Dr Sophie Nickeas | University of West London, UK

STUDENT PROFILE

Sophie’s doctoral research focused on a small group of female offenders in England and the ways in which engagement in the arts during incarceration supported and accelerated their rehabilitation via a process of desistance theory. Desistance is a modern criminological phenomenon which describes how and why offenders stop their offending behaviour rather than more traditional models of rehabilitation which look retrospectively and consider the reasons why people offended. With this in mind the transition from ‘offender’ to ‘ex-offender’ was considered, as were the ways in which agency acquired through the arts can be applied throughout the continuing stages of rehabilitation. The research gave a voice to six marginalised women, enabling them to articulate their own experiences through art during a difficult period in their life.

A desistance model developed by Giordano et al. (2002) contextualised alongside Archer’s (2003) theory of identity formation was critically evaluated. Links and comparisons between evolving reflective identities and transitional stages of desistance were presented in order to answer the research questions. In doing so, it was determined that identity subgroups bear great resemblance to specific stages in the desistance process. Critical analysis further established that an individual could develop or re-establish an identity as a result of the creative activities they engaged in during incarceration.

This research has demonstrated that the practice of arts in prison for women participants can be prolific in its ability to build confidence and the associated assertion of agency and autonomy. This was largely achieved and evidenced through the consideration for personal narrative of artworks and artefacts of great distance travelled, vital to any rehabilitative process. The use of artefacts as data collection also offered great insight into personal journey and space in terms of psychological and reflective activity of the participants. These artefacts have provided new phenomena in thinking around critical discourses in prison arts and how they relate to desistance theory. In particular, the emphasis of identity formation and how the physical piece of artwork can portray this process.

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New Vistas: Policy, Practice and Scholarship in Higher Education

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The purpose of the university
What is a university and what is it for?
Simple questions, though in the case of the English institutions they provoke complex and multifaceted answers. Some might say a university is what the government wants it to be, for it is said, what the state wants in society, first it puts into its educational institutions. It will be argued here that universities and higher education (HE) are worthwhile in their own right in that they transform the lives of individuals. Our HE institutions furthermore shape our society for the better and are powerhouse for economic growth.

Learning and teaching has taken place in an organised form across Western Europe since ancient times: their origins lie in the Christian cathedral and monastic schools; it is difficult to ascertain the exact dates of the foundation of these ancient centres of learning. The universitas, the schools or guilds, were corporations of students and masters. Until the 14th century they were a self-regulating community recognised and sanctioned by civil and ecclesiastical authorities. In terms of curriculum, the three most important subjects were grammar, logic and rhetoric. This was known as the trivium. Students then progressed to the other liberal arts geometry, arithmetic, music, and astronomy (the quadrivium).

The curriculum came also to include the three Aristotelian philosophies: physics, metaphysics and moral philosophy; transmissive or didactic teaching, remained the primary focus for hundreds of years. Scott (1984, 14) analyses the changes which took place over time throughout the liberal universities of Europe demonstrating how in early times they stood slightly apart from society in time and place. Universities’ wilderness and distance from society – a near-spirituality sustained by the superior authority of religion – was exemplified by the privileged nature of the participants, aristocratic and wealthy in financial and cultural terms, the curriculum fitting them for gentlemanly pursuits and emphatically not in preparation for any career. There was teaching at Oxford, a universitas as early as 1096, and in Cambridge in 1209. There were universities founded in Scotland during these early times: St Andrews, Glasgow and Aberdeen but not another university in England until University College London in 1826 and University of Manchester in 1824. There were no further university foundations in the UK until the nineteenth century, although the eighteenth century saw the establishment of a number of medical schools such as St George’s (1733), the London Hospital Medical College (1785) and the Royal Veterinary College (1791) later to be incorporated into the federated University of London.

In the Victorian age, from 1837 onwards, a long period of relative peace and prosperity was enjoyed in the nation, fuelled by the industrial revolution and the expanding empire, resulting in growing national self-confidence throughout the country. At the turn of the century, large institutions, often referred to as civic universities, were founded by wealthy industrialists in northern and midlands manufacturing and engineering cities such as Birmingham (1900), Manchester Victoria (1903), Leeds (1904) and Sheffield (1905). These universities were designated university colleges but were collegiate in a manner unlike their forebears. They admitted men only, though without reference to social class or religion, and delivered a curriculum focussed on imparting contemporary skills, often linked to engineering. The buildings were imposing, monuments to capitalism and progress.
The university's coming of age

Throughout the decades following Britain's involvement in the war world was the British government and people were important to make progress—to re-build new society key to technology. Universities came to be seen as the engines of production, knowledge creation displaced the education of students at the heart of institutional endeavour. Universities saw themselves as key players in the process of social change specifically their role in producing highly skilled labour and research output to meet perceived economic needs. Hence a shift in the paradigm: governing the purpose of a university occupied, driven not least by the technological revolution hungry for an educated workforce. As the sixties emerged, the fear that Europe and the US was losing ground, in terms of scientific development, to the Soviets, resulted in demand escalating for advanced technological and scientific knowledge production, as 10 Colleges of Advanced Technology (CATs), were founded. Later, Birmingham CAT became Aston University, Brunel CAT became Brunel University, Bristol CAT became the Bath University of Technology in 1966 (afterwards University of Bath).

What is more, the 'budge babies' born after WWII reached university age in the sixties. With the sheer increase in numbers of 18 year olds, a number of new universities—known variously as campus university, green fields or plate glass—are established in cities like York, Lancaster and Newcastle and in counties such as Surrey, Sussex and Essex. The government had appointed a committee in 1961 chaired by God Robbins, tasked with: reviewing the pattern of full-time higher education (HE) in Great Britain and in the light of national needs and resources to advise Her Majesty's Government on what principles its long-term development should be published. (Robbins Report by HMNI in 1963). Robbins was concerned to address a perceived gap in vocational HE especially since the CATs had been given university status. In particular he emphasised the need to widen access and countered against any dilution of quality. Many of his most important recommendations were not accepted and it was nearly 30 years the pattern of development that was proposed was in abeyance.

Who is a university for?

Hitherto, unlike many comparator nations, participation in higher education in UK HE had historically been very low. In the 1950s only 3.4% of young people had a university education, in the sixties, 4.2% increasing to 8.4% in 1970. So, if the purpose of the university is to extend human understanding and engagement with civic values, then over 90% of the population were denied that privilege.

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individual institutions. Kenyon quips, "Mrs. Thatcher's policy was a success. After a transient dip in international student numbers, they have soared ever since, to provide a vast influx of funding and the beginnings of a market to British universities". So he found itself in a relationship with the economy, marketing its goods like that of any other corporation or firm. It followed inexorably that the purpose of, especially the curriculum, and its alignment with pedagogies and assessment, would edge closer to the needs of the workforce and the career agendas of the students.

The university as a business

Because international students' status had changed from guest to client, they came to acquire a degree of what might be considered "consumer power". Universities began to seriously consider the efficacy of established traditional practices, like linear course design and terms across the year and began to develop policies and practices which were client sensitive. Modular courses, a preparatory or enabling curriculum, foundation courses began to evolve. A climate was developing in which innovation and flexible responses to diversity became more commonplace. The climate was to become increasingly receptive to the underrepresented non-traditional students in the home market.

In 1997 there was a change of government and incoming Prime Minister Tony Blair was determined to emphasise HE’s crucial role in supporting social mobility. He therefore set out to increase participation rates throughout the UK. Universities’ expertise in marketing HE internationally was directed towards achieving this goal. Not only the over-30s were targeted but women returning to learn, mid-career professionals desirous of post-graduate qualifications and, especially in London, home students from the successive waves of immigrants from the enlarging European Union, as well as those from the traditional sending areas of the erstwhile British Empire and Commonwealth. The post-92 universities were ready seeking domestic savings with immediate opportunities. Whilst developed for orienting an educated workforce, universities were also receptive to the underrepresented non-traditional students. This climate was to become increasingly receptive to the underrepresented non-traditional students in the home market.

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The threat to universal participation

Seeking domestic savings with immediate affect the Conservative led coalition cut the universities’ teaching grant by 80% and removed the cap on student numbers. Universities in England swiftly responded with the imposition of a fees hike which made Thatcher’s policy benign in comparison. From £3000 an almost threefold increase to £9,000, whilst some specialist institutions and science courses fees were higher. The scramble for extra students in 2010/11 was underpinned by the Higher Education Initial Participation Rate (HEIPR) for 2010/11 was 44.6%, pushing up to 49% the next year. In 2010/11, Labour lost the general election and the Coalition which replaced them had a different agenda for HE.

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The real problem is that we have too many universities, too many students in them, too many Mickey Mouse degrees and too many of the old polytechnics obloqued to masquerade as third-rate universities when they could be first rate vocational colleges.

This view was later expressed somewhat technically by a practising academic. It was an elitist, class-bound, activity in the 50s. Today it’s a commercial commodity, open to everyone and available - the collapse of the rungs of the ladder of social mobility. In the 50s, universities were fixed on the number of students, and the post-war years were geared towards full time students alone. In the 2000s, universities have diversified and increased their student numbers, especially those from non-traditional students. This climate was to become increasingly receptive to the underrepresented non-traditional students in the home market.

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Cynics might say it is not selection of students but seduction and in a crowded market jostling for students. financial risk is exacerbated. some institutions may go to the wall, go bankrupt, or be forced to merge.

And the playing fields are uneven. Those institutions regarded as prestigious, that grew from an advantageous position century ago, have been able to build on that advantage, through endowments and the sponsorship of wealthy alumni, to continue to improve their relative position and outbid their rivals. The market works this way unless corrected by policy, so a close relationship has developed between resource rich universities and student competition for places, resulting in market stratification. The HEA claimed in 2014, ‘Higher education is being profoundly reshaped by its marketisation, with league tables, branding, discourses of ‘excellence’ and competition for students framing such moves. In the contemporary context of English higher education there is increasing pressure for universities to position themselves as ‘world class’, to compete in a highly stratified field’.

Universities matter to students

The data confirms this. HEA’s first release of official student enrolment data for 2016/17 shows an increase in the number of students in higher education, though a decline in part-time students. The provisional Higher Education Initial Participation Rate (HEIPR) that measures participation for 17-19 year old England domiciled first time entrants for 2015/16 was 49.1%. This was an increase of 1.4 percentage points from the previous year, a steady rise since 2006/07 (other than the fluctuation of 2011/12 and 2012/13, coinciding with the introduction of a higher tuition fee cap). Whilst the HEIPR for both males and females has increased, the gender gap in 2015/16 widening and is estimated to be 11.9 percentage points, up from 10.2 percentage points a year earlier with females continuing to lead. It is interesting to reflect that women students at Oxford, regardless of the quality of their work and grades earned, were not allowed to graduate from the university until 1920. Today, it is more likely for women to study at university than men.

Higher education has the power to change people’s lives, a point which may have been missed by the government during the last election. In a article, Kenyani, T., ‘Universties matter to students: Transform lives. They encourage students to see the world differently, to engage with new networks, and break through their existing boundanes to future opportunities for employment and otherwise. So how is it that there seems to be invisible but unsurmountable barriers to the participation of some groups. Fewer people from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds participate in HE and when they do they tend not to do as well as their more privileged peers and without robust data on socio-economic status is not easily available, the National Statistics Office Social-Economic Classification as a measure, having been discontinued following concerns about the validity of the data. A great deal of attention has been paid by educators in the early years sector, on the challenges facing low income children from their entry into the first stage of education, but without a comprehensive analysis informing and underlining class attentive policies and practices the current inequity in participation will continue.

Universities transform lives. They encourage students to see the world differently, to engage with new networks, and break through their existing boundanes to future opportunities for employment and otherwise. So how is it that there seems to be invisible but unsurmountable barriers to the participation of some groups

Conclusion

It is incontestable that the British university has evolved as a major world class centre, characterised by internationalisation and globalisation. Its strong reputation, facilities and relationships will certainly not disappear overnight but may be under threat. The HE sector is united in its determination to maintain current levels of opportunity for all. Not least those who are currently underrepresented, black and minority ethnic, students with special educational needs, disabled, and young people brought up in the care of the local authorities. The nation’s students – both domestic and international – will be important voices in the discussions yet to come. They may decide they will not collude with the remorseless commodification of knowledge, but neither will they be its victims.
This article will assess the application of near-peer assisted learning (N-PAL) in the teaching of research methods skills using Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in order to facilitate an enhanced interactive learning environment and student experience. A near-peer is an individual who has recently gone through experiences that someone (one or two stages behind) is now or soon will be facing.

PAL and N-PAL

In a Higher Education context, Topping and Eby (2001) have encouraged the use of student peer assisted learning (PAL) strategies in addition to, but not in replacement of, the traditional lecturer led model of teaching. Ten Cate and Durning (2007) discuss the psychology of why peer tutoring may be a particularly effective addition to Higher Education teaching. Going beyond the basics of social interactionist theory and reaching the upper tiers of the individual’s potential within their zone of proximal development (i.e. the difference between what learners can do without help and what they cannot do) with assistance from a more advanced peer (Vygotsky, 1978, cited in Topping and Eby, 2001), Ten Cate and Durning suggest that congruence (lack of distance) between the student and a slightly more advanced peer, contributes to the student’s ability to engage with the peer. This congruence, which is both cognitive (thinking in a similar way, on a similar intellectual level) and social (being at a similar education stage, with no position of authority), may encourage engagement with peer teaching as a supplement to other methods of active learning.

Dawson, van der Meer, Skalicky and Cowley (2014) performed an extensive review of recent PAL studies conducted between 2001 and 2010. This focused mainly on the outcomes of module grades and pass/fail of the module after PAL and support was consistently found for improvement on both of these outcomes. In addition to this, improved satisfaction was established, suggesting reduced anxiety from the provision of additional support in a less formal lecture environment, and further opportunities to ask questions outside the lecture, where large cohorts sometimes make it difficult to do this.

PAL has been frequently applied in the Sciences. Both Cox, McDougall and McIlwain (1999) and Tanic (2005) found that peer led assistance in the form of additional small group seminar guidance for Chemistry and Bioscience undergraduate students was positively evaluated by both peers and participating students. Although the results of Ashwin (2003), focused on a Further Education context, they provide a warning about making sure that Higher Education PAL/N-PAL is encouraging greater quality of learning by facilitating deep learning (a meaningful understanding of the content, which is used in interaction with previously learned knowledge), rather than surface learning (a superficial, temporary understanding), in order to merely repeat facts (Entwistle & Ramsden, 1982). Ashwin found that while attendance at PAL sessions was positively related to performance on Chemistry and Mathematics A-Level examinations, there was also a decrease in meaningful orientation towards learning materials after participating in PAL sessions (reflected in qualitative feedback from peer tutors as well). An additional field where PAL is utilised frequently is Medicine. For example, Han, Chung and Nam (2010) found when practising upper lips dissections that those students in smaller peer-assisted learning groups (with peer tutors trained by the faculty giving guidance during the session) showed improved perceived and actual understanding of the course content in comparison to solely learning from anatomy demonstration. Han et al. state that tutors also felt more relaxed when making inquiries in the peer-led sessions than the faculty led sessions. Some concerns were raised by students about the competency of the peer tutors through, Cusick, Camer, Stamenkovic and Zaccagnini (2015) have applied N-PAL interventions in providing generic research skills training to postgraduate students in sessions across an academic year (with recent graduates of the programme with PhD scholarships as near-peer tutors). This found that the intervention was consistently positively evaluated, with qualitative feedback suggesting students appreciated the additional alternate source of advice, and the friendly environment.

Rationale

The review suggests PAL is particularly effective in enhancing student experience in areas that require practical skill development (sciences, medicine, research). The best of PALS

The application of near-peer assisted learning in the teaching of research methods skills, using Information and Communication Technologies

The review suggests PAL is particularly effective in enhancing student experience in areas that require practical skill development (sciences, medicine, research)
The trial took place during weeks 10-12 of the ‘Research Methods in Psychology’ module run at UWL. These workshops were focused on learning and running the statistical analysis (an independent samples t-test) for the second assessment of the module. Prior to beginning the trial, the researcher informed the students about what would be expected in terms of guidance on the materials being taught, as well as how Tara would be expected to provide guidance in the form of talking students through the processes to obtaining the answers they were seeking, but not directly giving the answers to the students. At the beginning of the ICT workshop in week 10, the researcher informed the class that the student near-peer assistant (Tara) would be helping out in ICT workshops over the next three weeks. The students and the near-peer assistant were informed that any feedback provided, when requested by the researcher, would remain anonymous in any write-up of the study (students were asked not to put their names on the feedback forms), and that they did not have to answer any questions they did not wish to. This explicit description of the research was in line with ensuring ethical principles developed by the British Psychological Society (2014) were followed in terms of giving an informed picture of the study, and that the participants’ anonymity and right to withdraw from participation were ensured. The students had also received a lecture on Research Ethics by this stage and were aware of their ethical rights.

The student evaluations of the trial used a feedback form developed by the researcher that allowed the students to suggest what they enjoyed about having a student near-peer assistant in the workshop, how they thought the experience could be improved, and whether applying for PALS to other modules would be useful. These forms were issued at the end of the second workshop in week 11 (as week 12 was a drop-in session). A consent form and interview schedule were also developed for the semi-structured interview conducted with the near-peer assistant after the final ICT session in week 12.

Evaluation of the innovation
Conducting a thematic analysis following the guidelines developed by Braun and Clarke (2006), led to the development of three themes in the student evaluation data. Importance of assistance coming from a relatable peer, Peer facilitates engagement with course and Appreciation for near-peer assistant. Table 1 provides a list of the themes and sub-themes developed, along with some quotations from the student feedback data (designated by S1, S2…). Where appropriate, supporting quotations from the interview with the near-peer assistant are also provided. In the quotations any word in brackets [...] indicates an addition by the author for clarity.

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<tr>
<th>Importance of assistance coming from a relatable peer</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
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<td>Been there before</td>
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<td>‘It’s a great help having someone who has experience of what we are just now hearing, sometimes for the first time’ (S7)</td>
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<td>Near-peer views on course</td>
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<td>‘we can learn more about this course from a different view’ (S4)</td>
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<td>Approachable</td>
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<td>‘Some of us find it easier to communicate with people who are the same level as us’ (S5)</td>
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Tara’s observations also refer to this when she states: ‘they seemed happy that they couldn’t just bother the lecturer all the time with every question…they didn’t feel like they were interrupting maybe, and they didn’t feel like they were taking all of the lecturer’s time’ (Tara).

The students not only appreciated the extended contact in class, but in fact would have found more contact time with the near-peer assistant beneficial (needing more contact time with near-peer assistant).

Overall these sub-themes within the student evaluations suggest that it was particularly important that the assistant in the class is on a near-peer level with the students in the class, due to the students finding the near-peer more relatable due to their more advanced student status. This innovative approach has enhanced the student experience of Research Methods ICT workshops through providing an additional source of advice from a more senior undergraduate student.

Peer facilitates engagement with course
This theme emerged from a selection of sub-themes focused around finding the near-peer to encourage further engagement with the course, in terms of the materials, and skill development generally. One way in particular that the near-peer encouraged engagement with the course is through providing more access to help in class. Whilst the lecturer will always assist all the students in a class in sequence, the lecturer cannot be in two places at the same time, helping individual students with differing enquiries. This is where the near-peer assistance was of particular use to the students: ‘Getting more help. Getting more attention.’ (S2), and ‘Yes, it is helpful to have extra assistance, because there is more help, faster.’ (S7). Student 6 expands upon this: ‘When the teacher is with other students and your stuck you have to wait, but with a student peer assistant helping you don’t have to wait as long, and the class can move on quicker.’ – If your behind while the teacher is talking the near-peer assistant is there to help.’ (S6)

Having the near-peer assistant there helped the workshops to run more smoothly, with those who were struggling being able to gain more intensive one to one support. Tara’s observations also refer to this when she states: ‘they seemed happy that they couldn’t just bother the lecturer all the time with every question…they didn’t feel like they were interrupting maybe, and they didn’t feel like they were taking all of the lecturer’s time’ (Tara).

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This was reflected in particular by students 1 and 2 (needing more contact time with the near-peer assistant). Where appropriate, supporting quotations from the interview with the near-peer assistant are also provided. In the quotations any word in brackets [...] indicates an addition by the author for clarity.
This innovation would also offer the opportunity to capable third year near-peer students to obtain teaching experience in an academic environment, which may prove useful for those planning a career in education, whether at higher education or other levels.

References


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Disciplines

THE OPPOSITE OF SUAVE

Conceptions of honour in The Mask of Dimitrios by Eric Ambler

T he popular author, Eric Ambler, fell out of fashion towards the end of a career that spanned nearly 50 years, but remains in the eyes of many critics a transformative figure in genre thriller writing.

The opposite of suave

Ambler successfully inverted the conventional spy story aesthetic established by John Buchan, William Le Queux and H.C. McNeile and set out to raise the quality of the popular espionage thriller by introducing, “‘wicked’, moral and literary seriousness, and popular front politics” in to his work (Denning, 1987: 61). His protagonists were “the opposite of suave, the opposite of superman’ (Fenton, 2009: V), engineers, managers, writers and academics who respond to the crises that Ambler contrived for them as might you or I. The Mask of Dimitrios is considered a masterpiece of the genre, and the most highly regarded from his first group of six novels, written between 1936 and 1940.

Honour is a common trope in the spy thriller and tends to be driven by questions around the nature of identity and conceptions of reputation, fidelity, and betrayal. The purpose of this article is to explore the central paradox at the heart of the Dimitrios narrative in relation to honour as an interchangeable moral equivalent, which in the typical Amber novel becomes a shifting commodity that is traded, elided, and re-invented through the various interactions of the principal characters, but also something that becomes an inability determining their fate (Ambler, 2009:1).

The premise for the story is perhaps conventional enough as it foregrounds a fatal convergence of two social opposites, in this case a former university academic and writer of popular crime fiction Charles Latimer, and Dimitrios, a notorious criminal assassin ignominiously murdered, whose corpse has been recently dredged from the Bosporus. Purportedly enthralled on a quagmire of creative writing research, Latimer seeks to find out more about Dimitrios. His investigation takes him across Europe and exposes a rebellion that is struggling against corruption, and one bent on coming to service political power by any means – and at any cost.

Ideology of Englishness

By invoking Providence, Ambler hints at human fallibility, casting doubt on the reliability of the protagonist, Charles Latimer, and the motivations in the pursuit of truth. He sets up Latimer as an arbiter, a political scientist who has critiqued a gamut of opposing ideologies before becoming a writer of pulp fiction, all of which are founded in Judeo-Christian codes of conduct and concerned with questions around civic identity among other things: European anarchism, democratic socialism, and racial theory. These are presented to us through Latimer’s, ‘ideology of Englishness’ – an implicit hegemony of Western ethical values; a corollary of which is a largely Christian, but moral conception of honour, courage, loyalty, duty, and service (Denning, 1987:118).

For instance, one of Latimer’s academic treatises apparently investigates Alfred Rosenberg’s work, then a principal tenet of Nazi thinking (The Mask of Dimitrios was published in 1939), which notoriously rejects conventional Christianity and exposes a myth of blood superiority, echoing earlier conceptions of muscular Christianity, but most notably celebrated in the chivalric romances of the late Medieval period and the promotion of chivalric values during the Crusades; it underpins the ordering of a world that is governed, if not by Christian-based hierarchies, then a ‘Nordic’ (white or ‘Aryan’) Nazi supremacy, manifestly Western in outlook and in direct opposition to the East. Though Latimer may be unreliable, the moral standard of the narrative world he inhabits is anchored in Western ‘superhuman law’ (Ambler, 2009:1).

Latimer’s retreat into writing fiction suggests a withdrawal from the world away from politics into a comfort zone where rules are ideologically palatable and safe; an echo chamber where perceived transgressions are brought to book, and a quagmire of chauvinism that life does not imitate art, but art is characterised by the prosaic titles listed as his novels conforms to the prescribed rules of procedural detective fiction. As the Turkish Chief of Police, Colonel Haki, puts it: “In a roman policier there is a corpse, a number of suspects, a detective and a gallows.” (Ambler, 2009:11).

Colonel Haki first appears as an admirer of Latimer’s work, who reads ‘nothing but romans policiers’. The relationship between the two raises questions that dog the nature of Latimer’s obsession with the Dimitrios case, and in particular around the ethical underpinnings of academic research, or what could be described as ‘honourable cause and the moral position of the academic-novelist (Ambler, 2009:109). The cult or fetishization of knowledge, or perhaps new knowledge that can be squandered in the writing of fiction (from an Academy standpoint), provides insight into the more narcissistic impetus driving Latimer’s quest: “To have held truth, to have explained that he was trying, for purely academic reasons, to trace the history of a dead...
criminal named Dimitrios would have been a long and uneasy business" (Ambler, 2009:40). His subsequent meeting with Haki set up a central theme of identity and displacement and how this is mediated around all of the principal characters in the novel.

There follows a discussion between the two men that centres on the plotting of a detective novel, but this is overlaid by Haki’s tantalizing offer for Latimer to experience true crime first hand, one that in Haki’s view bears no comparison to any degree of versimilitude in fiction. “You see, Mr. Latimer? There is your story. Incomplete. Intrinsically. No detection. No suspects. No hidden motives, merely scordi” (Ambler, 2009:14). The complexity of both men to share confidential information about Dimitrios, introduced to us as an archetypal criminal to demonstrate a point, and eventually proffered to Latimer on a mortuary slab by Haki as an indulgence, highlights if not the enigma that prompts the disordered nature of the arrangement in the first instance, then the stereotypical practices of a corrupt foreign (non Western) establishment, and the hypocrisy of an ethnically mislabelled protagonist.

Taxonomy of Honour

What begins to unravel are the precarious hierarchies of values that interest, intruded by the author in various ways throughout, mediated by Latimer and the various subterranean sources he enlists to investigate the life (and death) of Dimitrios. A pragmatic taxonomy of honour sanctioned bodied by societal norms, immediately locates Latimer and Haki as somewhat more honourable than their subject, by dint of their status, despite their conduct: in effect exercising just one among many competing sets of (moral) standards in the narrative, and echoing the author’s initial opposition that “If there should be such a thing as a human law, it is administered and enforced by a futility” (Ambler, 2009:11).

Latimer is “fascinated by the details contained in the police dossier”, and this provides a measure of character, in the same way that other documents and reports, official or otherwise speak for character and speak to a taxonomy of honour in the narraive. Letters of introduction, court depositions, registers of residency and refugee status, passports, death certificates, identity cards, letters of transit (see also Casabianca, de Miguel Curtis 1962), news reportage, and so on are all marks left on a criminal’s path, tokens of identity and are acknowledged as such. To be the subject of a suspect police dossier, on the other hand, would already categorize Dimitrios in this taxonomy as honourless, or dishonourable in one reading, but in another speaks to a corroded reputation, and might be considered a badge of honour amongst his criminal peers or the political circles to which he belonged.

The dual reading of the Dimitrios dossier is pivotal interest that would seek to employ his services. ‘Men of honour’ are to Latimer on a mortuary slab by Haki as an indulgence, highlights if not the enigma that prompts the disordered nature of the arrangement in the first instance, then the stereotypical practices of a corrupt foreign (non Western) establishment, and the hypocrisy of an ethnically mislabelled protagonist.

The ironic use of Trust intimates Ambler’s own scepticism regarding the fidelity of international financial institutions, and to some degree the lengths they go to manage and brand their reputations, however one chooses to interpret it. The opposite of suave | 2120

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but perhaps as cynically by Peters whose constant reference to ‘the Great One’ appears alternately as a whimsical way of articulating the nature of the thing, and licence for his many reference and allusive readings (Ambler, 2009:67). The absence of honour in his various sub-disciplines and portrayals, as a Christian ethical superior, a Chariotenean sense of duty, is rationalised by the politico-cultural (Vidal, 2008), as well as perhaps a measure of excessive fixity, with a detective story set in an English village in July, a coda of civic identity and England, with its inevitable codes of behaviour and predictably honourable outcomes: the clink of tea cups and sweet smell of garlic on a July evening. It was the sort of thing that he himself would like to do, perhaps." (Ambler, 2009:226).

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Identity and Displacement

It follows then that Istanbul as a location for the opening of Lutemier’s book is indicative of Ambler’s oppositional schema for the action to come, and as a backdrop to the specific origin of Dimitrios (and his statelessness), becomes a well-trodden generic trope for the character’s journey. In the world of Kafka, the isolation of the individual, and codes of behaviour and their semantic significance become perhaps the most appropriate measure of how honour functions in the context of the narrative.

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The study of gender issues that surround ageing is of great interest with women accounting for just under half of the world’s population. Understanding different life trajectories and diverse characteristics of the ageing female population is important given the implications for wider society and culture. Women’s changing circumstances, attitudes and behaviours are affecting their experience of ageing at both an individual and societal level. These circumstances present new opportunities and challenges for governments, policy-makers and service providers. The situation is particularly important for the UK where there is clear evidence of increasing longevity. During the years 2010–15, the life expectancy at birth for males and females was 78.45 and 82.39 years respectively (ONS, 2014a). Centenarians are also increasing at a faster rate than any other age group with a more than 137-fold increase between 1911 and 2013 (from 100 to 13,780) (ONS, 2014b).

Changing life-style choices are starting to have a marked impact on the shape, size and types of households in the UK (Raeside and Khan, 2007). Women living alone may reflect a lifestyle choice as well as a consequence of other factors such as loss of a partner through separation, divorce or death (Hafford-Letchfield et al, 2017). Living alone may be the result of an inability to find the right relationship at the right time as well as the use of fertility control or the experience of fertility problems in earlier life. Besides these more commonly perceived reasons for living alone in later life, greater diversity in relationship status has also been influenced by choice and sexual identities; evidence suggests that older lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are more likely to live alone in old age, with fewer connections to younger generations, thereby increasing their risk of isolation (Heaphy and Yip, 2003). Women are, therefore, increasingly likely to find they are moving into later life without either a long term partner or children or both (Hafford-Letchfield et al, 2017). These kinds of living arrangements are only just starting to be the subject of systematic research.

Single British households

British household studies conducted over the last three/four decades show a considerable increase in the number of people living alone (Macanini, 2006) with the majority of them being women. Other studies have shown that older women living alone are more likely to have relatively less material resources than their male counterparts (Roymu and Springer, 2010) and in many cases are dependent on their children and relatives (Khan et al, 2017). Longer life is also associated with multiple morbidities and long-term care and support. Whilst many enjoy longer longevity today compared to the previous generation, they also need to prepare for supporting themselves in circumstances which may also co-exist with increasing social isolation and lack of both economic and practical support, particularly where there is a financial burden of care. Women who have been single and are living alone, may not be able to draw on the range of family and community support seen in many societies (Lee and Xiao, 1998; Khan et al, 2017). With the changing demographic scenarios, studies have begun to pick up and explore these issues that have huge importance given that UK legislation and policy on care entitlement and provision tend to be underpinned by assumptions about informal care (Raeside and Khan, 2007). These assumptions include the notion that all older people will have caregivers to support them drawn from their families and networks (Hafford-Letchfield et al, 2017). Such expectations may be compromised for single women living alone in later life. The aim of this paper is to review one particular source of demographic data alongside the literature in order to identify research possibilities that would better facilitate examination of possible trajectories of older single women living alone in British households.

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Society

measurements are available in the main documents self-completion questionnaire. Definitions and the over answers the individual adult interview and wave 3 data collected between January 2011 between January 2010 and December 2011 and 2009 and December 2010, the second wave i.e., each wave is collected over 24 months, such that household, all adult members of their new household re-interviewed in each wave. If individuals leave their representative sample. The same individuals are to cover each adult member from a nationally conducted annually and is scientifically rich enough to capture key determinants enabling examination of individual behaviour through understanding society data wellbeing (Hafford-Letchfield et al. 2010). However, wellbeing can be measured in a wide variety of ways. Here, we have used the variable of general happiness as an indicator of the overall wellbeing of an individual. Health status is also directly linked with wellbeing which includes general life satisfaction (Khan and Raiss 2014). Hank and Wagner (2013) have addressed the question of whether and how parenthood and marital status are associated with various dimensions of older peoples’ wellbeing, including elements of the individual’s economic situation, psychological wellbeing, and social connectedness. European studies on the influences of objective living conditions on the life satisfaction of older Europeans’ living alone from a gender and cross-national perspective. Found that a lower proportion of women living alone declared themselves to be satisfied with life compared to men (Gaymu and Springer, 2010). These different findings have led to debate about the need for gender-specific models to measure wellbeing (Haddock Letchfield et al. 2017).

Understanding society data

This study used data from the “Understanding Society” longitudinal national survey. This data enabled examination of individual behaviour through a cross-sectional approach and the life course and is scientifically rich enough to capture key determinants of health outcomes within UK society. The survey is conducted annually and is scientifically rich enough to cover each adult member from a nationally representative sample. The same individuals are re-interviewed in each wave. If individuals leave their household, all adult members of their new household are interviewed. The fieldwork period is for 24 months, i.e., each wave is collected over 24 months, such that the first wave of data was collected between January 2009 and December 2010, the second wave between January 2010 and December 2011 and wave 3 data collected between January 2011 and December 2012. Each person aged 16 or over answers the individual adult interview and self-completion questionnaire. Definitions and the measurements are available in the main documents of the ‘Understanding Society’ manual.

European studies on the influences of objective living conditions on the life satisfaction of older Europeans living alone from a gender and cross-national perspective, found that a lower proportion of women living alone declared themselves to be satisfied with life compared to men percent), to the extent that health limited their ability to perform even moderate activities (52.2 per cent). Conversely, about 58.6 per cent of the women reported that their health situation is at least as good or even better than previously. Moderate happiness is found to be lower for women living alone (64 per cent) compared with 11.1 per cent for the total population.

The study reveals a statistical association between belonging to a social network and health status and general happiness. Belonging to social networks appears lower to the risk of reporting poor health. This finds that interacting with online social networks may have a positive influence on cognitive functions. The analysis for this study reveals that age is related to long-standing illness or disability which implies that there is a higher chance of suffering from poor health with increasing age. Suffering from long-standing illness is strongly associated with reporting of poor health outcomes. This means that the higher the age the more likely the person is to have suffered from illness or disability. Results show that the cohort aged 85 years or over has a 2.52 times higher likelihood of reporting a long-standing illness or disability than those in the 55-64 age cohort. Moderate activities are found to have a positive influence on age, but an older person has a higher chance of limiting even moderate activities (potentially 4.11 times higher for the 85+ years cohort compared to the 55-64 cohort). The study shows that age is related to dissatisfaction with health status with the oldest-old age group showing the biggest dissatisfaction compared to those in the 55-64 cohort. Age is found to be strongly associated with general happiness or overall wellbeing and indicates that the higher the age, the lower the propensity of reporting not being happy in the study sample. The study shows that important determinants of health and wellbeing in old age are related to moderate activities, satisfaction with health, health status, and general happiness.

Education plays an important role where the higher the education, the lower the chances of suffering from long-standing illness or disability. Education is also significantly related with limiting moderate activities, as long-standing illness or disability and appeared to reduce the level of dissatisfaction among single women living alone. Higher education is linked with lower reporting of poor health demonstrating that education is an important determinant of health and happiness among this group of women. It is important that promoting educational activities in later life may help to maintain better health and wellbeing. A higher proportion of women reported poorer health in rural than in urban areas (43.1% vs 37% with a statistical significance difference at 1% level). Those women living alone in urban areas are less likely to be happy than their counterparts living in rural areas. Long-standing illness increases the likelihood of reporting not being happy.
Concluding Remarks

Having a contemporary research agenda that includes the specific needs of a diverse group of women within the ageing population is becoming important if we are to successfully grapple with the unique challenges of demography. The increasing emphasis on intergenerational relationships, meeting individual needs and developing policies in public health need to take account of the specific characteristics of cohorts of women whose living circumstances are changing within a more fluid society. Little research has been done about the circumstances of single women living alone and how changing relationship status impacts on their future needs and wellbeing. This is particularly true in relation to key public services such as those providing care and support may need to respond and develop.

Aging women who have experienced long-term singlehood and who have not had children are a group at particular risk (Hafford-Letchfield et al. 2017). The analysis demonstrated that age plays an important role across the life cycle and is a major determinant of health and wellbeing of individuals. Education may be another important variable for women living alone in terms of how they may need to adjust and cope with the challenges of later life. There were some findings associated with measuring perceptions of health and happiness in this group of women that will need to be interrogated further.

Recap

Aging and longevity have created many issues affecting older women in the UK, including living alone and social isolation that have become of increasing concern to policy-makers. This paper examines factors associated with the health and wellbeing of older women living alone using data collected in ‘Understanding Society’, a nationwide longitudinal survey that captures important information on the life course trajectories of individuals in the UK. This survey indicates a trend for increasing numbers of single women by age and place of residence. Women that live alone may need to find a suitable balance in later life and comparing profiles for different groups of older women may help decision-makers move towards an inclusive policy on positive ageing.
The article discusses the value of student debates and motion writing exercises across all disciplines, starting from a public health perspective.

An exercise in reorganisation

The UK coalition government reorganised healthcare in England in 2012. It devolved decision-making on health services away from the Department of Health and created a new planning body, NHS England. The reorganisation was all-encompassing, and it led to the NHS’s £100 billion+ budget being channelled through a variety of new organisations. One of the justifications for the changes was to ‘take politics out of the NHS’. However, an important group of NHS workers was moved directly into a more political working environment. Local public health teams were relocated from NHS Primary Care Trusts into local authorities. Local authorities are run by elected councils, all of political shades. In councils, new staff are offered training on ‘working in a political environment’. And when public health teams joined councils in 2013, councillors were also given briefings on the role of public health. Nevertheless, the duties of councils in England already covered many of the ‘wider determinants of health’, such as housing, education, green spaces, leisure services and licensing. In fact, this was the main reason for putting public health under the control of councils, so staff could work more closely with colleagues on ‘upstream’ public health issues. Evaluation of the reorganisation of public health teams is still equivocal (Peckham et al., 2017). That said, a refocus on local democratic decision making and its impact on the determinants of health is much needed. While much of the work of local authorities is undertaken by local government staff, elected members conduct council debates, and, prior to these debates, they submit motions, which, if passed, become resolutions for action. Thus, for students to better understand the new public health organisational environment, teaching on resolutions and debates is germane. Further reasons for teaching using debate are discussed in the next section.
Student debates provide active learning simulation experience on the complexities of the politician’s role. All employment areas are governed by legislation, from funding for arts to financial regulation. Understanding the policy process equips staff with insights into how to affect change. Secondly, student debating exercises have been used with good effect across all disciplines in higher education to teach critical thinking skills (for example, Omelichev (2007)).

Debating learning
Using in-class debates for teaching and learning purposes has several benefits. Firstly, student debates provide active learning simulation experience on the complexities of the politician’s role. All employment areas are governed by legislation, from funding for arts to financial regulation. Understanding the policy process equips staff with insights into how to affect change. Secondly, student debating exercises have been used with good effect across all disciplines in higher education to teach critical thinking skills (for example, Omelichev (2007)).

Cottrell (2011: 2) characterises critical thinking as “a complex process of deliberation which involves a wide range of skills and attitudes” and according to her, critical thinking includes nine elements, which she lists. All the areas can be highlighted to students in a debate exercise. The first skill listed, for instance, is “identifying other people’s positions, arguments and conclusions”. For our purposes, a working definition of critical thinking, derived from Cottrell (2011), is the logical analysis of an issue, considering different perspectives and evidence. Academics have emphasised the need to support students in learning about critical thinking (HEA, 2104). ‘Debate’, which involves the assessment of evidence from different sources, is a common denominator across various discussions on critical thinking (Moon, 2008: 33.45; Paul, 1994: 183). For instance, Dixon-Terry’s (2010) article is a lone example of a text, from across a wide range of disciplines, that partly rectifies the omission of writing in this academic field. However, there is a short ‘how to’ tool for professional and does not discuss student-focused pedagogical activity. ‘International relations’ pedagogical simulations sometimes include a resolution drafting element, but there is no focus on this in the academic literature (Gentry, 2016: 334).

However, it is argued here that learning about resolution drafting, alongside debates, can also be beneficial. Educational theories indicate that teaching about critical thinking (HEA, 2104) ‘Debate’, which involves the assessment of evidence from different sources, is a common denominator across various discussions on critical thinking (Moon, 2008: 33.45; Paul, 1994: 183). For instance, Dixon-Terry’s (2010) article is a lone example of a text, from across a wide range of disciplines, that partly rectifies the omission of writing in this academic field. However, there is a short ‘how to’ tool for professional and does not discuss student-focused pedagogical activity. ‘International relations’ pedagogical simulations sometimes include a resolution drafting element, but there is no focus on this in the academic literature (Gentry, 2016: 334). Nevertheless, further analysis undertaken by the author quantified the extent to which written assignments, associated with the teaching referred to, demonstrate debate. This article covered essays written in the years before and after debating took place. In the post-intervention essays, an increase in debate, associated with critical thinking, was found. Students also expressed positive views on the series of exercises, including the resolution-drafting aspect.

Debating motions – a stage in debate
A ‘motion’, or ‘draft resolution’, means “a formal proposal put to a legislature or committee” and a resolution refers to “a firm decision and formal expression of opinion or intention agreed on by a legislative body (or committee)” (Concise Oxford English Dictionary, 2001). Wallace et al (2010) add that resolutions can also “inform, educate, create awareness, motivate, [and] initiate dialogue on issues”.

Before teaching using motion writing, the author conducted background research on the organisations that pass resolutions on public health-related issues. These are charities, professional bodies, trade unions, business groups, campaigning groups, co-operatives, political parties, varieties of government councils and international organisations. The last, for example, includes the World Health Organisation that passed resolution 65.9 in 2012: “agreeing resolution action on the social determinants of health…” (WHO, 2012). The drafters included Professor Sir Michael Marmot, an international expert on inequalities in health.

Student engagement can be fostered by linking learning to their experiences. Students taking responsibility for initiating the content of resolutions are, in some respects, more immersed as participants in experiencing the whole debate process. In the teaching practice example referred to here, E5: Health Promotion and Public Health students at the University of West London drafted, in groups, resolutions on improving student health (Resources from the exercises introduced in both 2015 and 2017, as well as evaluation methods and findings, are available from the author on request). The exercises gave learners a range of opportunities to link student experience to wider theory and practice. Previous discussions on power, for example, were reinforced. The control of agenda and restrictions on topics for debate, and a weak culture of resolution writing, most people lacking the skills to participate, was also provided as an example of a hidden form of control. In our example, the students wrote resolutions on topics covering, for instance, promotion of stairs not lifts; availability of healthy foods; student loans; and aircraft noise. On a later date, following preparation of evidence, the students conducted a class debate on one of their motions; the expansion of London Heathrow Airport.

Writing motions – a stage in debate
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This article focuses on a broad discussion concerning the extrinsic value of teaching motion writing and not on the effectiveness of one example. Nevertheless, further analysis undertaken by the author quantified the extent to which written assignments, associated with the teaching referred to, demonstrate debate. This article covered essays written in the years before and after debating took place. In the post-intervention essays, an increase in debate, associated with critical thinking, was found. Students also expressed positive views on the series of exercises, including the resolution-drafting aspect.

Debating motions – a discussion
It is intriguing that resolution drafting has not hitherto been discussed in the pedagogical literature. Instructors who regularly engage students in active learning exercises may easily conceive how a motion-writing stage can be added to a classroom debate exercise. They will also be able to design formative assessments, where individual students debate an aspect of a planned assignment. There may be other ways of producing some similar effects. For instance, there exists a burgeoning literature on online activism, or so-called ‘diaspora’, including discussion of online petitions. Resolution-writing exercises could be recast as petition writing, with a subsequent debate about the petition. But this seems to hold few advantages. The benefits of adding the resolution stage to pedagogical debates are summarised in Table 1 (over page).
The benefits of pedagogical debates and resolution-drafting exercises

**TABLE 1:** The benefits of pedagogical debates and resolution-drafting exercises

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits in both stages</th>
<th>Teaching &amp; Learning</th>
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<tr>
<td>Focuses on the need for evidence to back up arguments</td>
<td>Provides experiential learning on democratic processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaks thinking into stages, increasing opportunities for reflection and rethinking (Kulik, 2015).</td>
<td>Progression from motion writing to debate supports confidence building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides an engaging and memorable learning environment</td>
<td>Promotes reflection on options for addressing controversial political topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps teachers to make connections to questions of ‘power’ (Lukes, 1974)</td>
<td>Stimulates creative thinking: reflecting public health being an art as well as a science</td>
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<tr>
<td>Votes on motions can educate researchers, and others, about constituents’ opinions, thus complementing research using opinion poll data and focus groups, for instance</td>
<td>Enables future practitioners to anticipate opposing arguments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The opportunities for finding instances of health promotion, using resolutions, are evident</td>
<td>Helps students to follow through on the policy development process</td>
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The paucity of academic literature on resolutions has been highlighted in this paper. There is a lack of pedagogical literature and academic political science research, for instance, on analysis of resolution topics, trends, outcomes and organisational context, including training provision. This can be of some practical benefit to students and professionals, e.g. (ESCC, 2014: 9) evidence to make a point, or communities controlling resources for health. The value of teaching resolutions can be assessed from the perspective of their use in society. Students may develop a good understanding of drafting resolutions. But if they are learning a redundant skill, or no wider currency, then the teaching practice is more questionable. Therefore, it was important to provide the background research identifying that resolutions on public health are in fact used across society and internationally. From this background research the author conducted, it can be summarised that resolutions are a feature of one route to gaining actions to improve health. Thus, to teach these skills may not contribute to individuals or communities controlling resources for health promotion and empowerment. The value of teaching ‘empowerment’ is a more normative question, when contrasted to teaching critical thinking, and allows us to draw on an ethical perspective and reflect on our reasons for teaching. If empowerment is a key driver, then teaching on the setting up of debates will hold more interest. However, the students in our groups reported that drafting resolutions also increased their understanding of ‘agenda setting’, that is, state or private actors’ power to control what in society gets discussed (Lukes, 1974). So, learning was not just about students’ own direct personal empowerment, but it also supported their critical analysis of others’ power.

**References**


**A further justification is that students are also being taught, through active learning, to analyse the power of others. In addition, they might be better equipped to empower others.**

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**Highlights that groups and pedagogists may have differences in opinion on policy**

- Anticipates opposing arguments

- Supports team working and speaking skills development

- Promotes critical thinking

- Enables future practitioners to support communication in proposing actions to improve health

- Encourages a search for alternative arguments

- Teaching future practitioners how they might take forward suggestions to improve health – empowerment

- Shows the potential to reassure stakeholders make a point

- Promotes reflection on options for addressing controversial political topics

- Provides an understanding of the actions of public health leaders (Birnbaum, 2015)

- Enables future practitioners to anticipate opposing arguments

- Helps teachers to follow through on the policy development process

- Stimulates creative thinking: reflecting public health being an art as well as a science

- Enables future practitioners to anticipate opposing arguments

- Helps developers to make connections to questions of ‘power’ (Lukes, 1974)

- Votes on motions can educate researchers, and others, about constituents’ opinions, thus complementing research using opinion poll data and focus groups, for instance

- The opportunities for finding instances of health promotion, using resolutions, are evident

- Helps teachers to make connections to questions of ‘power’ (Lukes, 1974)

- Stimulates creative thinking: reflecting public health being an art as well as a science

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**TABLE 3:** The benefits of pedagogical debates and resolution-drafting exercises

- The value of teaching resolutions can be assessed from the perspective of their use in society. Students may develop a good understanding of drafting resolutions. But if they are learning a redundant skill, or no wider currency, then the teaching practice is more questionable. Therefore, it was important to provide the background research identifying that resolutions on public health are in fact used across society and internationally. From this background research the author conducted, it can be summarised that resolutions are a feature of one route to gaining actions to improve health. Thus, to teach these skills may not contribute to individuals or communities controlling resources for health promotion and empowerment. The value of teaching ‘empowerment’ is a more normative question, when contrasted to teaching critical thinking, and allows us to draw on an ethical perspective and reflect on our reasons for teaching. If empowerment is a key driver, then teaching on the setting up of debates will hold more interest. However, the students in our groups reported that drafting resolutions also increased their understanding of ‘agenda setting’, that is, state or private actors’ power to control what in society gets discussed (Lukes, 1974). So, learning was not just about students’ own direct personal empowerment, but it also supported their critical analysis of others’ power.
Research has suggested one prevailing commonality between mental illness and crime, and that is there is an associative correlation between the two. This association between mental illness and crime has been found in prison figures, reoffending rates, and across criminal offences. However, despite the considerable body of research, there is still no precise understanding of the relationship between mental illness and offending. Recent findings suggest that mental illness is rising amongst prison populations, so it is important to expand empirical understanding of the relationship between offending and mental health. This article aims to critically examine some of the main empirical findings on the relationship between mental illness and offending.

Defining mental illness

To start with, it is important to define mental illness. Mental illnesses are cognitive conditions that cause harmful dysfunction to oneself, society, or both (Schug & Fradella, 2015). This definition is based on Wakefield’s (1992) work which suggests that mental illnesses should be defined as conditions that cause dysfunction in terms of failure of biological or psychological mechanisms to operate as usual. Wakefield added that for a condition to be defined as a mental illness there must be harmful consequences produced from the dysfunctional condition to either the individual or society. However, Wakefield’s definition is flawed by a lack of clarity. For example, it is unclear how much harm does a mood disruptive behaviour need to cause for that behaviour to become a disorder. This subjectivity determining if psychopathological conditions are present is a significant issue for mental health professionals and increases the possibility of improper diagnoses. Despite this, the definition ‘harmful dysfunction’ manages to capture both the observable impairment, and the subjective harm, that is normally associated with mental illness.

Prevalence of mental illness and crime

Fazel and Seewald (2012)’s multi-national meta-analytic review investigated the prevalence of mental illness in prison populations and found prisoners had a significantly higher risk of having psychiatric illnesses compared to the US and UK general populations, and particularly higher rates of major depressive disorder and antisocial personality disorder. Notably Fazel and Seewald’s findings have significant validity as they only integrated studies into their meta-analysis that measured mental illness using validated diagnostic instruments, decreasing the chance of incorrect diagnoses, and studies which had random prison samples, mitigating potential confounding sampling biases. Furthermore, in UK offender populations higher rates of mental illness have been found in female offenders, older offenders and ethnic minority offenders (Brooker et al, 2002).

It has been suggested that female offenders overrepresent mental illness relative to male offenders because criminality contradicts feminine gendered behaviour, which in turn affects the increased likelihood of psychiatric diagnosing (Weare, 2013).
Co-occurring substance abuse and mental illness is significant because research has suggested that this dual diagnosis exacerbates psychopathological symptoms, decreases likelihood of complying with psychotic medication, and reduces impulse control. Thus, it is likely that substance abuse has an interactional effect with mental illness and offending.

The question of causality

Does mental illness cause offending, or does the criminal justice process cause mental illness? The likely answer is both factors play an interlinking causational role. For example, neurological evidence suggests that stress plays a major role in the susceptibility of developing mental disorders and enhancing psychopathological symptoms (Esch, Stefano, Fischinone & Benson, 2002). Silver et al. and John, (2007) found evidence suggesting the incarceration process increases stress levels significantly. Both Esch et al. and Schnittert & John (2007) combined findings suggest that for individuals who have committed a crime the criminal justice system enhances the probability of developing mental disorders and increases psychotic symptoms.

Schnittker & John (2007) suggested psychotic conditions within a prison environment increase the likelihood of violent offending. Thus, it is likely both mental illness and offending factors seem to interact with each other and influences criminogenic factors (elements that cause or likely increase criminal behaviour). For example, mental disorders have been found to increase the likelihood of living in socially and economically depressed areas, and those areas have been linked to higher probability of committing crime (Stinch, 2008). Therefore, offending and mental illness factors are likely to interact and enhance the likelihood of each other’s occurrence.

Concluding remarks

The relationship between mental illness and offenders is multi-layered and complex. The high prevalence of substance abuse has made it difficult to isolate the effect of mental disorders may have on offending and subsequently biased the relationship between the two factors. Nonetheless, the research does suggest more people with mental disorders end up in prison. The trend does not directly mean there is a causal relationship between mental illness and criminality; it is likely that both factors (offending and mental illness) increase criminogenic factors and the susceptibility to develop a mental illness. This is critical as prisons are not effective environments in supporting the treatment of mental disorders. Therefore, it is likely that offenders are treated more negatively within the criminal justice system, with the combination of improved mental health services, the number of individuals with mental illness in criminal populations will fall.

References


