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PRISON EDUCATION IN SCOTLAND: A PRELIMINARY STUDY OF YOUNG OFFENDERS INSTITUTIONS (YOIS)

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IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM
- Prison education (work) for young offenders is a well-researched question in prison research.
- In Can Prisons Work? (2000), Stephen Duguid wrestles with the paradox of corrections-sanctioned rehabilitation: tensions and structural constraints inherent in prison rehabilitation programs such as education.
- How transformation can and does occur within prisons.
- Whether prison personnel and prisoners offer higher education.
- Extent to which education can provide rehabilitation to inmates.
- Consistency of thought and certainty of epistemic trajectory the purpose of prisons and whether prison (education) works across Western world (USA, Australia and Scotland).

Dugald also identifies: thought of consistency and similarity of epistemic trajectory the purpose of prisons and whether prison (education) works across Western world (USA, Australia and Scotland).

- What are the beneficial results of prison education? (Dugald and Pawson, 2000).

- Calls to overall prison education.
  - If prisons are ever to be able to tackle recidivism, and make inmates more employable (see BBC News, 2015; Coates, 2016).

NEED FOR THE RESEARCH
- UK-Wide research
  - Prison education remains a fertile area of research in the UK.
  - Some published research in England and Wales but none on Scotland (see Reuss, 2017; Czarniawska, 2015; Education Scotland; etc).

- Scotland – Devolved Status
  - Scotland has Jurisdiction over Crime and Justice, including management of prisons.
  - So far only unpublished reports in Scotland.
  - Unpublished reports such as those commissioned by the Scottish Government, and
  - Undertaken by Prison Reform Trust (PRT).
  - Annual un-official reports by the MoJ’s Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland (MPIPS) – all which provide important information (PRT, 2003; MPIPS, 2015; Southin, 2015).

- If the Scottish ‘uniques’ provides the need to understand:
  (a) The Scottish scenarios in terms of published on prison education.
  (b) How far does the prison education exist in ways to dealing with the persistent problem of recidivism.
  - Issues of research focus on prison education in Scotland include:
    (a) Extent and quality of the provision.
    (b) Volume and variety of the provision.
    (c) Who teaches in prison and their experiences of a prison teaching and learning environment.
    (d) How prison staff manage education, including resources available, time allocation within the wider ‘purposeful activities’ programme.
    (e) What works (and doesn’t) and how to motivate and improve learning in prison.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK
- Realist Evaluation
  - Highlights theories, ideas and practices that can help explain why such programmes succeed or fail.

- Prospective analysis to discover what works and why, for whom and in what circumstances.
- Extent to which education can provide rehabilitation to inmates.
- How transformation can and does occur within prisons.

TENSIONS AND CONTESTATIONS IN PRISON EDUCATION RESEARCH
- Paradise of provision due to conflicting interests and ideologies between the education and penal systems.
- Paradox of theories of education to oppose different audience (Dugald and Pawson, 2001)

- Prison Education: Contested terrain between ‘optimistic’ and ‘pessimistic’ scholars and theorists on the purpose of prison (Czerniawski, 2005).
  (a) Transformative vs prisoners can not change (Dugald and Pawson, 1998).
  (b) Time for learning vs time of control (Wilson, 2000; 2004).
  (c) Self selection vs heuristic (Wilson, 2000; Dugald and Pawson, 1998).
  (d) Realism vs empiricism (Reuss and Wilson, 2000).
  (e) Earliest vs education vs rehabilitation (Reuss and Wilson, 2000).
  (f) Punishment vs Human Rights/public safety (Reuss and Wilson, 2000; Thomas and Murray, 2008).
  (g) Cost vs benefit: keeping low fee earners locked up is very expensive (in UK cost per prisoner is £33,783) (Thomas and Murray, 2008).
  (h) Choice vs control (Reuss and Wilson, 2000).
  (i) Basic skills vs employability skills (Dugald and Pawson, 2000).

- Areas of general agreement in the discourse
  - Less dispute regarding ‘barriers’ to education in prison: (a) dispositional barriers; (b) effects of imprisonment (negative values of prison culture); and (c) institutional factors (Czarniawska, 2001; Terry and Pike, 2006; Westinham and Manger, 2014).

SITUATIONAL AND POLICY CONTEXT IN SCOTLAND
- Scottish Prison Service (SPS)
  - Prisons under the ‘Scottish Prison Service’ (SPS), on agency of the Scottish Government under a Chief Inspector of Prisons.
  - One of the Highest Rates of Imprisonment in Europe
  - Although recidivism rates declining slightly (0.6%), along with Wales and England, Scotland has one of the highest rates of imprisonment in Europe per head of population.

- Re-offending rates for young people offenders
  - In Scotland, re-offending rates is highest for young offenders (16-21 years old)
  - 53% re-offended after two years.
  - Young offenders largely reluctant to participate in “purposeful activities”, including education and preferring to watch TV instead.

- Annual budget
  - SPS receives an annual budget of £162.3 Million of which £18 Million is spent on ‘purposeful activities’ including education (SPS, 2014).

- Prison population in Scotland:
  - Male sentenced: 565 | Female sentenced: 266.
  - Young offenders make – sentenced: 264.

- Number of Prisons in Scotland: (15) Public and 2 Private

Prison | Ownership | Additional Status
--- | --- | ---
Scottish Justice Services | Women/Young Offenders Institution (YOI) |
| | |
England and Wales | Public |
| | |
46 Mag/Based in Wales - | Public |
| | |
Low Moss - Bishopbriggs Public | Public |
| | |
Glenochil - Tullibody Public | Public |
| | |
| | |
Scotland 5.4 Million (2015) 7872 (2016)

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- Interesting policy detail
  - From a policy context, SPS has no statutory duty to reeducate prisoners (Fox, 2012).
  - SPS however does recognize the importance of rehabilitation.
  - Encourages prisoners to take opportunities which will reduce the likelihood to re-offend and help them reintegrate themselves back into their communities.

- Purposeful activity
  - Prison education undertaken by a nation-wide initiative known as “purposeful activity” (HMPS, 2015).
  - Scheme that encourages all prisoners to use their time in prison constructively.

- Provision of education in prisons
  - Provision of prison education in Scotland is “contracted out” and currently offered by two national learning providers (non-degree providers).
  - PRT (2003), Time to Learn: Prisoners’ Views on Prison Education, Prison Education Trust;
  - Scottish Parliament, 2013;
  - Carnegie College;
  - Motherwell College;

- Courses typically offered
  - Education subjects: Arts programme, literacy and numeracy.
  - Vocational training: bricklaying, painting, decorating, hairdressing/berthing, cleaning etc.

AIMS OF THE RESEARCH
- To appraise the nature and extent of provision of prison education in young offender’s institutions.
- To critically examine Scottish young offenders’ engagement with prison education.
- To explore the prison lived experience of Scottish young offenders and assess the impact of the prison environment on offender learning.
- To examine in which way prison education in young offenders’ institutions in Scotland could be improved.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS
- What works (and doesn’t), and how to motivate and improve learning in YOIs?
- What are the nature and extent of provision of prison education in young offenders’ institutions in Scotland?
- What resources (human and material) are available for prison education in young offenders’ institutions in Scotland?
- What is the quality of these resources? In what ways do these resources facilitate or hinder offender learning?
- How do young offenders’ engage with prison education? If at all, how are gender differences in the way male and female offenders engage with prison education, and why?
- What is the nature of prison life for young offenders? If at all, how does the prison environment impact on offender learning?
- What should be done to improve learning for young offenders in Scotland?

RESEARCH DESIGN
- Qualitative research - critical micro-ethnography (Pane and Racco, 2009)
- Sources of data (data triangulation)
  - Examination of relevant documents
  - Official government report
  - SPS reports and other relevant documents
  - Curriculum materials
  - Newspaper/Internet materials
  - Interviews with key informants
  - Government officials in the department of corrections.
  - Prison warders and managers
  - Teachers who teach in prison
  - Young offenders (both male and female
  - Officials from non-government organisations

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS WITH YOUNG OFFENDERS

WAY FORWARD AND IMPACT
- Fieldwork Research
  - Phase 1: Preliminary study
    - Undertake the proposed research in YOIs between November 2015 and July 2016.
    - Aim to complete 2016
  - Phase 2: Expand the research to include data from adult prison (both male and female)
  - Aim to complete 2020

- Impact: Professionalisation of prison education
  - Need to formalise and professionalise prison education within teacher education.
  - Through the research unit interest my university to offer professional graduate diploma in education specialising in teaching in prisons.
  - Approach the GTCS for recognition of the new qualification as a new area for teacher professional registration.

- Prison population across the UK

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England and Wales | 6.5 Million - England 3.1 Million - Wales | 65450 (2016)
Northern Ireland | 1.9 Million | 1816 (2004)
Scotland | 5.4 Million | 762 (2004)