Co-producing desistance: towards a sense of 'we-ness'

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www.coproducingdesistance.org.uk
Twitter: @Coprod_Desist

Dr. Beth Weaver

beth.weaver@strath.ac.uk

University of Strathclyde, Glasgow

Introduction

- What supports *both* desistance and social integration & what this means for practice.

- Towards co-production and beyond individualistic approaches: developing a sense of 'WE'.

- How change happens and the importance of social relations

- What coproduction means

- Some practical examples.

Desistance (see Weaver (2015) for comprehensive review)

- **Age and life course transitions (Ontogenic):**
  - Growing out of crime? (Glueck and Glueck, 1940, Rutherford, 1992)
  - Change over the life course: changing priorities, motivations, aspirations, relationships, and experiences (Maruna, 1997)
- **Social ties (Sociogenic):**
  - Influence of bonds to family, education and employment
  - Vary by age and gender (i.e. Bersani et al., 2009; Giordano et al., 2002, King et al., 2007; Kraeger et al., 2010; Monsbakken et al., 2012 etc)
  - Effects are complex, and contingent on the quality and meaning of these bonds, and interaction with other factors (Weaver, 2015).
  - This means understanding their effects on an individual level

Desistance (see Weaver (2015) for comprehensive review)

- **Identity transitions (interactionist)**
  - Changes in sense of self, perceptions of agency
  - Influenced by social roles and societal reactions
  - Civic reintegration / social integration is key (Uggen et al., 2004), links to generativity (Maruna, 2001)
  - Reduced citizenship status and stigma can undermine desistance

- **Situational factors**
  - Effects of our social environments & routine activities: place and space (Bottoms, 2014, Farrall et al., 2014; Flynn, 2010)
  - Moving away, avoiding peers and places associated with offending
  - Developing new routines, often around family and/or work
  - Influences identities: place and activities communicate something about the self

Desistance (see Weaver (2015) for comprehensive review)

- Bringing it together:
  - Identities, relationships/bonds and places and social spaces shape change processes
- Belonging and social recognition: beyond individual change (Weaver, 2015): desistance as a relational process
  - Involves feeling that you have a place in the world
  - Requires social participation
  - Depends on social recognition

Deconstructing Social Relations

- A relationship is **a connection** between people which implies **an exchange** of something - a reciprocal/ two-way action which generates a **mutual** connection between people.

- Relational effects: **relational goods** or bads depend on the endurance of the relation – they do not exist outside of it.

- The desire to maintain these positive effects i.e. loyalty, care, trust, concern **motivates individual behaviour**.

Beyond individual desistance: the importance of social relations -- Weaver (2015)

Social networks can **trigger a desire to change** in different ways:

- Self comparison to peers: how do I measure up to my friends?
- Social perceptions: How do my friends see me? What do they think of me?
- Friends who have changed their behaviour can incentivise and influence an individual to do likewise.
- Changing together: mutual support to change through informal mentoring, practical and emotional support and sharing personal and social resources.

Relations do not cause behavioural change; they only exert influence and the individual needs to be receptive to it.

Social Relations and Desistance: a sense of we-ness (Weaver, 2015)

- Those social relations [intimate relationships and family, friendship, faith or work groups] that are most causally influential in the desistance process are characterised by… **solidarity** and **subsidiarity**, or in other words, a sense of 'we-ness'.

- Subsidarity is a way to support and help another person without making him or her passive or dependent. It allows and assists the other to do what they need to do for themselves to realise their goals or aspirations. Subsidiarity cannot work without a sense of solidarity.

- These principles confer mutual responsibilities on each person for supporting change and in taking responsibility for personal change.

Limitations of / constraints on current penal policy & practice?

- Societal reactions and public attitudes: penal populism and punitivism

- How we punish can influence outcomes i.e. fracture relations or repair and restore them.

- Beyond adopting a language of desistance, penal policy and practice is largely focused on personal or self-change

- Social and penal policies tend to aggravate rather than alleviate social disadvantage and exclusion.

- Even discussions of desistance focused practice focus on what either the desister does/what professionals do; no appreciation of the non-professional relational contexts of offending and desistance

Moving Beyond an Individualistic Approach

- To attend to relational contexts and how they might influence practice.

- Move beyond traditional individualistic approaches: responsibilising, cognitive behavioural, professionally led interventions designed to manage and minimse risks and aimed to instil capacity for self-risk management

- Move towards a deeper engagement with the means and processes that can support social integration.

Co-production is:

- Coproduction refers to the interdependent relationship between professional service providers, service users, and communities as co-producers in enabling change (Pestoff, 2012)

- Co-production is: '*'the public sector harnessing the assets and resources of users and communities to achieve better outcomes'* (Bovaird and Loeffler 2013)
    - Emphasis on reciprocity / mutual exchange
    - Recognition of relationships between stakeholders in coproducing change
    - Focused on outcomes rather than outputs
    - Active role for practitioners, service users and communities.

Typologies of co-production (Weaver, 2011, Weaver and McCulloch, 2012)

- From individualistic forms to co-production and group and collective forms
- Individual co-production: produces outcomes which benefit the individual participants, and this - presently the dominant co-productive strategy.
- Group forms of co-production: typically bring users together to shape or provide services
- Collective forms are those strategies that benefit the whole community rather than just groups of users
- Limited empirical evidence of experiences & effects both in terms of process and outcomes
- Intrinsic benefits
  - Enhanced self efficacy
  - Enhanced self esteem
  - Increased social capital

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- Coproductive approaches are a way of realising relational principles: operationalising the **manner of relating** than can support change.

- Coproduction rests on principles that build on and develop people's **assets and capabilities** through reciprocal relationships between a range of stakeholders

- Desistance focussed practice maximizes individuals' engagement in the process of change and should therefore be - **active, participatory and enabling**

- Its about **interaction and negotiation** with service users, volunteers, groups and communities and **the mobilisation of their resources** in the design and delivery of services and practices.

Co-producing Desistance: with individuals

- The professional relationship, developing a 'therapeutic alliance' is key:
  - Humanity, mutuality, trust and empathy
- Developing a sense of 'we' in terms of:
  - a) how we understand the person (mutual understanding?)
  - b) the means and processes through which we endeavour to support (coproduce?) change.
- Moving beyond an over-reliance on risk assessment tools and moving towards personalised, participatory and asset based approaches:
  - Locating the individual in their desistance journey
 - Locating their journey in its social and relational context

AIRMAPS – an example

Name: Case manager: Date:__/__/____

Map 7.2 Getting out and staying out

Why I want to make these changes.

What I want for myself: goals and outcomes

What I am going to do to make this happen: next steps/actions

Emergency strategies

How can I do things differently on release?

External / formal resources and supports: what will help me

My internal resources and strengths: how I can help myself

My support team: people who can help me.
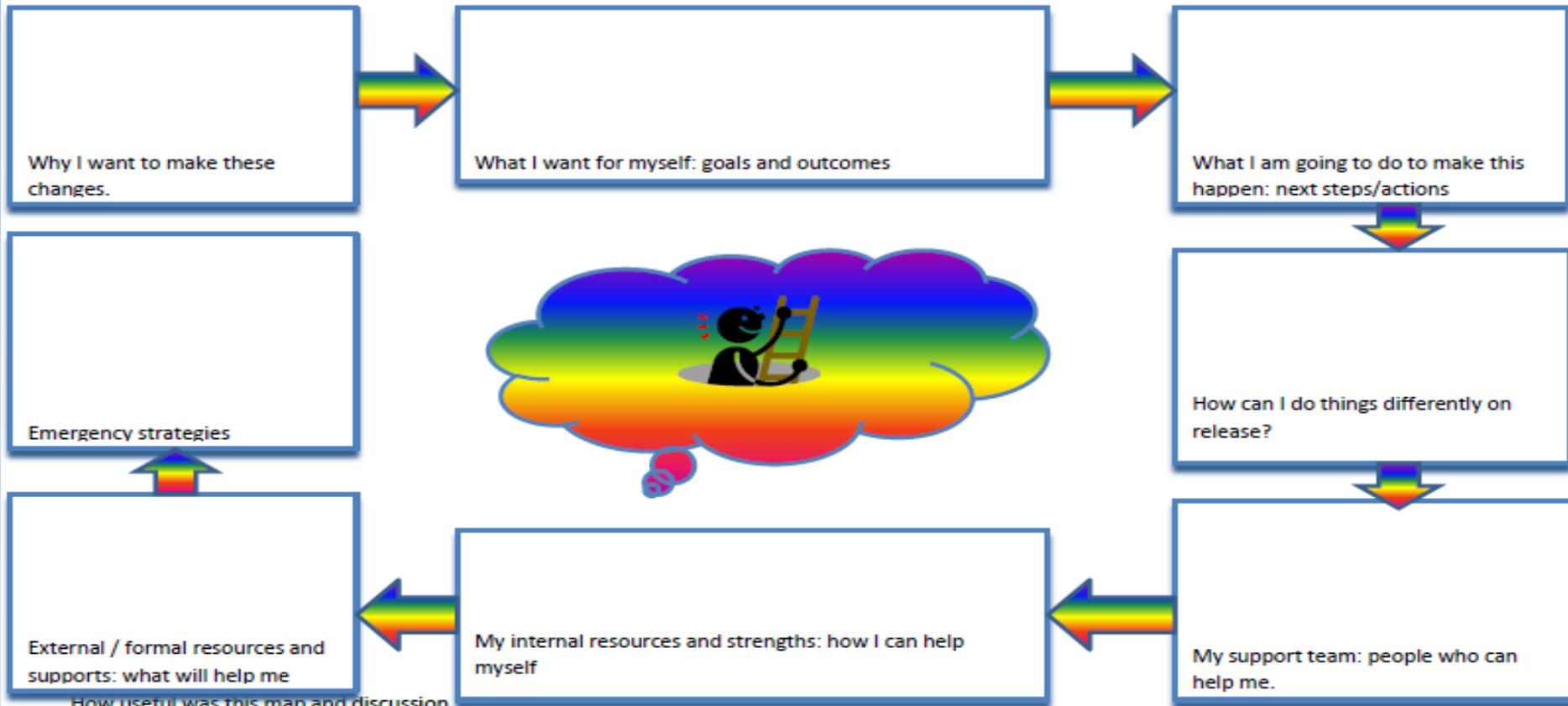
How useful was this map and discussion
Not useful 1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10 Very Useful
Comments:

Early outcomes

- Improved relationships
  - And levels of trust between personal officers and prisoners
  - Between some prisoners and their families. Some reported reconnecting and building relationships with their children.

- Attitudinal changes
  - Evidence of attitudinal changes including improved confidence, more positive outlook re future, improved interpersonal environment.

- View of prisoners
  - Like use of self reflection; being able to lead the discussion; to go at their own pace; that it was personalised and tailored to them.

Developing a sense of we-ness: Co-production with groups

Mutual aid groups

Premised on the exchange of help - so the group member is both provider and recipient of help for the purpose of achieving collective and individual goals

- All operate differently but they all prioritise and address the issues that matter to service users or group members.

- Emphasis is not just on outcomes but on processes of engagement and its impact on those engaged

- Supports change: learning new ways of being, new ways of thinking and new ways of doing things.

Evidence base....   The MAG

- enhance people's sense of self worth and control over their life;

- develop their social networks and generate social capital;

- provide direction and meaning;

- offer a sense of hope, purpose and accomplishment

- reinforce personal and collective learning and skill development; (Burns and Taylor 1998; Mok, 2005; Parsons et al., 1998; Riessman et al., 1993; Simon, 1994).

The Meaning of Community

- Community life…is not a place, or simply a small-scale population aggregate, but **a mode of relating**, variable in extent (Calhoun 1998).

- The persistence of community consists in its ability to communicate ways of belonging…community as belonging is constructed in communicative processes rather than in institutional structures [or] spaces…[it is] a form of experience about belonging as opposed to emphasis on an underlying sense of morality, a group or place (Delanty, 2003)

Community Involvement

- **Means**: building relationships with the networks that comprise civil society:
  - voluntary and faith based organisations, community groups and mutual aid societies – as well a host of other formal and less formal social and community networks
- **Effects**: contributes to a range of individual and service-level/organisational outcomes.
- **How**: through a co-productive approach.
  - 'The public sector harnessing the assets and resources of users and communities to achieve better outcomes' (Bovaird and Loeffler, 2013)
- **Implies**: a radical reinterpretation of relationships between services, service users and communities in criminal justice; a different way of 'doing' services – towards a sense of 'we-ness' (Weaver, 2011, 2013, 2015).

Coproduction with communities

- Community groups

- Volunteering

- Men's sheds

- Timebanking

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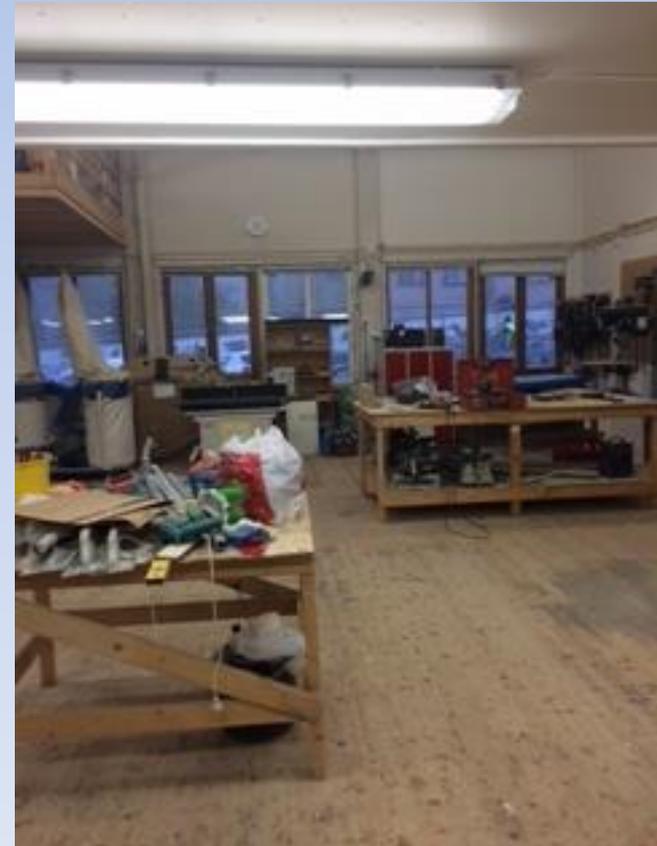
Employment and Desistance

- It is the meaning and outcomes of either the nature and/or quality of the work, or simply participation in employment, and how these experiences influence an individual's self-concept and social identity - as well as how they *interact* with a person's priorities, goals and relational concerns that count (Weaver, 2015).

The cultural significance of work

- *Network relationships and external ties can influence the internal equilibrium of the [co-op], because internal norms develop in connection with the social values prevalent in the community* *(Borzaga et al.,)*

- ''Work' with 'family life' and 'house' – this is a cultural norm of this area. These are the three values that have been chosen by the coop to respect the community culture' (Professional_9)

- Work is much more important even than the value placed on family and the home because article 1 of our [Italian] constitutional law said that our republic is based on work (Professional_12)

What it feels like to work for a social cooperative

- 'The ethics of the co-op is one of inclusion; it is to move toward, to develop, active citizenship. It is a way of acting – or being' (Professional_2)

- In the cooperative, we all have to cooperate with each other and so the way we relate to and interact with each other is different – the whole experience is different. It is a matter of responsibility. We are all part of something that together is collectively owned. A boss [in a private firm] can instruct you to do something but, whatever way, the final product belongs to him or to her. You produce it for them. It is not yours. In a co-op the final product is yours, so you are invested in the whole process. A cooperative depends on cooperation. It cannot function any other way so unlike the private sector, there is a chain of responsibility rather than a chain of command…so, if I make a mistake, there is no sanction or punishment – we work together, all of us, to find the solution. (Worker, Female, Age 40_5)

What social integration means

- Working for the coop has given me a sense of what it is to be **normal** and to take responsibility…[it] has taught me how to live normally, within the rhythm of life (Worker, Male, Age 35_11)

- I feel that **I am well accepted by people for what I am, as a normal person** and not as a former prisoner. This is a very important element to improve your self-confidence… **people from the area, not only from the coop, treat me as a normal person** (Worker, Male, Age 46_20)

The role of the co-op in supporting social integration

- Work is central to **resocialisation** into the outside world and this means that you need this re-education of the outside world while you are in prison…I mean in terms **of being in the world and building a life** (Worker, Female, Aged 41_7)

- You need to pass through the co-op to start being reintegrated into society. The co-op is the right mechanism for coming out of prison because you need to start down a different path …[it] helps you learn how to cope with the demands of work…and how to manage social relationships. (Worker, Male, Aged 43_10)

- The most important fact is the capacity to feel, **to be part of a** group, a sort of family. In this way they start to rebuild or build positive relationships (Professional_2)

The recidivism question

- In [our] experience, the recidivism rate is very low: 2-3% (Professional_4)

- I don't have a percentage in my mind but it is well known that the employment opportunities provided by the cooperative help to stop recidivism (Professional_6)

- We don't have an absolute percentage ... we can see that of the people we work with in the cooperative, 70% of people don't commit crime again, while the percentage is the other way round in the case of people that aren't involved in the coop' (Professional_8)

Co-producing Justice

- You can't impose a pre-planned structure for people to fit into.

- Coproduction is not an end state it is a dynamic and changeable process that evolves over time.

- The environment (relational and physical) can shape opportunities for everyday participation (or conversely constrain them).

- Embedding a culture of collaboration and coproduction is key.

- Coproduction can't be an add on – engaging with service users and involving communities takes time and it needs to be resourced.

- Time, trust and relationships are central to supporting the participation of service users, community volunteers and other groups.

- Coproduction requires the development of a continuum of informal and formal opportunities that are both accessible to and meaningful for the people you seek to 'involve'.

Concluding Comments

- Implications for community alternatives:
  - Development of accessible and meaningful opportunities for participation;
  - Supporting social participation;
  - Capitalising on people's strengths;
  - Building capacities: individuals, families, groups and communities;
  - Extending social networks and building social capital;
  - Creating meaningful opportunities to live differently.

- The relational WE can inform not just *how* we support people but the *nature* of that support

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