., Devaney, C., & Noonan, K. (2006). *Youth work: Voices of practice*. National Youth Agency.
- Spence, J., & Wood, J. (2011). Youth work and research: Editorial. *Youth & Policy*, (107), 1-17.
- Springer, S. (2015). Postneoliberalism? *Review of Radical Political Economics*, 47(1), 5-17.
- Springer, S., Birch, K., & MacLeavy, J. (2016). An introduction to neoliberalism. In S. Springer, K. Birch, & J. MacLeavy (Eds.), *The handbook of neoliberalism* (pp. 1-14). Routledge.
- Stavarakakis, Y. (2014). Hegemony or post-hegemony? Discourse, representation and the revenge(s) of the real. In A. Kioupiolis & G. Katsambekis (Eds.), *Radical democracy and collective movements today: The biopolitics of the multitude versus the hegemony of the people* (pp. 111-132). Ashgate.
- Steger, M. B. & Wilson, E. K. (2012). Anti-globalization or alter-globalization? Mapping the political ideology of the Global Justice Movement. *International Studies Quarterly*, 56(3), 439-454.
- Steven, R. (2014). *Rebranding the YMCA*. Creative Review.
<https://www.creativereview.co.uk/rebranding-the-ymca/>
- Taylor, S. (1997). Critical policy analysis: Exploring contexts, texts and consequences. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 18(1), 23-35.
- Taylor, T. (2009). *Threatening youth work: The illusion of outcomes*.
<https://indefenceofyouthwork.files.wordpress.com/2009/05/threatening-yw-and-illusion-final.pdf>
- Taylor, T., Connaughton, P., de St Croix, T., Davies, B., & Grace, P. (2018). The impact of neoliberalism upon the character and purpose of English youth work and beyond. In P. Alldred, F. Cullen, K. Edwards, & D. Fusco (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of youth work practice* (pp. 84-97). Sage.
- Thomas, P. (2011). Proving our worth? Youth work, 'race' and evidence. *Youth & Policy*, (107), 18-33.
- Tiffany, G. (2008). *Lessons from detached youth work: Democratic education*. Nuffield Foundation.
<https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/sites/default/files/files/11%20Lessons%20from%20Detached%20Youth%20Work%20Democratic%20Education2.pdf>
- Tomos, A. (2021). Everything must change: Welsh language policy and activism. In D. Evans, K. Smith, & H. Williams (Eds.), *The Welsh way: Essays on neoliberalism and devolution* (pp. 142-151). Parthian Books.
- Topping, A., & Robertson, C. (2011). *Haringey youth club closures: 'There'll be riots' [video]*. The Guardian. <http://www.theguardian.com/society/video/2011/jul/31/haringey-youth-club-closures-video>
- Topping, A., Robertson, C., & Smith, E. (2011). *'I did predict a riot. The government should have seen it coming' [video]*. The Guardian. <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/video/2011/aug/12/i-predict-a-riot-video>
- Torring, J. (2005). *New theories of discourse: Laclau, Mouffe and Zizek*. Blackwell.
- Trendell, A. (2018). *Manic Street Preachers look back on 'If You Tolerate This Your Children Will Be Next' on its 20th anniversary*. New Musical Express. <https://www.nme.com/news/music/manic-street-preachers-if-you-tolerate-this-your-children-will-be-next-lyrics-meaning-video-song-stories-interview-2370143>
- Treseder, P. (1997). *Empowering children and young people: Training manual*. Save the Children.
- Trinity Saint David. (2016). *Youth work: A review - recommendations on how the voluntary sector and local authorities can work together more effectively*. <https://www.gov.wales/youth-work-review>
- UK Parliament. (2017). *Radical thinking needed on future of National Citizen Service*.
<https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/127/public-accounts-committee/news/98529/radical-thinking-needed-on-future-of-national-citizen-service/>
- UK Youth. (2020). *The impact of COVID-19 on young people and the youth sector*.
<https://www.ukyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/UK-Youth-COVID-19-Impact-Report-.pdf>
- UNICEF. (2019). *A summary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*.
https://www.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/UNCRC_summary-1_1.pdf
- Unison. (2016). *A future at risk: Cuts in youth services*.
<https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2016/08/23996.pdf>
- Valleys Kids. (2015). *Why we do it: REALITY CHECK*. <https://valleyskids.org/home/why-we-do-it/>

- Verkaik, R. (2009). *City pay culture has spread to charities, union says*. The Independent. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/city-pay-culture-has-spread-to-charities-union-says-1817725.html>
- Wales Audit Office. (2019). *The well-being of young people: Skills and employability*. <https://senedd.wales/media/0hdd2rtf/agr-ld12774-e.pdf>
- Wales Youth Agency. (2001). *A brief summary of the work of the Wales Youth Agency*. <https://www.youthworkwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Work-of-WYA.pdf>
- Wales Youth Agency. (2003). *Position paper on the role of the youth service in Young People's Partnerships*. Wales Youth Agency.
- Watt, N. (2010). *Cameron promises power for the 'man and woman on the street'*. The Guardian. <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2010/jul/19/david-cameron-big-society-cuts>
- Wavehill Consulting. (2021). *Research to inform development of the Youth Work Strategy*. <https://www.gov.wales/research-inform-development-youth-work-strategy>
- Weakley, K. (2012). *Welsh Government turns down funding for NCS pilot*. Civil Society. <https://www.civilsociety.co.uk/news/welsh-government-turns-down-funding-for-ncs-pilot.html>
- Welsh Assembly Government. (2007). *Young people, youth work, youth service. National youth service strategy for Wales*. Welsh Assembly Government.
- Welsh Government. (2013). *Youth engagement and progression framework: Implementation plan*. Youth Engagement and Employment Division.
- Welsh Government. (2014). *The national youth work strategy for Wales 2014–2018*. Welsh Government. <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/the-national-youth-work-strategy-for-wales-2014-2018.pdf>
- Welsh Government. (2019a). *Youth work strategy for Wales*. Welsh Government. <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-06/youth-work-strategy-for-wales.pdf>
- Welsh Government. (2019b). *Margaret Jervis: Winner*. <https://www.gov.wales/youth-work-excellence-awards/winners-and-finalists/2019-awards/margaret-jervis>
- White, M. (1991). *Against unemployment*. Policy Studies Institute.
- White, R. J., & Williams, C. C. (2016). Everyday contestations to neoliberalism: Valuing and harnessing alternative work practices in a neoliberal society. In S. Springer, K. Birch, & J. MacLeavy (Eds.), *The handbook of neoliberalism* (pp. 603-612). Routledge.
- Whitehead, H. (2019). *NCS Trust unveils £1m rebrand*. Civil Society. <https://www.civilsociety.co.uk/news/ncs-unveils-1m-brand-refresh.html>
- Wiggan, J. (2012). Telling stories of 21st century welfare: The UK Coalition Government and the neo-liberal discourse of worklessness and dependency. *Critical Social Policy*, 32(3), 383-405.
- Williams, H. (2021). The new dissent: Neoliberal politics and the Welsh way. In D. Evans, K. Smith, & H. Williams (Eds.), *The Welsh way: Essays on neoliberalism and devolution* (pp. 104-114). Parthian Books.
- Williamson, H. (1988). Youth workers, the MSC and the Youth Training Scheme. In T. Jeffs & M. Smith (Eds.), *Welfare and youth work practice* (pp. 155-170). Macmillan.
- Williamson, H. (1997). Status Zero youth and the 'underclass': Some considerations. In R. MacDonald (Ed.), *Youth, the 'underclass' and social exclusion* (pp. 70-83). Routledge.
- Williamson, H. (2001). Unemployed young people. In F. Factor, Chauhan, V., Pitts, J. (Ed.), *The RHP companion to working with young people* (pp. 192-199). Russell House Publishing.
- Williamson, H. (2005). *Opinion: Unstructured work is not youth work*. Children & Young People Now. <https://www.cypnow.co.uk/other/article/opinion-unstructured-work-is-not-youth-work>
- Williamson, H. (2010). For God's sake, tie your ropes together: The (recent) history of youth work in Wales - political betrayal, professional infighting and practice inertia. *The History of Youth Work in Europe*, 2, 83-92.
- Willis, P. (1986). Unemployment: The final inequality. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 7(2), 155-169.
- Witherall, C. (2004). Foreword. In R. Nash, *Liberating scholarly writing: The power of personal narrative* (pp. vii-viii). Teachers College Press.
- Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (2009). Critical discourse analysis: History, agenda, theory and methodology. *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, 2, 1-33.
- Wodak, R., Muntigl, P., & Weiss, G. (2000). *EU discourses on un/employment: An interdisciplinary approach to employment policy-making and organizational change*. Benjamins.
- Wood, L. A., & Kroger, R. O. (2000). *Doing discourse analysis: Methods for studying action in talk and text*. Sage.
- World Health Organisation. (2023). *Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic*. <https://www.who.int/europe/emergencies/situations/covid-19>

- Wrigley, L. (2017). *From 'NEET' to 'unknown': Who is responsible for young people not in education, employment or training?* Youth & Policy. <https://www.youthandpolicy.org/articles/from-neet-to-unknown/>
- Wyn-Williams, G. (2019). *Council's decision to close youth clubs 'was motivated by financial savings'*. The Daily Post. <https://www.dailypost.co.uk/news/north-wales-news/councils-decision-close-youth-clubs-17049250>
- Wyn-Williams, G. (2020). *Staff recruitment troubles hamper Gwynedd youth clubs revamp*. The Daily Post. <https://www.dailypost.co.uk/news/north-wales-news/staff-recruitment-troubles-hamper-gwynedd-17624566>
- Yates, J. S., & Bakker, K. (2014). Debating the 'post-neoliberal turn' in Latin America. *Progress in Human Geography*, 38(1), 62-90.
- Youdell, D., & McGimpsey, I. (2015). Assembling, disassembling and reassembling 'youth services' in austerity Britain. *Critical Studies in Education*, 56(1), 116-130.
- Young Men's Christian Association. (2018a). *Youth and consequences*. <https://www.ymca.org.uk/research/youth-and-consequences>
- Young Men's Christian Association. (2018b). *Welcome to YMCA: Brand guide for staff and volunteers*. <https://www.ymca.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Brand-guide-for-staff-and-volunteers.pdf>
- Young Men's Christian Association. (2020a). *Out of service: A report examining local authority expenditure on youth services in England and Wales*. YMCA. <https://www.ymca.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/YMCA-Out-of-Service-report.pdf>
- Young Men's Christian Association. (2020b). *We believe in youth services*. <https://www.ymca.org.uk/youth-services-campaign>
- Young Men's Christian Association. (2022). *Devalued: A decade of cuts to youth services*. <https://www.ymca.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/ymca-devalued-2022.pdf>
- Youth Work in Wales Review Group. (2022). *Youth work in Wales: Principles and purposes*. <https://www.cwvys.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/YOUTH-WORK-IN-WALES-2022-ENGLISH.pdf>
- Zdnet. (2006). *Web 2.0 a piece of jargon*. <https://www.zdnet.com/article/web-2-0-a-piece-of-jargon/>
- Zurcher, R. (2010). *Teaching-learning processes between informality and formalization*. Infed. <https://infed.org/mobi/teaching-learning-processes-between-informality-and-formalization/>

Appendices

Appendix A: Characterisation of Literature Review

Appendix Table 1: Literature for Review

<i>Characterisation of literature and search process - aligned with the literature review's themes</i>		
Key Themes within Literature Review	Characteristics of literature search process	Characteristics of literature identified
Typologies of Youth Work and Youth Workers	An information-orientated and iterative search process of academic and professional literatures of youth work and informal education.	Academic and professional literatures of youth work and informal education, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Models of youth work and youth worker formation texts including journal articles (notably Youth & Policy), youth work focused books and chapters from edited collections (including Sage and Palgrave collections), and specialist encyclopaedic entries (notably Infed Encyclopaedia of Social Pedagogy). Supplementary literatures referenced from broader fields of education. • Texts on principles and purposes of youth work and practitioner development, including workforce pamphlets, manifestos, open letters, webpages and blog entries, and staff training resources. These are from professional and employing bodies for youth workers, children's rights and youth participation agencies, and youth service campaigns in both England and Wales.
Analysis of Neoliberalism	An information-orientated and iterative search process of academic and education sector literatures of neoliberalism.	Academic and education sector literatures of neoliberalism, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapters from edited collections on neoliberalism studies (notably Sage and Routledge publications), as well as books and journal articles on the analysis of neoliberalism (including key texts from various approaches and perspectives identified such as critical human geography). • Academic and professional texts from education as well as fields of children's work and youth work - on antagonisms of, and responses to, austerity and neoliberalism, including campaign materials (notably from IDYW, YMCA and Choose Youth), books and journal articles (including journals on education studies and youth studies).
Agendas for Youth Work	An information-orientated and iterative search process of academic, professional and governmental literatures of youth work and youth studies.	Academic, professional and governmental literatures of youth work and youth studies, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seminal texts on social pedagogy and volumes on youth work history (notably from Bernard Davies), texts on principles and tensions of youth work practice (including IDYW open letters, articles on Infed Encyclopaedia of Social Pedagogy, and articles from journals such as Youth & Policy). • Youth studies texts on youth transitions and 'NEET' policy, including journal articles (notably from youth studies, sociology and social policy) and with both

		English and Welsh dimensions to youth policy (including respective government documents and youth work press reports).
Researching Youth Work and Youth Services	An information-orientated and iterative search process of academic, professional and governmental literatures of youth work and youth studies.	<p>Academic, professional and governmental literatures of youth work and youth studies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texts on evidence and research into youth work including Welsh and English documents for government (including youth work press reports), journal articles (such as from Youth & Policy and Journal of Youth Studies), and texts from wider youth work field including blog posts (notably from Centre for Youth Impact). Examples of cross-national studies of English and Welsh youth policy (notably by Hannah King).

Appendix B: Wider Pool of Texts

Appendix Table 2: Key Documents for Understanding Cases

	<i>NCS, England</i>	<i>Youth Service, Wales</i>
<i>Key Documents for National Services</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conservative Party's NCS Vision Paper, 2007 NCS Act, 2017 NCS Royal Charter, 2017 NCS national website NCS partner sites, including: Ingeus, Reed in Partnership, The Challenge, Catch 22 NCS Business Plans (2018-2022) NCS Annual Reports (2012-2022) NCS Evaluations (2013-2020) National Audit Office report on NCS, 2017 House of Commons Public Accounts report on NCS, 2017 & NCS response, 2017 DCMS guidance for local authorities on NCS, 2017 DCMS spending review slides, 2021 & DCMS Youth Review, 2022 Academic papers on NCS, including: de St Croix (2011; 2017), Mycock and Tonge (2011), Mills and Waite (2017), Murphy (2017) and Davies (2019). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principles and Purposes document, 2022 version Learning and Skills Act, 2000 (support for 11-25 year olds in Wales) Education (Wales) Act, 2014 Extending Entitlement directions & guidance document, 2002 Welsh Government's youth work & engagement webpage & partnership sites: CWVYS & WLGA NCS pilot in Wales documents, 2016 & Cabinet Office specification, 2014 Professional standards & inspectorate sites: ETS Wales, EWC & Estyn Local youth project sites - as signposted by Welsh Government's awards programme including: Gwynedd Youth Service, Valleys Kids, Cardiff Council Youth Service & Grassroots Cardiff Youth Service and Youth Work National Strategies, 2007, 2014, 2019 Youth Engagement & Progression Framework, introduced in 2013 Welsh Government & well-being of young people reports, 2019 Interim Youth Work Board: Terms of Reference, Final Report, and minutes Youth Work Strategy Implementation Board: Written Statement on Board Recruitment & copy of Applicant Pack, 2022 Reviews & Evaluations of Youth Work and Youth Service Strategies, including: Arad Research (2015), Rogers (2016), Trinity Saint David (2016), Mark Brierley Consulting (2017), Glyndwr University (2018), Jervis (2018), Wavehill Consulting (2021), Marshall et al. (2021) Academic publications on youth services in Wales: Rose (2008), Williamson (2010), King (2016), Tomos (2021)

<i>Key Documents for Wider Youth Policy Context</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• IDYW website• Choose Youth coalition websites• YMCA Generation Cut webpages• Labour: Only Young Once document• Youth Work Wales repository• CYPN: youth work news site• The Independent: reports on NCS• The Guardian: reports on austerity, youth service cuts & English Riots
---	--

Appendix C: Wider Pool of Images

Appendix Table 3: Wider Pool of Images (List)

	<i>Image</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Media format/ publication genre</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Nation</i>	<i>Related Policy Theme and/or Service Node</i>	<i>How identified</i>
1.	Front cover of NCS envisioning document & imagery (union jack)	Conservative Party	Policy document	2007	England and Wales	Policy problems and service envisioning Node of service provision	Documentary research
2.	Front cover of national youth service strategy document – imagery & text (young people)	Welsh Assembly Government (strategy unit)	Policy document	2007	Wales	Policy problems and service envisioning Node of service provision	Documentary research
3.	Still and screenshot of cuts & riots report (Chavez)	Guardian	Online video & news coverage	2011	England	Problematisations of austerity policy Node of service provision	Documentary research
4.	Still of cuts & riots report (Erika)	Guardian	Online video & news coverage	2011	England	Problematisations of austerity policy Node of service provision	Documentary research
5.	Image of anti-cuts rally (band & audience) - with retrospective caption	Choose Youth	Webpage & campaign material	2011	England and Wales	Problematisations of austerity policy Node of service provision	Documentary research

6.	Still and screenshot of youth project video (video text)	Valleys Kids	Online video & advocacy resource	2015	Wales	Problematisations of austerity policy Node of service provision	Documentary research
7.	Still of youth project crowdfunder video (youth worker's introduction)	Grassroots Cardiff	Online video & advocacy resource	2015	Wales	Problematisations of austerity policy Node of service provision	Documentary research
8.	Project poster (young people & activities)	Grassroots Cardiff	Project poster	2015	Wales	Node of delivery	Documentary research
9.	Front cover imagery of trade union magazine (demonstrator)	Choose Youth (coalition member)	Magazine & labour organising resource	2016	England and Wales	Problematisations of austerity policy	Documentary research
10.	Front cover of regulatory guidance (logo and title)	EWC	Guidance document & employer/workforce resource	2017	Wales	Node of delivery (incl. NEET agenda)	Documentary research
11.	Image from policy review (street image)	Welsh Government	Policy paper	2018	Wales	Nodes of service provision and distribution	Documentary research
12.	Front cover text & imagery (work tools)	Welsh Government (WAO)	Policy report	2019	Wales	Node of delivery (incl. NEET agenda)	Documentary research
13.	Imagery and headers for CEO statement (NCS 2.0)	NCS	Website & management statement	2019	England	Nodes of service provision and distribution	Documentary research
14.	Imagery from youth policy document (small group on devices)	Labour Party	Policy paper	2019	England	Policy problems and service envisioning	Documentary research / Interview research
15.	Imagery from youth policy document (small group walking)	Labour Party	Policy paper	2019	England	Policy problems and service envisioning	Documentary research / Interview research
16.	NCS Board profile (membership)	NCS	Organisational report	2019		Node of governance	Documentary research
17.	NCS Board profile (membership)	NCS	Organisational report	2020		Node of governance	Documentary research

18.	NCS case study (young person)	NCS	Organisational report	2020	England	Node of delivery (incl. NEET agenda)	Documentary research
19.	Front cover of cuts report (Alan)	YMCA	Policy paper	2020	England and Wales	Problematisations of austerity policy Policy problems and service envisioning Node of service provision	Documentary research
20.	Still from cuts video (Alan)	YMCA	Advocacy video	2020	England and Wales	Problematisations of austerity policy Policy problems and service envisioning Node of service provision	Documentary research
21.	IDYW web banner (logo & tagline)	IDYW	Website & banner	2020	England and Wales	Policy problems and service envisioning Node of delivery	Documentary research
22.	Statistics on spending cuts (infographic)	Welsh Government	Policy paper	2021	Wales	Problematisations of austerity policy Node of service provision	Documentary research
23.	Imagery from storytelling article (group circle)	IDYW	Website article	2021	England and Wales	Node of governance	Documentary research
24.	Quality Mark (badge)	Welsh Government	Organisational guidance	2021	Wales	Node of governance	Documentary research
25.	Sill of NCS Team Leader Recruitment video (text & landscape)	Catch 22	Recruitment video	2021	England	Node of delivery	Documentary research

26.	Still of NCS Team Leader Recruitment video (running through river)	Catch 22	Recruitment video	2021	England	Node of delivery	Documentary research
27.	Social mobility imagery and text (young people & statistic)	NCS	Website & organisational data	2021	England	Node of delivery (incl. NEET agenda)	Documentary research
28.	NCS Board (membership)	NCS	Organisational report	2021	England	Node of governance	Documentary research
29.	Cover of recruitment pack	Welsh Government	Board advert	2022	Wales	Node of governance	Documentary research
30.	Still of video on employability & equality initiative (group circle)	NCS	Video & project profile	2022	England	Node of delivery (incl. NEET agenda)	Interview research
31.	Project mission (text of liberation struggle)	4Front	Webpage & project mission	2022	England	Policy problems and service envisioning Node of delivery (counter-example)	Interview research
32.	Website banner caption (tagline)	Kids of Colour	Webpage & project mission	2022	England	Policy problems and service envisioning Node of delivery (counter-example)	Interview research

Appendix D: Interview Analysis

Appendix Table 4: List of Codes and Categories

No.	Codes	Categories	Research Objectives
1.	Image 1 and Austerity (England)	Policy problems and problematisations	Analysis of discourses shaping and influencing public youth service provision and youth worker subjectivity (objective 1)
2.	Image 2 and Austerity (Wales)	Node of service provision Accounts of policy and service developments	
3.	Image 3 and NCS Envisioning (England and Wales)	Policy problems and envisioning	
4.	Image 4 and Youth Service Envisioning (England and Wales)	Node of service provision Accounts of policy and service developments	
5.	Image 5 and NCS Provision and Access (England)	Nodes of service provision and distribution	Analysis of service regimes in England and Wales, and nodes of public service chain (objective 2)
6.	Image 6 and Youth Service Provision and Access (Wales)	Accounts of service developments	
7.	Image 7 and NCS Delivery (England)	Node of delivery	Analysis of accounts and experiences of policy, service, and practice developments (objective 3)
8.	Image 8 and Youth Service Delivery (Wales)	Accounts of practice	
9.	Image 9 and NCS Delivery (England)	Node of delivery	
10.	Image 10 and Youth Service Delivery (Wales)	Accounts of practice	
11.	Image 11 and NCS Governance (England)	Node of governance	Analysis of accounts and examples of individual and collective agency (objective 4)
12.	Image 12 and Youth Service Governance (Wales)	Accounts of policy and service developments	
13.	Other Images (e.g. hints for additional imagery)	Emergent ideas	
14.	Emotive investments and fantasy	Affective dimension Fantasmatic logics	
15.	Alliances and antagonisms	Political logics	
16.	Norms and alternative projections	Social logics Projected social logics	
17.	Grounded negotiations	Accounts of service developments and practice	
18.	Alternative Imaginings	Political logics	
19.	COVID/pandemic	Emergent developments	
20.	Other developments (e.g. Brexit and levelling up agenda)	Emergent ideas and developments	

Appendix E: Inner-Challenges of the Post(-)neoliberal

Appendix Table 5: Psycho-Social Dimensions of Post(-)neoliberal Subjectivity

Psycho-Social Dimensions	
<i>Affective Dimensions</i>	<i>Example Interviewee Comments</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forward looking yet conscious of the nostalgia critique 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "I don't mean like have a youth club from the seventies or something" (i7)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The anger and sadness at losses (e.g. of austerity measures, and that want to avoid again in the future) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "It was extremely painful" to experience and witness service demolition due to austerity, as "to feel it, collapsing around you was absolutely horrendous" (i4)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Various reservations (e.g. with aspects of what went before) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While resisting the Conservative's austerity measures "we were also...very keen to not romanticise what was going before" including the "neo-liberal agendas that youth work was following under New Labour" (i3)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The stresses and pressures (e.g. of organisational and service changes) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Practitioners are just so overwhelmed by the amount of need for support from young people, as austerity has never really stopped and continued - and now we've got the cost-of-living crisis... ... Then there's the increase in bureaucratisation or all the monitoring that need doing, or you need to be the best, measure your work in all these innovative ways." (i3) "After sort of like the battles I went through... I just sort of think 'how can I make my work fit within this anyway'. And I've just put my head down a bit...but.. even this interview is making me think about it [the wider youth policy context] more again and how it affects us." (i7)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The uncertainty (e.g. of how the future will unfold) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "I've never been more fearful for youth work than I have now, when terms like 'second austerity', when you know, youth workers are being paid a very low wage for the hard work that they deliver, and they're very undervalued, even after being called key workers during the pandemic." (i1) Youth work in the gaps is like a "little flickering flame. And then, like the wind could blow and blow it out" (i3)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The deep investment and commitment (e.g. to young people, youth work and youth services) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "From a personal perspective, and I often think the personal becomes political doesn't it? I was very lucky that the school that I went to had a fantastic youth centre attached to it... I loved going to the youth centre... it sounds a cliché - but you know that sense of belonging we know youth work does, and that connectivity and opportunities and empowerments and participation. So I thrived in that space... ... I think I found sanctuary in the youth work because there you could be yourself... your view was important, and I felt that youth workers were nurturing that not fighting against it." (i8) "When I was a youth, a young person, attending a purpose built youth centre in this little town... and five years after I left - so I was around twenty - I went back to that youth centre, just as a fleeting, passing visit, and realised what a wonderful experience I've had..."

	<p>... Last night I watched a programme... Building SOS or something, where a bunch of people go into buildings and renovate them... last night it was a programme about Getaway Girls (a youth project) in Leeds... and in twelve days, thirteen days, a fantastic new building for girls work... That was absolutely inspiring to watch, and had me in tears." (i1)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hope (e.g. for contributing to the future). 	<p>"I was very mindful, and increasingly aware of the (dramatic) cuts to youth work... both to the voluntary and the statutory youth work services - and wanted to be part of making a difference, I guess, to turning that around." (i8)</p>