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* 'Other' Lives - Social Justice and AP

- Neoliberalism, and forgotten children
- Liminality - in between space/positioning
- Discursive gaps - *the profits of AP*
- Exclusion - issue of social justice and equity

*Themes

Disparate policy discourse -
how England frame issues
(class/SES)

Competitive systems -
Accountability, perverse
incentives and youth in
economies of student worth

Narrowing of the curriculum

Fragmentation of the
education system

Under resourcing of services,
increased thresholds and
'punitive benevolence.'



* System level factors
- exclusion and AP

Michelangelo, when asked how he made such beautiful sculptures replied:

‘Simple. You just take a slab of marble and cut out all the superfluous bits’

*** A perfect school in policy?**

Working-class modes of distinction (e.g. clothes, accent, and humour and demeanour) have been politically and culturally depicted as embodiments of deficient capital, leaving relations between boys' social and educational identities fragile and confirming discourses of troubled and defective youth.

The characterisations of deficit and failure used to strip disability of power in schools are similar to the supposed characteristics historically attached to working-class men.

'This sense of embodiment is conceived as either a lack and/or excess with some young disabled men from working class backgrounds regularly, if not always, described in terms of aplasia, meaning absence or failure, or associated with hypoplasia, meaning mind body-emotional underdevelopment'
(Johnston & Bradford, 2023, 57)

* **Absence of value: class, ⁵masculinity, and disability**

* Relational/pedagogic forms of inclusion as social justice
(Johnston & Noly 2023)

* Filling the gaps in services and a sense of belonging
(Page, 2020; Johnston, C., Malcolm, A., & Pennacchia, J. (inpress))

* Understanding of youth drawn from psychological and
therapeutic orientations (Johnston, C., Malcolm, A., & Pennacchia, J. 2024)

* “It has always seemed to me that educational institutions are likely to absorb ideas, and try them out on a fairly large scale, provided that those subject to them are either the very young children or the so-called less able working-class children, before the ideas are sufficiently worked through to be useful”. (Bernstein, 1971, 14)

* The ‘profits’ of AEP

Gutherson et al (2011; 11) “schools or programmes that are set up by local authorities, schools, voluntary organisations, or other entities, to serve young people whose needs are not being met and who, for a variety of reasons, are not succeeding in traditional learning environments”.

Type of AEP	Includes... But not limited too
General	All-round (often full-time) provision, such as offered in PRUs but increasingly in school and online provisions
Arts-based	Provision based on creative experiences (e.g. music, drama or film)
Physical activity	Sports, boot-camps, military training
Therapy	Counselling, mindfulness, mentoring
Tutoring	Tuition in school subjects/in school provision/home education
Vocational	Work-focused experience and qualifications, e.g. in construction
Nature-based	Outdoors education, often involving animals or plants

***Variations in ‘type’ of A(E)P**

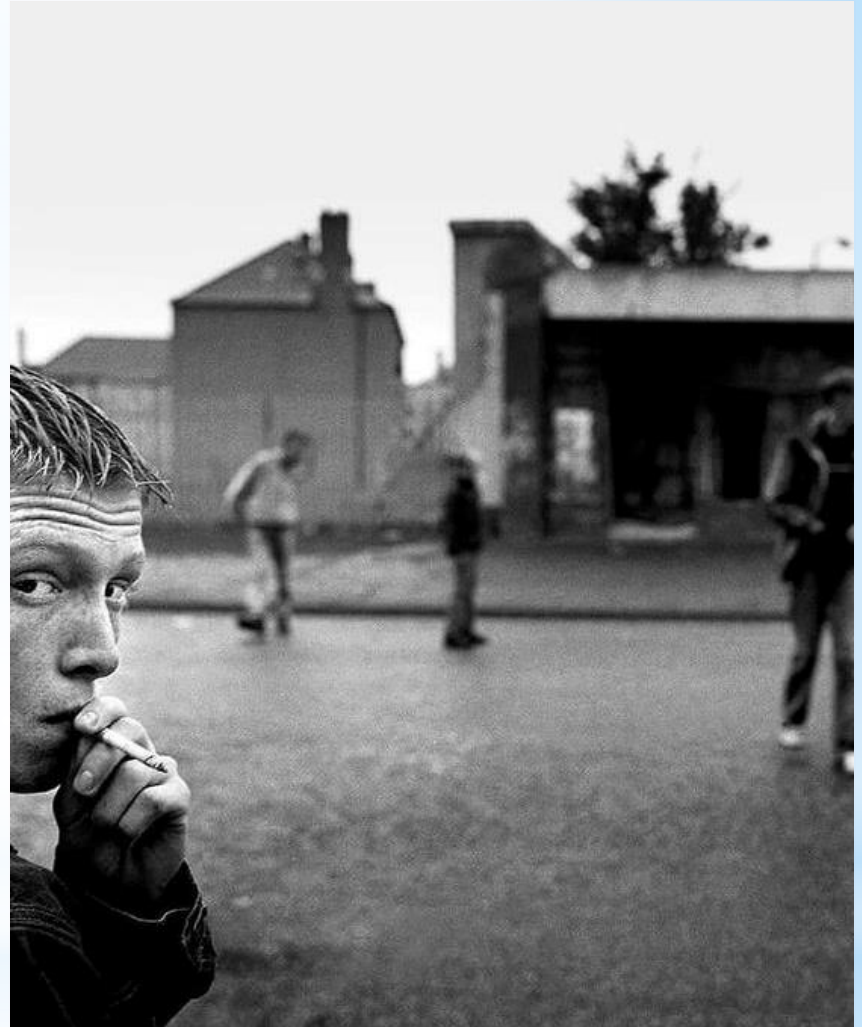
* The importance of young men's voices

*'No-one cares
'bout us'*

Sam, Year 10

*'They'll just get'
rid (of me)'*

Gaz, Year 11



- Strict regimes of care can make it a binary choice of resist or conform to what it means to be an AP student: deficient, dependent and deferential
- Many conveyed a disabled identity in APs as a form of incarceration

‘Girls’ do beauty stuff an’ most of ‘em (fellow students) got no fuckin’ chance (of work) ...there’s (construction), jobs for ‘ard lads like me ... (in places) yeh’ ‘ave to do (heavy) liftin’ an’ that.’

(Kevin, Year 10 interview)

Johnston & Bradford (2019)

*** Life inside AP - Class/Masculinity**

- They were told “*to go back to school*”, attributing these instances to aspects of their size, appearance, association and age.
- Lack of recognition
- Denial of activities (based upon risk)

“I ‘fink lads (from school) see me as a freak, like when I was walkin’ wiff friends (from class) past some lads from school, they start larfin’ an callin’ me retard an’ that, it’s cos’ they ‘fink it’s (AP) for stupid kids, init!”

(Tom year 11, interview)

Johnston & Bradford (2019)

*** Outside the Provision: the importance of views from mainstream students**

“After we got excluded, I chatted about everything (to Tom), ‘cos he dealt with it too”.

Further responses in WhatsApp messages that were sent directly to the young men by friends, which were openly discussed within individual interviews, demonstrated a similar reflexivity.

“You’s smart, you can do somefink with yourself (message sent to Sam)”

Johnston & Bradford 2023

 **Young men’s agency**

There is no data on how many students are using these different providers, for how much of their school time, for what duration, and for what purpose.

There are no data on how much funding is flowing from the public purse to AP businesses, social enterprises and charities. It is likely that school-level commissioning of AP is placing financial burdens on regular schools, especially those serving disadvantaged communities.

There is no systemic evidence on how effective AP provision is - either at reducing school exclusions or providing young (disabled) men with worthwhile educative experiences.

 **Concerns**

Well-meaning practices and policies can deepen and entrench structural barriers. Some researchers, policymakers and practitioners position AP as social justice champions, promoting innovative educational practices. This may play into a narrative of deficit and a need to be 'segregated'

The majority of activity conducted to challenge systematic forms of discrimination - criticizing private schools, for example, but fail to react to what is happening at the 'bottom' tier of the education system

This does not mean we do not 'need' APs, or that practices with young men are not to be celebrated/shared - but, there is a bigger picture.

Questions?:

- 1 Do young disabled men from working backgrounds deserve AP?
- 2 Why an interest in AP now?

 **Provocations**

The role of policy

Shared vision of inclusive principles
and alert to unintended consequences

Redistribution

Designing educational structures that
impede inclusion and can effectively
redistribute valued resources

Research

- * How we understand the issues facing
young people in society

- * Over to you....



* **Ways forward**

*Thank you

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