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Home from Home: UK civilising offensives in residential childcare

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Abstract: *Approaches to residential childcare within the United Kingdom incorporate process ostensibly types of civilising offensives. The offensives are determined by political and media groups attempt to alter the behaviour of problematic sections of the population in alignment with popular opinion about what constitutes civilised norms, values and activities. These policies are part of recurring rearing and schooling offensives that were noticeable throughout industrialisation and colonialism. Contemporary approaches intentionally, or otherwise, are part of wider processes which are reinforcing emergent and reinforcing spatial, dispositional barriers between the established and young outcasts. Interconnected weakening chains of mutual interdependence are enabling the disproportionate use of punitive measures against vulnerable members of society to either be supported or ignored. Fraying threads of relationships present further challenges for children and young people living with their carers who must seek to develop life chances against a backdrop of declining opportunities.*

Keywords: *Civilising offensive; established-outsider relations; informalisation; residential childcare for young people.*

Introducing Civilising Offensives in Residential Childcare

In the UK there are approximately 68,000 children and young people in the care of a local authority (Audit Scotland 2013). The local authority has duties and responsibilities for care and duties can be met whilst they are looked after at home through a supervision order, away from home in a community setting either through kinship care or other, in a residential home or school or secure unit. Axford (2008) adds that care includes short breaks and specialist provision for children such as those with disabilities and psychological needs. Hence the group is heterogeneous and generalisations can be problematic. However as Audit Scotland (2013), Axford (2008), Department for Education and Skills (2007) explain there are some commonalities. The Scottish Government (2013) explains:

The vast majority of looked after children have become “looked after” for care and protection reasons. Some will have experienced neglect or mental, physical or emotional abuse. Some parents are unable to look after their children because of their own substance misuse or poor parenting skills.

For the affected children and young people, educational qualifications are much lower with only achieving five grades A*–C grades at GCSE compared to 59 per cent of all children (Department and Skills 2007). Health is poorer with 45 per cent of children in care assessed to be suffering from health disorder compared with 10 per cent of the general population (ibid.). Morris and Wheatley reported on the prevalence of children describing their loneliness, physical and sexual abuse, bullied, unloved and personally responsible for their situation. Offending is

frequent, leading to exclusion from the wider community, as are educational deficits with significant numbers excluded from school (12%) or waiting to be allocated to a new school [...] and on leaving compulsory education as many as two-thirds of children leaving care in study struggled to establish a stable employment pattern (Axford 2008: 9).

9.6 per cent children in care aged ten or over have been cautioned or convicted for an offence in the twelve months which is almost three times the rate for all children at this age (Department for Education and Skills 2007). Compared with other children and young people, transitions into adulthood for residential childcare leavers are more likely to commence aged sixteen. Subsequently these looked after children are more likely than their peers to face low paid, insecure jobs or unemployment and experience teenage pregnancy, drug dependency, mental health problems and imprisonment (Parliament 2009), in what Wacquant (2008) described as ‘advanced marginality’.

Residential childcare programmes are designed to overcome these stark statistics and improve the life chances of children and young people. Yet despite the dedication, contributions and life changing interventions of social work professionals, the above data is indicative of the deep rooted difficulties residential workers face in improving prospects for the majority of the residents while wrestling with long standing tensions between development and control. In this paper it is argued that one of the biggest obstacles for residential childcare professionals has been a shift in emphasis towards greater control of the industry by their personnel and of the children against a backdrop of diminishing secure, longer term post care opportunities. The outcome has been that individual developmental interventions are being implemented alongside the wider imposition of punitive measures. These are government policies that are designed to target sectors of the population that are deemed to be increasingly financially, socially and legally problematic. In short, these measures disproportionately disadvantage the life chances which residential workers are simultaneously striving to improve. Such ambivalent civilising offensives are being introduced which create cultures of containment that are intended to control behaviour. Instead of integrative and more open approaches to the penetration of ‘civilised’ codes of conduct, boundaries that the offensives are intended to overcome are reinforced. Social distance between populist and political moralists and children and young people is increasing, not least because threads of mutual interdependence have frayed, snapped or were never established. Consequently in this paper it is argued that levels of empathy, warmth and trust in the relationships between children and childcare professionals and wider opinion formers are reduced and a significant number of young people are not (re)integrated.

The concept of civilising offensives is derived from long-term rather than short-term, unintentional and uncivilising processes and is being applied within residential childcare as active, intentional attempts to establish, [1] [N1] powerful groups to change the behaviour of residents through the implementa

'civilising' norms, values and habits. Following on from Elias (2012) typically the process is not a unilinear and irreversible state. Indeed residential childcare and post-care life highlights that the numerous pockets that have escaped the most pervasive elements of behavioural control. The fact that these pockets incorporate weakly integrated groups throughout modern history has led to the introduction of civilising offensives. Unlike the absence of deliberate steering within civilising processes, offensives have been deliberately planned with specific intended outcomes; namely to 'civilise' and control problematic behaviours. Despite, or perhaps because of, planning for civilising campaigns, many of the outcomes have proved unintended and unwanted consequences. Today's UK coalition government is at the focal point of the current conduct of children and young people, aided and abetted by populist media and law and order agendas. Although the ordering of the powerful may have changed over generations, they share a tendency to implement policies which are underpinned by moralising sentiments based upon an understanding of what constitutes good behaviour is and should be. Such certitude is based upon a portrayal of what Elias and Scotson (1986) described as 'the minority of the best' from among their own established group. Yet as Powell (2011) argues, civilising offensives can be ambivalent. The following sections highlight that this is certainly true of current policies. Throughout modern British history institutions have offered social support, trust mechanisms and welfare against a wider policy for restraining behaviour, connecting into processes of stigmatisation and increasingly all-encompassing nets of containment. Hitherto, as discussed below, the different social arrangements and emphasis upon the Children's Hearing System has meant that Scotland has been considered to have avoided the worst excesses of the English model (Law and Mooney 2011).

The implemented policies have struggled to overcome tensions surrounding the elongation of childhood and balancing approaches to protect children both from adults and other children. Perceptions of the duration of childhood, allied to shifting demarcations surrounding appropriate behaviour have, as Powell (2005) suggests, contributed to longer transitions into adulthood for the children of established families. In comparison, their peers with outsider status, such as Gypsy-Traveller children (Powell 2011) and children of the streets, enter adulthood abruptly, frequently with limited life chances (Axford 2008; Hendrick and Wheatley 1994; Smith 2009). That these outcomes continue despite a backdrop of generational religious, philanthropic, political, bureaucratic and academic interventions requires considerable consideration. In this paper it is argued that some policies devised for residential childcare have ostensibly been civilising offensives. However the failure to position the offensives within individual, conceptual and institutional contexts and longer term social processes and wider societal influences have meant that they are often inappropriate and/or doomed to fail or even be counterproductive. Many of today's contradictions can be understood from the perspective of their historical roots. Hence the remainder of the paper commences with an exploration of the history of care for children and young people and its contemporary significance. It then shifts to processes of socialisation experienced by those in care which contribute to diminished life chances before exploring processes of demonisation that have seen reinforced portrayals of problem children. Finally, upon these processes, the paper draws to a close by accounting for the decline in middle-class engagement with care and how this has contributed to the physical and psychological detachment from children and young people in care. Collectively these developments help to explain looked after children and young people's bleak economic and social prospects.

Modern history of caring for the lost legions

From the onset of the industrial revolution emergent Western European secular and religious authorities sought to inculcate their standards for behaviour upon the newly emergent industrial outsider groups and recently acquired colonial subjects. For instance, Kruithof (reported in Powell 2013) outlines how class Protestantism, child-rearing practices and education combined in attempts to create a 'virtue' and 'morality'. Achieving such virtue was considered to be possible through repressing and eradicating the 'traditional mentality' and the moral improvement of the lower classes. Within the UK, evangelical motives were prevalent within the 'child-saving movement' (Parker 1990), mixing compassion and self-righteousness. Parker (1990) argues that child saving in the nineteenth century was often indistinguishable from salvation as the spiritual and physical well-being became firmly intertwined. Within Britain, evangelical motives were prevalent within the 'child-saving movement'. Schooling of the poor was introduced by philanthropists as part of this wider civilising mission. Members of the burgeoning middle class provided support for institutions such as the ragged schools which tended to include religion within their curriculum. The goal was to improve physical, mental and moral well-being and to counterbalance secularism (Smith 2001). Sectarianism pervaded child care, heavily influenced by anti-Catholicism, and rivalry between convictions and denominations for the minds of young children (Parker 1990).

The emergence of what De Swaan (1990) described as 'scientific philanthropy' in the nineteenth century proved to be indicative of a shift in approach towards the poor which continues to resonate today. The emergent emphasis on helping the needy to help themselves has been accompanied by different understandings of the capacity of the poor. De Swaan explains that fear of the poor had been influenced by the limited availability of jobs. Without universal welfare, the poor could be temporarily incorporated by piece-rate or piece-paid employment or alms. Alternatively individuals could be discouraged from remaining in the neighbourhood and the implicit threat of their poverty was transferred to another district. The growing interweaving of lives and complex specialisations and differentiations brought about the narrowing of the distance which helped achieve greater integration of the poor within the lengthening social interdependencies. Nevertheless the drawing together of social groupings was not equitable across groups of the population. Although greater interdependency was to result in the introduction of welfare provisions this did not translate universally into inculcation of the established's normative standards. Pockets continued to behave outside the 'civilised' parameters and arguably, following legal and political shifts, these pockets grow and become entrenched.

The roots of today's institutions can be traced to voluntary church bodies which provided some support for destitute children. The Poor Law Relief Act (1601) established the state's responsibilities towards the destitute. Pauper's children were to be instructed to work or be placed as apprentices (Heywood 1959). During industrialisation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, philanthropic trusts and charities were established, in part to cope with the rapid migration of families to urban areas. Programmes were developed to work and morality amongst the threatening, threatened, dispossessed and dislocated. Notions of 'undeserving' poor were formulated under the 1834 Poor Law (Colton 2002) [3][#N3]. In order to gain access to workhouses, the doctrine of 'less eligibility' was introduced so that staying in an institution was considered to be less desirable than living outside (Parker 1990; Smith 2009). Alongside the 1834 Factory Acts, such as those of 1802 and 1901, were implemented to progressively restrict children's working hours within industrial processes. In the short term, the well-intentioned campaigns led to child labour or stealing to substitute the loss of industrial earnings. It was not unknown for young children to be imprisoned for such activities. [4][#N4]. Following the changing nature of industrial labour, mass unemployment

weakening social controls and concomitant visibility of children on the streets, the latter half of the century became known as the 'reformation-rescue period'. With no free, compulsory education until 1870, many families were viewed as contaminating influences and children needed to be removed and protected from the degradations (Smith 2009). Parker (1990) suggests that although the children were brought under control, they were largely considered blameless and malleable. Hence the potential for reclamation was greater than for adults and as such children's 'souls' were targeted by religious campaigns.

By the end of the nineteenth century there were 58,000 children in homes and residential schools, which were integral to reform programmes providing habits, routine, virtue, discipline and, often standardised education. The dual purpose of caring for the abandoned and destitute 'whilst protecting society from the potential threat to social order posed by "dangerous" children' (Colton 2002: 37) contributed to children being viewed as both victims and threats (Kendrick 1998). [5] [N5] Holman declares that 'All these children bore the stigma called "the badge of shame" for to come under the auspices of the Poor Law was to be associated with shame and inferiority' (1996: 2). Unlike today, there was no encouragement or enabling programmes for children to return to the family home; a decision influenced by perceived familial degradations, the perceived fecklessness of lone mothers. In short, care regimes did not want to return children to the territories of degradations from which they had been 'saved'. Separated children could remain so for life, even those thousands who were transferred to new lives and families in the colonies, particularly Australia and Canada (Parker 1990). [6] [N6]

Prior to the Second World War, there was a shift away from the Poor Law and voluntary organisations to the Home Office and local authorities for what became known as 'children deprived of a normal home and family life' (Holman 1996: 5). A number of pieces of legislation were introduced in the first part of the twentieth century. [7] [N7] However the extent to which provision remained dangerously inadequate only became apparent during the Second World War. There were a number of reasons for the changes including the evacuation of largely urban working class children to rural and suburban, middle-class fostering then known as 'boarding out'. 'Difficulties were encountered with the latter [foster parents] often complaining about the former's [children's] head lice, bed wetting, eating habits, bad manners and behaviour' (Holman 1996: 6). Reformers were to successfully campaign for fundamental changes to the care system. 'The Poor Law children seem to constitute a kind of lost legion [...] they are nobody's children' (cited in Holman 1996: 8).

Significant post-war changes were made to the duty of care yet residential care for children continued to be stigmatised based in part on the perceived flawed morality of their parents, including the ongoing stigma about illegitimacy. Subsequent policy changes tended to be indicative of shifting priorities that stressed improving residential homes to keeping children out of care. These examples are indicative of the move towards the 'best interests of the child' which Van Krieken explains are 'part of a much broader and deeper set of social processes of social change' (2005: 26). The Children and Young Persons Act 1963 and Children Act 1989 in England and Wales were introduced to avoid the need for children to go into care and to ease pressure on residential fostering. Parker (1990) has argued that, unlike the nineteenth century, in the 1960s the solution was to address problems within the family through social services rather than the removal of the child. Parker has also positioned changes during the 1960s within the re-location of residential childcare into the social work profession. Tensions between different approaches within the emergent profession, particularly the more dominant anti-institution approach, which pervaded much of the rest of social work discourse.

contributed to a movement away from residential care with greater emphasis placed upon substitute families. Residential care became increasingly viewed as a staging post in preparation for a substitute family or a permanent placement for the most problematic and/or those least likely to be adopted. This view continues to be reinforced. For instance, despite declaring in the 2007 White Paper 'Care Matters' that 'local authorities treat a placement in a children's home as a "last resort"' (Department for Education and Skills, 2007), the government proceeded to state that, 'our expectation is that most children will benefit from being in their own homes [...]. Nevertheless, residential care has an important role to play as part of a range of placement options' (ibid.: 57).

Despite these observations the post-war period to 1970 was one of optimism both within residential care and programmes to maintain children with their families. The optimism was based upon the capacity for public intervention in children's lives (Corby et al 2001). However incidents of physical child abuse became more prominent in the 1970s and contributed to a significant increase in the number of children in care. Child sexual abuse rarely featured until the late 1970s and early 1980s when allegations were considered to be matters to be dealt with by the institution. Abuse was to become symptomatic of the tensions within the history of child care between the aspirations of protection and restoration to home (Parker 1990). Moreover local government reorganisation was also to initiate the onset of managerialism. Greater professionalism was encouraged which resulted in more detached staff and a shift in focus which, allied to greater emphasis upon procedures and child protection, resulted in more unfamiliar and increasing physical and psychic distance (Smith 2009).

The Children Act (1989) in England and Wales and the 1995 (Children) Scotland Act stressed parental responsibility and the concept of 'children in need' became a formal classification for the provision of local authority services. In essence, the growing prevalence of child protection allied to financial constraints resulted in intentions for family support and active intervention with children in care not being realised. McCall (2009) argues, the concept of care became marginalised. Although the change in terminology was intended in order to improve rights and reduce stigma, over the longer term the rhetoric has accorded with the retraction of the welfare state and consumerist version of care. 'Corporate parenting' became an important concept within programmes with the legal and moral duty placed upon the local authority and parents. The UK Department for Education and Skills stated that 'it is with the corporate parent that responsibility and accountability for the wellbeing and future prospects of children in care ultimately rest. A good corporate parent must offer everything that a good parent would, including stability' (2007: 7). In essence, the concept of family is replaced with parenting by multi-agency partnership or childrearing by commission. The government intentions to address 'both the difficulties which the children experience and the challenges of parenting within a complex system of different services' (Department for Education and Skills 2007) are likely to prove to be the source of considerable tensions, not least as the difficulties can stem from dealing with the concept of parenting by partnerships.

The UK Government's most recent approach has been incorporated with the intention to improve the adoption system (GOV.UK 2013). Specific reference to services for looked after children are argued to be in ambition. To summarise, the government intends to overcome the huge emotional, educational and occupational problems encountered by the individuals in care by maintaining the current programme of care. Local councils should appoint a virtual school head post, and listen to the views of children in care. The intention of improving the quality of care in children's homes is to 'make sure looked-after children receive b

protection' (ibid.). Children and young people who return home can expect 'improved services' w
Government will 'keep the wellbeing of care leavers in mind' (ibid.).

This vacuous vision for residential childcare also needs to be set against the financial and philosoc
targeting of the welfare provision. Creeping privatisation and commodification of services increa
delivered for profit have become widely accepted. Employment consequences for temporary, ins
who work long, often anti-social, hours, in challenging conditions for low pay has similarly becor
practice. Within the work environment, control has shifted towards external managers, who ofte
experience of residential childcare, supported by pervasive bureaucratic systems and rigorous ru
procedures and risk assessment frameworks. Meanwhile staff members are supposed to replicat
family experiences and opportunities while being bound by the pervasive emphasis on safekeepin
management (Hendrick 2003; Smith 2009).

Alongside the pervasive privatisation and managerialism, welfare institutions and clients have be
encapsulated within the rhetorical attacks against benefit recipients which have accompanied co
cutbacks and policy drivers. Whilst at one level, austerity was introduced following the 2008 ban
order to reduce the massive budget deficit, the rationale for welfare cutbacks has often been dire
recipients who become implicated or blamed for their poverty or associated misfortunes (Wallac
Wouters (2007) notes similar processes in the preceding recession when governments defended
instituted budget cuts through reference to general interests and the need for commercial and en
stimuli through de-regulation. Arguably people who did not fit within this agenda became positio
the common good. Residential childcare is obviously firmly located within welfare provision and
subjected to the political and populist expectation of lessening the financial burden while overtu
processes in order to produce the requisite good citizens. Hence although staff remain committe
improving lives, contemporary financial, social and political restraints are restricting possibilitie
transformative interventions.

Inculcating through socialisation

A number of agents have been involved in transferring affects, providing behavioural boundaries
pressure for political and populist parameters to be maintained. In so doing, family, friends and
been integral across society by encouraging, often unconsciously, shifts from external restraints
placed upon a child to the self-discipline of maturing and mature individuals (van Krieken 1998,
Within portrayals of the 'normative' family, there remains what Elias described as 'the anachroni
insistence on an idealised conception of the parent-child relation' (1998: 210). The large-scale or
divorce rates and growth of single parents have contributed to feelings of nostalgia which are int
within politics and mass media. For instance, Slater (2011) outlines how marriage and stable two
family life were pivotal factors in the 2010 Conservative Party General Election and were widely
much of the tabloid press. Following the election Slater (ibid.) argues that these beliefs provide th
undercurrent for public policy exemplified by the Prime Minister David Cameron's assumption th
the 2011 rioters in England were from homes lacking fathers and male role models. Subsequently
widespread and vocal sense of loss has emerged over the weakening, and dispersal, of the nuclea
which overlooks the longer term processes which lead to the changes. As Elias (1998) and Kitche

explain, the apparent weakening of controlling relations within the family is only possible because parents and children have inculcated greater patterns of self-restraint. Instead the gradual reduction of unequal power relations both between parents and between parents and children have been attributed to a responsibility for much that is perceived to be wrong. However Elias (1998) explains how the notion of unconditional authority of parents and unconditional obedience of children have changed within unplanned 'civilising processes'. Less rigid power differentials have enabled greater engagement within familial relationships and decision making within the liberalisation of the family (Kitchen Wouters (1986, 1999, 2007) has outlined, processes of informalisation have entailed a relaxation of modesty and sexual restraints and codes of etiquette and behaviour between social hierarchies blurring of the demarcations between parental authority and children's acquiescence is indicative of a decline of traditional symbols of respect between individuals and authority figures and institutions of respect came to be seen as unduly excessive and undeserved. Deserved respect was to be earned, through warmth, confidence and trust. Recently however there has been a growing consensus on the political spectrum and within populist media against informalisation and associated outcomes. A solution to these feelings was the introduction of Parenting Orders which would provide 'help and support [...] in addressing a child's offending behaviour' by restoring 'a proper relationship between the child and parent or guardian' (UK Government 1999: 181). Parents were provided with instruction on 'how to enforce acceptable standards and behaviour' (ibid.). Failure to adhere to the terms of the Order could result in parents being liable for sanction and punishment. Ultimately as Powell and Flint (2009) explain, the move to housing based interventions, across a historical framework civilising offensives are intertwined with unintended de-civilising processes.

Within residential care, socialisation occurs against a backdrop of children and young people's previous experiences. Throughout the modern history of residential childcare, the UK government's emphasis placed upon the residents' differences from the normative template for what a child's experience should be. To quote from a more forthright period, Elizabeth Bremer, a Home Office tutor, 'They all have some special need – be it social or emotional, physical or intellectual' (1965: 16). Bremer goes on to observe that:

occasionally the young person has to re-think and re-evaluate his own life, has to be helped towards a different attitude to life, towards different moral standards. The residential work sets the tone, the example for the community life and for the individual [...] all these children must be helped to see that their handicap does not exclude them from life in the community. That they will have to go back to their place (ibid.: 17).

The emphasis on 'character training' was the main aim of institutions, especially prior to the Child Care Act 1948 (Henry 1965). Such training was a requisite for personality development, vocational opportunities and the ability to cope with their problems. This is compared with the normal family and Henry draws attention to the role of two parents. Applying stereotypical characteristics from the era, the husband is the 'breadwinner', the mother 'turns the sticks and stones provided by the father into a true home' as they provide emotional balance (Henry 1965: 54).

Since these instructions were issued, relative equality and the sharing and integration of roles has developed considerably within the processes underpinning societal emancipation of women and children. It

the lives of residential children and young people continue to be measured against an idealised benchmark namely what the Department of Education and Skills in its 2007 White Paper described as ‘a normal childhood’. For instance:

children in care are necessarily subject to interventions in their lives which other children experience [...] we want to see such interventions delivered in as normal a way as possible minimise the sense of difference which children in care often feel (2007: 47).

The theme continues as the:

children should, as far as possible, be granted the same permissions to take part in normal acceptable age-appropriate activities as would reasonably be granted by the parents of the peers, and we would expect carers to behave as any other parent would in such situations

The White Paper goes on to declare, ‘we cannot wrap children in cotton wool and prevent them from a normal childhood. This applies equally to children in care’ (ibid.: 47–8).

Against this backdrop of the normality of mainstream family life and the ontological insecurity it contributes towards, is the parallel debate about problematic families and whether irresponsible parents should be punished for the actions of their offspring (Rodger 2008). Blame becomes detached from social, economic, political and cultural processes to be concentrated within familial relations, largely as Gaskell (2008) suggests, individuals can be viewed to have become responsible for their own actions. A combination of these explanations became prominent during particular social disturbances, such as urban riots in England. For example, in a survey of the general public’s perceptions of important causes of the riots, the most popular responses were poor parenting, criminality and bad morals (The Guardian and LSE 2011). In this regard, it might be expected that blame will also be placed on the state as corporate parent when looked after children become ‘troublesome’. However as this text explains, the state and structural factors are becoming increasingly detached from the recognised causes of problematic behaviour.

Demonising and reformalising problem children

The disproportionate representation of looked after children and young people committing crimes, being diagnosed with mental illness (Axford 2008; Barter 2003; Shaw Report 2007), and the ongoing tendency for the normative majority to assume that children in care are in there, at least in part, for their behaviour, has meant that the characteristics of ‘the minority of the worst’ (Elias and Scotson 1986) are applied to all residents. Processes through which these classifications are occurring must also be understood within the wider debate about anti-social youth behaviour. Although the discourse surrounding troubled youths is not new, [9][#N9] it is perhaps surprising when set against shifts towards greater informality in other relations. Moreover the identification of childhood as a distinct phase with different affective qualities has enabled children’s behaviour to be considered against different expectations to adults. Hence

satisfy drives and frequent emotional expressions has been viewed as part of a necessary stage of civilising. The defined, elongated processes lead Elias to explain how 'currently it has come to be accepted that it is not simply an "evil will", "disobedience" or "naughtiness" which brings children is forbidden to adults' (1998: 209). Yet the emphasis on problem children and young people as transgressive normative values suggests a shift in attitudes, or to be more precise an overt reconnection with the pressures surrounding behaviour and a sense of a 'broken society' or 'Broken Britain' with spatial segments therein. These children, and often their carers, are failing to meet idealised conceptions of either rather immune to, or bypassed by, processes of civilising. These constructions are formulaic public policies such as New Labour's Respect Agenda. Under the Respect umbrella, respect was targeted at the specific groups responsible for anti-social behaviour were tackled (Powell and Flint 2009). Hargrave and Gaskell (2008) argues, the initiatives disproportionately impact upon disadvantaged young people not addressing the underlying structural factors behind their behaviour. Hence children and young people are expected to evidence respect when their lived experiences lead them to feel disrespected or even disrespected. With political norms of citizenship offering little in the way of constructive forms of respect and discipline, young people create alternative frameworks for themselves where respect and control are recognised as achievable.

Scraton (2007) outlines processes of regulation and criminalisation of children and young people in the aftermath of the 1993 killing of the toddler James Bulger by two ten-year-old boys. The case was a challenge to alter visions of child normality/abnormality (Hendrick 2003) and both coincide with, and furthered, a wider retreat from welfare and a rethink of solutions to youth crime (Smith 2009). Complex psychological and community-based experiences and relationships which had led to the killings were displaced onto the act. When sentencing, the Crown Court Judge described the act, in terms that reflected an attempt to legitimise and reinforce the condemnatory tone, as 'of unparalleled evil and barbarity' (reported in Scraton 2007: 107). Scraton highlights how media reporting connected into this deterministic appropriation as the populist national press ran headlines such as 'Freaks of nature', 'Born to murder' and 'How now you little bastards'.

The subsequent legislative onslaught was underpinned by a populist backlash against children's welfare. A plethora of explanations for the troublesome children have been provided. These include failures of unconditional welfare and lax school discipline and changes in relationships which had resulted in the bankruptcy of 'progressivism' and bad parenting. Sexual permissiveness was considered to contribute to a rise in illegitimacy, while conversely female liberation to weaken commitment to the stabilising function of the mother (Hendrick 2003). A moral panic was generated around 'feral' children who were known as persistent offenders (Scraton 2007). The Bulger case was deemed to be at the extreme of a national crisis stemming from a generation of poorly controlled children. Months after sentencing, Gerald Warner in the Sunday Times wrote of 'civilisation menaced by adolescents from hell' (quoted in Scraton 2007: 107).

The impact on child welfare has been considerable. Normative childish behaviour was reinterpreted through the sullied lens of adults for whom childhood had lost its innocence. Children were now positioned as potential threats requiring greater surveillance and forms of constraint. At the same time (2007) notes that the concept of persistent young offenders was increasingly emphasised by the media and incorporated within political discourse. No-go areas were located within cities often against a narrow law-abiding few whose lives had been made intolerable by out of control locals. Anti-social behaviour

a focal point through which problem families and children could be targeted. Changes were proposed to family structures, single parents and, the Labour Party bemoaned the reduction in the 'discipline control' (reported in Scraton 2007: 127). As Law and Mooney (2011) observe in their study of urban class youth in Scotland:

Instead of focusing on the structural disadvantages in the labor market, the blame for material and symbolic dispossession is laid at the door of genetically or morally flawed individuals, ways not dissimilar from Victorian images of the "dissolute" and "undeserving" urban poor (2011: 107).

Scraton (2007) draws attention to connections between young people's familiarity with social security departments, paternalism and state over-indulgence resulting in derogatory scapegoating between workers and the 'delinquent' children in their care. Some progressive educational and youth projects which had been instrumental in rehabilitation were to be challenged and replaced by more punitive [11][#N11] New forms of advanced or neo-liberal governance emerged which connected the previous welfare/justice framework with dependency while neglecting social causes of crime and poverty (2003). Such policies could have been anticipated during periods of Conservative government and accompanying law and order agendas. However as Law and Mooney (2011) outline, the post-1997 government also sought to address perceived failings in the lower socio-economic groups, not least of paid employment and civilly unacceptable behaviour. Belligerent youths, classified as 'Chavs' in England and 'Neds' in Scotland, became easily identifiable because of their ostentatious appearance and perceived inappropriate consumerism, and became symbols of shock, embarrassment and contempt. It is possible to locate these distinctions within longer term processes. Across the white working class (2005) has argued that the body shapes and adornments of the poor have been a source of middle class repulsion and dispositional assumptions since at least the nineteenth century. Reported behaviour of the worst became caricatures within class dynamics which emphasised both a dislocated generation to be feared and repulsed and a normalised middle-classness imbued with taste and respectability (Lawler 2005). Within Scotland, the moral targeting of problem youths was accompanied by moral legislation which sought to address anti-social behaviour through restricting the freedoms of the young. Law and Mooney (2011) point out that this is against a legal backdrop that had prioritised the welfare of the child (Children and Young Persons Scotland Act 1932) and in the 1960s had introduced Children's Hearings to promote rehabilitation rather than retribution. However the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 has been indicative of the shift away from youth welfare and towards offender accountability with the protection of the child as offender replaced by greater protection of the public as a victim (Law and Mooney 2011; Rodger 2008, 2012).

Hendrick (2003: 235) incorporated Jervis when stating that New Labour 'believes in its *duty* to provide citizenship for its "project", which requires reshaped subjects who', as Jervis explains 'can carry through becoming "civilized" and "Enlightened"' (1998: 6). In short, children who exhibit anti-social behaviour must be transformed to conform in the interests of those affected by their actions, who are the deserving poor or middle classes. In failing to do so individuals can increasingly face lifelong relegation through residence whether within rundown estates or part of institutional conveyor belts that travel back and forth, between social housing estate and prison.

The denouncements were, and remain, part of a regressive approach to welfare which, partly through reinforcing government policies and media reportage helped both to stigmatise the local population and to formulate consent for the punitive stance towards these problem families and individuals. Blaming parents and youths for the problems they were encountering has helped weaken long standing commitments to a welfare safety net, in part, as Rodger (2008) argues, because of the post-emotional approach to social problems and the periphery which ensues. As New Labour theorist Anthony Giddens described, welfare has become a reward for those who are to be removed for those who do not meet requisite standards. This approach required a shift from families to civilising parents through direction to become more explicitly responsible for their children. Accompanying the removal of accountability from wider social processes was the directed support of parents (Scruton 2007). Policies were formed around urban regeneration, civic renewal and respect and have been rehashed in the Conservative Party's Big Society theme. These terms are intended to safeguard and encourage civilians who are in employment, or want to be, who accept family commitments and are committed to steering their communities to more normative, 'civilised' forms of behaviour. In so doing they have become involved within community safety and crime prevention and as such provide extensive arms of securitisation policies which underpin the civilising offensives. Support and demand for civilising offensives become mutually reinforcing, tying into and fuelling growing fears of crime and social breakdown. Garland (2001) outlines how the 1980s-onwards shift towards rising levels of fear and distrust combined with neo-liberal attitudes to success, lifestyle changes including increased car ownership, empty houses, long working hours and growing distance between affluent consumers and marginalised groups. Under the legal umbrella the long standing tradition of civilians becoming regulators is further transformed as they become formally involved in monitoring and reporting neighbours for civilly determined offences to police authorities. These informal networks are interwoven within formalised procedures for social control, surveillance and provide civilising parameters for offensives which demarcate between the deserving and the undeserving poor. Again it is possible to draw upon preceding examples. Croll (1999) highlights how in the nineteenth century, local media and readers combined to provide surveillance which named and shamed the culprits of what today would be described as anti-social behaviour. Today offensives continue to widen processes of dis-identification whereby the undeserving become detached from the moral and normative deserving poor habitus.

The anti-social agenda has contributed to children and young people being caught up within the nets of punitive justice alongside 'the jobless, homeless, beggars, drug addicts and street prostitutes, immigrants from the former colonies of the West and from the ruins of the Soviet empire' (Wacquant 2002). For Wacquant (2009, 2010) this is part of an ideological campaign that is designed to encourage the poor to accept responsibility for their structural inequalities and restricted life chances which occurred through deregulation of financial markets and concomitant increased regulation of the 'urban outcasts'. Simultaneously this 'centaur state', with a liberal head and authoritarian body, continues to espouse the norms and values for the middle and upper classes. Their consent to the application of coercion is given in a price to pay for protecting their properties, sensitivities and right to freedoms. Altruism, tolerance and respect for others diminish when the same people are viewed to be the source of insecurity. Hence the left hand protects and expands life chances in conjunction with the right-handed regulatory force of intrusive policing, surveillance and justice. The associated civilising offensives therefore contain elements of welfare and of warfare – as the term offensive indicates – of support and of processes of stigmatisation, isolation and control. As Standing (2011) argues, contrary to the widespread belief that globalisation

symbolised by de-regulation, the reality has been one of re-regulation with swathes of new laws introduced and implemented. It was within such widening divisions that Sennett (1998) described the 'corrosive character' and the declining levels of mutual trust, loyalty and commitment, accompanied with rampant paranoia, resentment and acquiescence to the securitisation agenda to protect against fears, three caricatures, and are discussed in greater depth below. This emphasis, which can also be noticed in British and American counter-terrorism policies (Vertigans 2010) [12][#N12], has led Lea and Hallsworth (2010) to suggest that rather than Wacquant's reference to the penal state, a more fitting description would be a security state that revolves around the dynamic of neoliberalism and the self-determined fate of the individual. And this creates intensified ambivalence with institutions having caring roles in an authoritarian position; namely carers are expected to interweave securitisation within the formal role of controlling children and young people while simultaneously providing a 'normal' childhood and improving life chances. Hence, although large swathes of the population continue to be interwoven within the arteries of the 'liberal head', young outsiders circulate poorly in the 'authoritarian body'. To understand why this is not only continuing, but becomes more embedded, it is important to review some of the processes that have resulted in growing spatial and emotional barriers and reduced interdependencies and empathy.

Explaining the liberal headbutt

With social interactions and experiences, both real and virtual, heavily influencing individual frames of reference, empathy between established and outsiders can only emerge through levels of interaction and exposure. For care residents and leavers stigma continues to feature, something which authors have argued originally stems from the poor law aid, the rejection of the poor house in Scotland for needy children and the prevailing view that only 'problem' children are institutionalised (Corby et al 2001; Kendrick 2001; Kendrick (2002) outlines how the abuse suffered by children and young people in residential care further reinforces negative social attitudes and perceptions. That this is happening when the distance between socio-economic classes had previously narrowed through rising levels of interdependency requires investigation. By applying the processes around formalisation and reformalisation (Wouters 1999, 2007), it becomes easier to understand why the middle-class 'liberal heads' are complicit in control of the authoritarian body. Heads are turned away while state legislators and enforcers implement laws ostensibly for the protection of the established rights, freedoms and the material benefits of occupational and consumer success. Costs of this process include the authoritarian bodies being head-butted in the nether regions.

Within social relationships between classes and social groups, Wouters (1990, 1999, 2007) outlines how decreasing power inequalities, allied to enhanced social integration of former outsider groups within the welfare state, have resulted in processes of informalisation and a relaxation of social codes and norms, and trust. Less rigid divisions, increased interdependencies and more pervasive functional differentiation provided the basis for higher levels of empathy for social groups entwined within broad normative behavioural parameters. At a formal level, as Pratt (2011) explained with regards to penal bureaucracy, welfare bureaucracy and managerialism has contributed to longer chains and denser interdependencies within welfare agencies. Centralisation, standardisation, regulation and pervasive risk and performance management frameworks create shared ways of working across organisations and regions. Individual expression becomes more subservient to corporate procedure. Pratt's (ibid.) observation that wh

interdependencies within the bureaucracy had strengthened, the chains with the general public shorter, can also be applied to welfare. A number of factors help to explain this reduction, which the preceding sections. In particular, the ostracisation of some welfare recipients; rising fears over welfare connected with criminals; the demonisation of problem children; and the targeting of the sector as an unproductive, even counter-productive, drain on strained national resources (Lawler and Hallsworth 2013; Scraton 2007; Wacquant 2009).

Across Western societies, functional democratisation, which had hitherto occurred over generations, weakened in the wake of neo-liberal policies. Wouters (1999, 2007) draws attention to the impact of the high levels of unemployment, loss of swathes of industrial and manufacturing companies, the resultant decline of the appeal and impact of trade unions. Jobs have either long since moved to the world or are replaced by inferior terms and conditions, with little or no job security, organisational loyalties or interconnected membership opportunities (Shildrick et al 2012). The menial and transient nature of many of these jobs has meant that these temporal workers are no longer integral to processes of functional democratisation. Moreover, Lawler (2005) points out how the decline of heavy industry connected to the decline in the worth of the working class. Hence the contraction of power differences has been reversed and distinction shifted from the blurring of hierarchical forms of mutual identification to demarcations between the downwardly mobile and the rest. As Wouters (ibid.) explains, populist mutual identification narrowed as people sought to distinguish themselves from individuals and communities diminished by the ravages of neo-liberalism. Civilian narrowing around the established's norms, legal arrangements reduced dissonance and strengthened the consensus over the requirement to underpinning morality and discourse. Subsequent increases in formal social controls, punitive measures and populist support for further restraints were indicative of fears of a potential surge of new crimes being committed by the demarcated outsiders.

In essence, Wouters (ibid.) argues that during this period, policies directed towards rehabilitation and restraint were changed to accord with the diagnosis that weak inner regulation was to blame for high crime levels. No longer able to trust the outsiders to control their own behaviour, the solution was to be a re-formalised imposition of restrictive rules, regulations and punishments which have become increasingly prevalent for children and young people in care. With reduced functional democratisation, the actions of the minority of the worst at particular times and locations becomes symptomatic of wider problems. Reactions to the 2011 riots in England typify these causal connections. For instance, the British Prime Minister David Cameron argued in the aftermath that 'these riots were not about poverty', but rather 'about [...] People with a twisted moral code,' which has been part of a 'slow moral collapse that has taken parts of our country over these past few generations' (Number 10 2011).

Today, opportunities to bridge the widening and reinforcing demarcations are restricted because of the contraction of working-class opportunities and relationships allied to factors specific to local areas. For instance, when children and young people are removed from family homes and their wider communities, it contributes to what Colton (2002) describes as an 'out of sight out of mind' mentality. On account of hierarchical positioning and relatively weak levels of power and opportunity to be able to re-shape opinion (De Swaan 1990), care residents and leavers struggle to gain the necessary skills and emotional controls to break through the post-1980s narrowed consensual boundaries which disaggregate the undeserving poor from the law abiders, regulators and shapers. Moreover, the limited levels of mutual interdependence and functional democratisation shared between themselves and the liberal head

the latter's low levels of empathy contribute to disinterest in outcomes unless those outcomes threaten security and possessions. Within the law and order agenda these fears translate into measures in order to further isolate or remove the threat. As part of the wider demands for great within, and respect towards, normative behavioural parameters, residential children and young people being encouraged to integrate in circumstances which can prevent their incorporation, contribute to disrespect and anger, and for which they are subsequently likely to be blamed and often punished. Steering young people towards middle-class values and attitudes, civilising offensives are, Gaskell argues, contributing to young people gaining respect and self-esteem through anti-social behaviour.

Conclusion

The history of looked after children is riddled with ambivalence and tensions between the control and development of children and young people who are to be protected or need controlling for the protection of others. Civilising offensives designed to achieve 'normality' are being applied in conditions which are implicitly considered to be 'abnormal' and through processes which reinforce or fail to overcome social distinction. Children and young people are encouraged towards normative manners and emotions in transitory, insecure, under-resourced environments which constrain the likelihood both for inculcating deep rooted self-restraints and acquiring the requisite economic, educational and social capital to enhance post-care prospects. This is not to declare bleak outcomes are inevitable. However care system successes can largely be attributed to relationships with social care professionals rather than government campaigns. Instead, much of the blame that they direct at the victims of re-formalisation can be placed on governments. Ambiguous civilising offensives which stress normality cannot be achieved alongside measures, surveillance, inadequate resources, impersonal managerialism, overbearing regulation and persistent reluctance to overcome the tendency to view residential care as the last resort. Inevitably residents living in these environments struggle to positively apply their experiences against the ideal template for family life.

The problems encountered today can be tracked throughout the last couple of centuries of British history, extended across other young outsiders and those deemed capable of anti-social behaviour, such as generations of the undeserving poor. The fears and concerns of the rest of the population have meant these weakly integrated groups have regularly been subjected to periodic forms of civilising offensives. Labour's Respect Agenda and the Coalition Government and media reactions to the 2011 riots are examples of attempts to transform behaviour without addressing the underlying causes. For care system young people and carers, post-1980s developments have arguably created further difficulties, an erosion of levels of empathy from the middle classes, some of whom might otherwise have challenged the re-formalisation of controlling the young outsiders. Middle class engagement and support which was noticeable during nineteenth-century attempts at child saving has diminished, while determining what is to be tasteless, uneducated and immoral continues and is arguably more pervasive through extensive media intrusion and 'poverty porn'. Instead cultural, economic and political developments have increased social differentials, diminished functional democratisation and weakened mutual identification. Today there is greater emphasis upon residential children and young people's heightened emotions and spontaneous reactions, sweeping generalisations about 'problematic youth'. Tying these fears into a wider, longer term political trajectory of moral decline and welfare dependency has enabled the civilising offensives to be directed

reinforcing social constraints which will help offset failures at individual and social institutional shifting political patterns and allegiances have reinforced these divisions with few signs of forthe progressive change.

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Notes

1. Application of established-outsider relations draws on Elias and Scotson (2008). [\[#N1-ptr1\]](#)
2. De Swaan (1990) points out that a shift to more worldly concerns and self-help approaches happened prior to the nineteenth century. [\[#N2-ptr1\]](#)
3. Poor law care differed in Scotland where no poor relief was provided for those deemed able children the preceding establishment of parish systems of education allied to the limited institutionalisation contributed to more children being provided with formal schooling (Pai [\[#N3-ptr1\]](#)
4. Smith (2009) provides an example of five- to seven-year-old children regularly appearing b court for stealing during the 1840s. The judge was not inclined to imprison them but felt he option with a seven-year-old recidivist. [\[#N4-ptr1\]](#)
5. Parker (1990) argues that some voluntary religious organisations were aware of this and so overcome problems stemming both from the children's environment and the Poor Law. [\[#N5-ptr1\]](#)
6. In the 50 years prior to the First World War, Parker (1990) reports 80,000 separated child believed to have left Britain, mainly for placements on farms. The practice of childhood emi to continue until 1970, particularly for gypsy children (Humphreys 1996). [\[#N6-ptr1\]](#)
7. For example, The Children Act (1908) and the Children and Young Peoples Act (1933), and similar legislation was adopted in 1937. [\[#N7-ptr1\]](#)
8. Although this perception continues to dominate, studies have shown that some children and people prefer residential over foster care (Sinclair and Gibbs 1998). [\[#N8-ptr1\]](#)
9. Pearson's (1983) study of concerns about the behaviour of children and young people over highlights that there is nothing unique in normative fears and expectations. [\[#N9-ptr1\]](#)
10. In this regard there has been an intensifying ambivalence concerning children's innocence : threat to the maintenance of adult codes and respectability which Ariès (1996) and Elias (19 reported since the late sixteenth and seventeenth century. [\[#N10-ptr1\]](#)
11. Alongside the contraction, some policies continued to provide support such as Family Inter Projects and Nurse Partnerships. [\[#N11-ptr1\]](#)

12. The application of counter terror legislation in order to safeguard common interests has resulted in ethnically profiled communities' freedoms being reduced and residents subjected to invasion with the support or disinterest of the majority of the British population. ♦ [#N12-ptr1]

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Biography

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