Governmentality of adulthood: a critical discourse analysis of the 2014 Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice

Leah Burch

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Abstract

Produced and published by the coalition government, the publication of the 2014 Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years (2014 SENCoP) set out to overhaul the management of special educational needs (SEN) provision across England and Wales. This paper employs a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of the 2014 SENCoP to reveal the ideologies and aims that this policy is built upon. Following a Foucauldian framework of governmentality, this article focuses upon the way in which 'a successful transition to adulthood' is constructed within the policy, particularly in relation to the wider Conservative narrative of a 'Big Society.' Developing this analysis, the article draws upon the current political landscape of a Conservative government and the shift towards the creation of a 'shared society' in attempt to locate 'adulthood' within its wider political, economic, and cultural context. This analysis reveals the neoliberal values underpinning the 2014 SENCoP, whereby educational support is reduced to the practice of shaping and sculpting the future generation of citizens. By deconstructing notions of employment, independence, participation, and health, this article reveals the 2014 SENCoP as a tool of government, written to the demands of the economy rather than the unique needs, aspirations, and ambitions of children and young people labelled with SEN.

Keywords

Special Educational Needs, Education Policy, Neoliberalism, Adulthood, Governmentality

Introduction

The 2014 Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years (2014 SENCoP) was first published by the Coalition Government on 11th June 2014 and implemented with immediate effect for the new school year. Produced in alignment to the Children and Families Bill, the 2014 SENCoP attempted to overhaul the management of special educational needs (SEN) in schools (Hodkinson, 2016). This new system proclaimed to be less confrontational for parents, and more efficient for children and young people labelled with SEN (DfE, 2014). In addition, the code's extended age range represented a consequence-based approach to education that promised to 'help everyone working with children and young people with special educational needs and disability to secure for them the outcomes from education, health and social care which will make the biggest difference to their lives' (DfE, 2014, 11). Indeed, the 2014 SENCoP sought to raise the aspirations of children and young people labelled with SEND in relation to four key areas: higher education and/or employment, independent living, participation in society, and being as healthy as possible in adult life. The notion of adulthood in the code of practice is a recurring topic, and forms the basis of the 'radical reform' that the document is suggested to implement.

If we move beyond the rhetorical haze that the code presents us, its contextual and political positioning is less inspirational. Emanating from an ideological amalgamation of the Conservative and Liberal-Democratic parties, the 2014 SENCoP presents part of the coalition's radical programme for government (HM Government, 2010) that sought to create a 'Big Society Matched by Big Citizens'. Between the two parties, a focus upon addressing the economic deficit was endemic (Finn, 2015) and became a central concern within David Cameron's 'Big Society'. The Big Society represented a 'powerful idea' premised upon the notions of 'liberalism', 'freedom', and 'responsibility' (Cameron, 2010b). This 'powerful idea' was an attempt to unlock potential within society and, in turn, create a fairer society for everyone (Slocock, 2015). In a bid to return power from the state to the citizen, the 'Big Society' sought to overcome a system under New Labour which had, according to David Cameron, created a system where it 'paid more not to work than to work' (Cameron, 2009, 6). Intertwined with a commitment to abolish a climate of public debt, the 2014SENCoP is a site where political ideology meets practical reality. Indeed, situated in a climate of welfare reduction and a commitment to independent living, support for students labelled with SEN was placed in the realm of employability and future aspirations (Yates & Roulstone, 2013). While Cameron's' 'Big society', in explicit terms, has vanished in recent years from political rhetoric, the values, policies, and practices that it represented remain rooted in politics to this day

(Slocock, 2015), particularly when we consider the 'shared society'. Coined by Prime Minister Theresa May, we must strive towards a 'shared society'; a society that focuses upon 'the responsibilities we have to one another… respects the bonds that we share…[and] recognizes the obligations we have as citizens' (May, 2017).

The 2014 SENCoP is a product of this particular mode of government, which places the financial prospects of the economy at the center as a means of tackling financial instability. With recognition to its surrounding context, from its origins within a 'Big Society' and to the current Conservative government policy that this ideology has morphed into, this paper considers the 2014 SENCoP as a tool produced and used by government. In particular, attention is directed to the way in which the values of 'freedom, fairness, and responsibility' laid the groundwork for the introduction of the 2014 SENCoP and, as a consequence, the running of education as a factory tasked with the production of productive and economically oriented workers. Such a system, as Dwyer (2004, 266) argues, has strengthened 'a strong link between rights and responsibilities, and an increasingly moral agenda [to] meet the requirements of cost containing governments rather than the needs of citizens'.

Neoliberalism, Foucault, and Governmentality

Both in the focused field of disability studies, and wider strands of study in the discipline of sociology, it has become conventional practice to point out the strains, frustrations, and consequences of neoliberalism in the lives of disabled people. As noted by Bayliss (2016), the concept of neoliberalism is consistently named by its opponents. What we call 'neoliberalism' has been termed 'economic reality' and 'no alternative' by those in power. Although explicating the growing commitment among academics, and activists, to resist the consequences of neoliberalism, it also demonstrates the growing reality of financial, emotional and physical exhaustion as an outcome of this particular regime. Neoliberalism assumes that 'human well-being can best be advanced by liberating entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade' (Harvey, 2005, 2). The creation of competition through this market style is proclaimed to aid economic development, both for individual participators as well as the wider economy (Brenner & Theodore, 2002) and, as such, has been given prominence in education policy.

Education policy provides a set of guidelines, principles, and aspirations for the way in which the education system should be operated. Such policies are formulated within a specific time and context and written to meet the needs of these (Kress, 2000; Woodside-Jiron, 2011). The inextricable ties between education and its wider social context demand consideration, particularly as the neoliberal impetus for personal drive, choice and freedom has taken dominance in subtle but alarming ways. A reading of education policy in neoliberal times appeals to the likening of education policy as a form of 'delocalized power' (Beaulieu & Gabbard, 2006), that is, power which has been expanded and diffused so that it can be operated in subtle but powerful ways. In other words, education policy can, from a distance, steer the behaviours and actions of children and young people as they move into society (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Woodside-Jiron, 2011) through the expectations and regulations that they enforce.

For Goodley (2014), the pressures of neoliberalism mean educational institutions are run like businesses, measured by the desire to create 'ideal' neoliberal citizens who are able to achieve rigidly drawn out ability expectations. Ability expectations form the bedrock of education policy to ensure that active citizens are created (Wolbring 2012a). That is, a citizen who is deemed to be responsive, active, work-ready, and productive (Goodley, Lawthom & Runswick-Cole, 2014) measured upon the basis of economic contribution. Within this context, such measurements have constituted a highly competitive society. In turn, neoliberalism is a movement of inequality, as the desire for profit diminishes the value of community and marks out those who do not comply (Springer, 2016a). Produced within these rigid educational agendas, the 2014 SENCoP holds a certain political presence as it deploys the demands and expectations of neoliberalism. From this perspective, Foucault's concept of governmentality offers a theoretical framework that is able to reveal the neoliberal undertones of the 2014 SENCoP and 'its capacity to associate itself with certain key elements of an alternative formula of rule, a set of strategies for governing in an "advanced liberal" way' (Rose, 1993, 294).

In a lecture series titled 'Security, Territory, Population', Foucault explores a shift in government that he traces back to the beginning of the 18th century. No longer exercising power through the sovereign right to decide life and death (Foucault, 1978), the birth of bio-politics understood the population as a resource that can be managed, fostered, and optimized for economic utility (Foucault & Burchell, 2007; Dean, 2010). This shift marked a transformation in the operation of power between the State and the population, as power was

deployed in more subtle and diffused ways. Explained by Foucault (1991a, 94), 'it is a question not of imposing law on men, but of disposing things: that is to say, of employing tactics rather than laws, and even using laws themselves as tactics' in order to ensure the achievement of desired ends. Thus, power is deployed across multiple sites, and through a plethora of different technologies and strategies. Such dispersion of power operates in subtle ways and works through the enforcement of self-regulation. Coated under the guise of 'choice' and 'freedom', self-regulation operates subtle workings of power that rely upon individual responsibility. In the current context, for example, the rolling back of the welfare state has resulted in many individuals losing their entitlement to financial support (Cross, 2013). Indeed, estimates suggest that a total of 370,000 disabled people will lose an average of £3,500 a year following radical changes in the allocation of disability living support (Adam, 2016). As a result, many disabled people have been forced to partake in the grueling exercise of employment, coated under the guise of 'choice'. Such self-regulation underpinned the Coalition's 'Big Society' which promised to respond to the 'hunger' of the population to 'take on more responsibility and have more control' (Cameron, 2010b). In this way, Government is suggested to operate the 'conduct of conduct' (Foucault, 1991a), as the diffusion of power pursues a discourse of freedom whilst simultaneously remaining in control. The 2014 SENCoP is suggested to be one example of how such power is deployed.

For Rose & Miller (1992), the 'conduct of conduct' refers to technologies of government as they work through the personal autonomy of the population. This deployment of power brings governmentality into being as an art of government (Campbell, 2013; Dean, 2010; Gordon, 1991), or more specifically, as 'the art of exercising power in the form of the economy' (Foucault, 1991a, 92). These activities, strategies and technologies of government 'require craft, imagination, shrewd fashioning… the employment of intuition and so on' (Dean, 2010, 28) in order to successfully govern through self-regulation and freedom (Rose, 1993). Self-regulation becomes a commodity as the population take responsibility for their own fates, choices and outcomes (Rose, 2000). This deployment of power governs through the population, making neoliberal dreams of the active citizen a reality. Indeed, the adoption of political rationalities in the intimate sphere of the personal enables a neoliberal form of government at a distance (Larner, 2000; Rose, 1993). This operation of governmentality is fundamental to neoliberalism, utilizing technologies of government as a means of decentering government through the active role of auto-regulated selves (Campbell, 2013; Springer, 2012).

With this in mind, we might position the 2014 SENCoP as a technology of government that brings together specific rationalities of 'adulthood' as a means of ensuring that future citizens align to a set of ability expectations. Thus, critically exploring the political positioning of the 2014 SENCoP in line with Foucault's theory of governmentality, I uncover how neoliberal forms of government activate the conditions and practices of citizenship in subtle and regulated ways (Lands, 2014). Indeed, by deconstructing the way in which adulthood is framed in relation to employment, independence, participation, and health within the 2014 SENCoP, I reveal the mechanical, strategic, and power-laden techniques at play. While the context of the 2014 SENCoP aligns to David Cameron's 'Big Society', the neoliberal values of the code of practice are considered in the current context and links are made to broader policy initiatives. Specifically, discourse analysis is employed to 'perform the autopsy in examining the anatomy of this powerful idea' (Springer, 2016b, 7).

Methodology

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a process of discourse analysis that involves a critical and systematic reading of text. Defined by Fairclough, Mulderrig & Wodak (2011, 356), CDA is:

> 'A problem-oriented interdisciplinary movement, subsuming a variety of approaches, each with different theoretical models, research methods and agenda. What unites them is a shared interest in the semiotic dimensions of power, injustice, abuse, and political-economic or cultural change in society'

The process of CDA utilized by this research employed a de-layering approach to discourse. This approach aims to break down and reveal the underpinning values of policy before repositioning these in wider political and contextual conversations. In order to critically explore the relationship between neoliberal government and the 2014 SENCoP, this research adopted a problem oriented and politically engaged approach to the analysis (Fairclough, Mulderrig & Wodak, 2011; Jaworski & Coupland, 2006). This approach was able to unearth the careful workings of power within policy discourse and thus provide a platform for understanding the impact that such policies have for children and young adults labelled with SEN. For Liasidou (2011), this approach is particularly useful when addressing SEN policy as it reveals the disempowering attitudes embedded within policy discourse for those marked out as "non-

typical". In this way, the adoption of CDA in this study complements the theoretical framework of governmentality by problematizing 'the ways in which language constitutes a pervasive use of control' (Liasidou, 2016, 159) that requires children and young people labelled with SEN to 'persuade their limbs and sense to "behave" in line with ableist expectations' (Hansen & Philo, 2009, 253). Using the critical and contextual tools of CDA, this paper sought to unravel political rhetoric, confront discursive power relations, and unveil the underpinning ideologies, aims, and values that are at the core of this policy document.

CDA involves the systematic analysis of text, and thus required the author to engage thoroughly with the process of coding. A coding process both informed and developed the analysis by allowing for the refinement, theorization, and consolidation of text. In line with Strauss's (1987) three stages of open, axial, and selective coding, a systematic reading of the policy document created a database of extracted text that could be used in the proceeding analysis. Open coding involved an initial reading of text in order to identify important sections for further consideration. Axial coding sought to closely examine these selected sections in relation to the contextual focus of this piece of research. Finally, selective coding defined, developed and refined themes for analysis. Once thematically coded, data from the 2014 SENCoP was considered in relation to wider policy initiatives in order to situate this policy document within its broader socio-political context. Thus, although the 2014 SENCoP is the primary site of analysis, it should be noted that additional sources are also drawn upon.

The employment of CDA aimed to explore the way in which 'a successful transition to adulthood' (DfE, 2014) had been constructed as a political rationality, and the way in which this related to broader political aims and initiatives. By engaging with CDA, I aimed to unveil the techniques that are deployed by the 2014 SENCoP to ensure the generation of certain citizens that correspond to politically defined ability expectations. As a technology of government, then, the 2014 SENCoP is considered to be an assemblage of rationalities and strategies concerned with economic advantage. Thus, this analysis focuses on the rationalities included in the framing of adulthood to uncover the desired outcomes of the policy document. This includes: employment, independent living, participation in society, and being as healthy as possible.

Data Analysis

Employment

The code provides an extensive description as to how educational institutions must support employability as an outcome of education. It states that:

> 'colleges that offer courses which are designed to provide pathways to employment should have a clear focus on **preparing** students with SEN for work. This includes identifying **the skills that employers value**, and helping young people to develop them' (DfE, 2014, 131; emphasis added).

This extract reveals the 2014 SENCoP as a mechanical too that is deployed to facilitate the production of 'well-adjusted and productive citizens' (Hornby, 2011, 236) who are able to adopt the specific skills and requirements of the labour market. Indeed, the code clearly demonstrates the role of education in 'preparing' future workers and to ensuring that this preparation is focused upon the skills valued by employers, not necessarily the individuals themselves. Thus, the 2014 SENCoP presents an education system that is concerned with the creation of 'workers in waiting' (Tomlinson, 2005). That is, citizens who can respond to the condition of employment that has been contracted to neoliberal citizenship (Lakes, 2011) and to the rationalities that such an economic climate requires. In these terms, employability becomes a political rationality, that is regulated by the participation of young adults within a competitive labour market.

With this in mind, the naming of employment as a 'strategic outcome' (DfE, 2014, 46) of education within the 2014 SENCoP brings into being a population that is utilized as a resource. While the code contends that 'employability can be life-transforming for children and young people with SEN' (DfE, 2014, 122), the stream of claims that there are too many disabled people unemployed, presents an ulterior motive (DWP, 2014; Work and Pensions Committee, 2017). This motive has been described by Harris, Owen & Gould (2012), who propose that the policy investment in employability readiness and training programmes is an industrialized response to the reduction of welfare support. This is enforced by the coalition commitment to 'reform the benefit system to make it fairer, more affordable and better able to tackle poverty, worklessness and welfare dependency' so that 'work pay[s]' (DWP, 2010a, 2). Keyed to this narrative, employment and welfare are positioned on a dichotomy of citizenship, therefore

levying individuals who are employed against individuals who receive welfare support. Employability as an outcome of education, and criteria of adulthood is, therefore, less about personal value and more about the importance of self-regulation and self-control expected from the 'responsible' subject. Freedom is thus tied to the desired mentalities of government and an outcome only on offer through a system of conditionality (Dwyer, 2004).

The coalition rhetoric of 'freedom, fairness, and responsibility' that aligns to the creation of a 'Big Society' is, thus, conflicted, particularly within the notions of employment that the 2014 SENCoP plays with. Noted by Wolfe (2012), Cross (2013), and O'Hara (2014), political initiatives aiming to drive up employability have had detrimental consequences for many disabled people, including the loss of welfare support and exhaustion. In addition, a recent inquiry on behalf of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (2016) has revealed the cost of cumulative cutbacks to welfare support, suggested that more disabled people are now relying on family members or debt lenders for financial support and food banks as a means of necessity. Explored by Goodley, Lawthom and Runswick-Cole (2014), work in a neoliberal climate is what Lauren Berlant calls 'a practice of slow death' that many individuals have been forced to partake in. Thus, there is a notable contradiction in this system between 'the authoritarianism of work enforcement through the work programme and the emphasis on upon personal freedom and getting the government off our backs' (Deacon, cited in Ellison, 2011, 57). For the individual, increasing pressures to drive up levels of employment have been devastating, and represent a necessity rather than a choice. Yet, politically, 'work is promoted ideologically as a good thing' (Bambra, 2011, 4) as it enables a social support system that is fair to 'those who pay for it' (Conservative and Democratic Unionist Party, 2017, 54).

This promotion of employment remains rooted in the policy context of the present day as the current Conservative government continues to encourage participation in the workforce as a desirable alternative to support from the state, claiming that work, rather than welfare, is the best route out of poverty (Conservative and Unionist Party, 2017). Moreover, changes to the distribution of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), for example, have meant that new ESA claimants who are categorized within the 'work related activity group' are no longer eligible for the additional work-related activity component (Kennedy et al 2017).

Posited by Dean (2013, 49), 'under the terms of governmentality, a population is required to be flexible to whatever the state needs it to achieve'. While employability is considered to be essential for a fair society, it is, in reality, an unfair and exhaustive machine, oriented to the economic undertones of a 'Big Society' and to the creation of the self-correcting, abandoned citizen. Indeed, it is important to note that the role of education as a means to the end of employment is not strictly limited to the provision of special education. As noted earlier, notions of employability are saturated with ability expectations that impact us all (Wolbring, 2012b). Framed by ableism, these expectations aspire to create the neoliberal-ableist citizen who is responsible, active, and work-ready citizen. Children and young adults labelled with SEN occupy a precarious position within this discourse, included as a matter of economic necessity while simultaneously excluded by the strict regulations. Indeed, while the most recent manifesto produced in coalition by the Conservative and Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) aspire to 'make Britain the world's Great Meritocracy' (Conservative and Democratic Unionist Party, 2017, 49), it is unclear where children and young people labelled with SEN fit in with this, as the government appears to have forgotten to include these individuals in this section of the manifesto.

Independent Living

Like employment, the 2014 SENCoP confirms the role of educational support in meeting a narrow criterion of successful adulthood. In accordance to independent living, educational support should:

> 'enabl[e] people to have choice and control over their lives and the support they receive, their accommodation and living arrangements, including supported living' (DfE, 2014, 28)

Considering this statement only, and the values accredited to the notions of choice and control, it would appear that the 2014 SENCoP has maintained a definition of independence that is reflective of the Independent Living Movement. In its contextualization of independence further within the document, however, it is clear that the value of independence transpires to the economic advantage of less people receiving social support. Explicitly, the code states that:

> ‘The National Audit Office also estimates that equipping a young person with the skills to live in a semi-independent rather than fully supported housing could, in addition to quality of life improvements, reduce lifetime support costs to the **public purse** by around £1 million’ (DfE, 2014, 123; emphasis added).

In this extract, independence is valorized and rationalized by a dialogue of economic utility. Thus, the value of independence has taken a journey far beyond its roots in the Independent Living Movement. Once defined by the possession of agency that would empower and transform the lives of disabled people (Evans, 2003), this movement has voyaged into far-right politics, hijacked by the ideological tenets of neoliberalism and to the coalition’s call to help ‘people along a journey toward financial independence from the state’ (DWP, 2010a, 31). Rationalities of compliance are deployed here, as ‘individuals, families, firms, organizations, communities are urged to take upon themselves the responsibility’ (Rose, 2000, 327) of their own economic fates. Guided by the rationality that we must be autonomous beings, the 2014 SENCoP is predicated upon the subtle powers of self-regulation that are underpinned by ‘uncritical assumptions about independence, such as the idea that disabled people should aspire to physical independence or self-reliance’ (Garabedian, 2014, 81).

The valorization of independence in relation to financial savings not only distorts the philosophies of the Independent Living Movement, but is also detrimental to understandings of dependence. Indeed, the statement quoted above from the 2014 SENCoP portrays dependency as a financial drain on society (Yeo & Moore, 2013) meaning that any individual who is dependent, in contrast to independent, is tarnished with farcical assumptions of defectiveness (See Barnes, 1992; Davidson, 2007 cited in Herzl-Betz, 2015). Specifically, the unthoughtful expression of the ‘public purse’ appeals to a narrative that is inappropriate, demeaning, and demonizing, eliciting a cultural script of ‘us’ against ‘them’. This narrative provokes the emotions of financial inequality that are manifested within a modern culture of blame and resentment (Kirwan, McDermont & Clarke, 2016; Hughes, 2015). Moreover, this positioning of the independent/dependent binary makes clear parallels to wider claims that Britain has become a ‘sickness culture’ (Cameron, 2010a) alongside a denigrating media rhetoric of shirkers and scroungers (Garthwaite, 2011). Indeed, the strategic expression of the ‘public purse’ endorses the emotions of the reader, presenting ‘the ordinary working person, the taxpayer, the decent citizen, [as] the victim of injustice; treated unfairly relative to those who do not contribute’ (Hughes, 2015, 994). The political navigation of emotions allows social

policies to be ridden with inequalities, justified by blaming inactive welfare recipients for their irresponsibility and lack of independence (Dwyer, 2004). It is thus clear then, how independence as an attribute of successful adulthood feeds into the coalition's 'Big Society'. Indeed, independence demonstrates the ability to govern oneself with direction, but no support, from government. Such an aspiration is manifested within a neoliberal agenda that desires 'each of us is to be our own rock' (Rose, 2000, 328) so that the role of the State is one of 'steering and regulating rather than rowing and providing' (Rose, 2000, 324).

The code's positioning of independence in line with a welfare rhetoric similarly raises the question of freedom within a 'Big society'. No longer conceived as the liberation from professional subjection in a system of medicalization, independent living is articulated as a necessary rationality in the modern era. Independence, as deployed within the code of practice, becomes a strategy of governing, as 'individuals can be governed through their freedom to choose' (Rose & Miller, 1992, 201). Interdependence risks becoming illusionary in a system that governs the population by macro-level regulation, the deployment of power 'at a distance'. To be independent (in the neoliberal sense) is no longer empowering, rather it is 'the paradoxical combination of empowering citizens to take action while simultaneously manipulating them to take the right action' (Hodgson, 2001 cited in Land, 2014, 426). Thus, the so-called independent body is not a free and empowered body. It is the product of governmentality, a body produced by and for the neoliberal requirement of flexible and work-ready citizens (Bambra, 2011) that economically 'give' to society, rather than 'take'. Drawing upon the previous exploration of employment, it seems that a system that aims to minimize welfare gives disabled people two options. The first, to prove their independence through participation in employment, or to be excluded from notions of adulthood and to live a life burdened by poverty. Put this way, the above options do not necessarily appear as choices, yet they are coated as such by neoliberal rationalities of absolute responsibility.

Participation in Society

While neoliberal definitions of citizenship tend to be focused upon the capitalist calculation of economic contribution, the 2014 SENCoP offers an alternative means of participation in the community. Particularly the case for young adults who are in the process of transitioning to the outcomes of adulthood, participation is measured in terms of access to local youth services and voluntary work in the community (DfE, 2014). This particular strategy works in alignment

with wider government initiatives such as the National Citizen Service (NCS) supported by the coalition government and the #iwill campaign supported by the current Conservative government. The NCS scheme aspires to 'shape, support, champion and lead a thriving National Citizens Service' (NCS, 2016). In other words, it strives to govern young people to self-regulate in the 'correct' ways and discipline their bodies to the behaviour accepted by the State. Explained by David Cameron,

> 'Too many of our young people appear lost. Their lives lack shape or any sense of direction. So **they take out their frustrations and boredom on the world around them**. They get involved with gangs. They smash up the neighborhood. They turn to drink and drugs. **We want to offer them an alternative'** (Conservative Party, 2010, 1-2; emphasis added).

In this statement, 'we' (the conservative party) are presented as the heroic superior, as they offer 'them' (young people) an alternative to the devastation caused by anti-social behaviour. This dichotomy of 'us' and 'them' serves to differentiate both between the State and young people, but also between different members of this population. Adulthood, according to the techniques of citizenship, becomes a status awarded only to the young people who participate in approved activities. That is, participating in society, through the means of youth schemes and voluntary work, is rewarded by the status of successful adulthood, in contrast to the irresponsible youth outlined by Cameron above. We may therefore consider the coalition commitment to youth and voluntary schemes as a tool to promote the regulation of the right behaviour (Lister, 2011) as young people complete their transition into adulthood and are awarded with the label of 'citizen' by merit. The sense of community is established here, 'not simply [as] the territory of government, but a means of government… in the hope of producing consequences that are desirable for all and for each' (Rose, 1996, 335). That is, we have a responsibility to the rest of our community that we must take seriously if we are to be included in 'adulthood'. Reiterated by the recent Conservative and Democratic Unionist Party Manifesto, 'without individual responsibility, nothing can be achieved' and 'without the obligations and duties of citizenship, society would not function' (2017, 9).

The rationality of responsibility dominates the framing of adulthood within the 2014 SENCoP. Posited by Dean:

> ‘with a responsibilized youth, theoretically the power of the state is increased as the possibility of a threat to authority from young people within is reduced, and the work of the state is taken up by conscientious empowered volunteers’ (2013, 59)

This is interesting, as Dean suggests the threat of the younger generation to government and that, to overturn this, government deploys voluntary strategies to utilize the younger generation in terms of taking on desired roles in society in addition to increasing the chance of compliance. In this way, voluntary work, as a measurement of adulthood, represents a ‘new politics of conduct [that] reflect notions of self-regulation and responsible citizenship… with a normalizing discourse in which the law-abiding citizen is differentiated from the irresponsible’ (Nixon & Prior, 2009 cited in Lister, 2011, 72). Adulthood then, may be understood as the regulation of behaviour through the political levying of responsibility against irresponsibility. This, in turn, reinforces the conditionality of citizenship, based upon the neoliberal values of freedom, fairness and, responsibility. Adulthood, in terms of citizenship, is not an entitlement, rather a condition of conduct (Rose, 2000; see also Rose, 1996) that is only rewarded to individuals who are able to internalize the rigid mentalities that the code offers. A dividing line is clearly drawn here, as ‘those who refuse to become responsible, to government themselves ethically, have also refused the offer to become members of our moral community’ (Rose, 2000, 335). This point was recently confirmed by Theresa May, who pointed out that ‘the very word “citizen” implies that we have responsibilities to the people around us’ (May, 2017). Such responsibilities, then, have come to define citizenship, and thus drawn the boundaries of who can, and cannot be included. Like employment and independence then, participation in society is a strategy that drives up personal responsibility in the pursuit for inclusion in citizenship. Again, however, disabled people are likely to be pushed to the margins. Indeed, in 2016, Theresa May announced a £40 million fund to support the campaign #iwill coordinated by the charity ‘Step Up To Serve’ to encourage more young people to give their time to the service of others (May, 2017). Ableist understandings underpin this, as social action becomes a mission that we all must ‘step up’ to, an act that is neither possible or desirable for everyone.

Being as healthy as possible in adult life

As the final criteria of adulthood, the requirement of ‘being as healthy as possible’ aligns to wider governmental ambitions for the ‘health protection and health improvement for the local population’ (DfE, 2014, 54). Indeed, the code states that the local authority (LA) has a

responsibility to ensure that the health services commissioned for children labelled with SEN aligns to wider health oriented programmes, such as the 'Healthy Child Programme' (DfE, 2014). There is little explanation to how 'health' is understood within the code of practice, thus it is useful to consider the way in which 'being healthy' is positioned within accompanying government initiatives in order to reveal the values that underpin its inclusion within the notion of a successful adulthood in the 2014 SENCoP.

Being healthy is represented in the Healthy Child Programme as our responsibility as human beings. It states that, 'good health, wellbeing and resilience are vital for all of our children now and for the future' (Public Health England, 2016, p. 6). Similarly, as Rose (1993, 286) explains:

> 'In the name of social and personal well-being, a complex apparatus of health and therapeutics has been assembled, concerned with the management of the individual and social body as a vital national resource, and the management of "problems of living", made up of techniques and advice and guidance, medics, clinics, guides and counsellors'

Thus, our health is distanced from the intimacy of our own bodies, and instead made subject to the rules and regulations of public health initiatives (Bogart, 2013) that detail the shapes, practices, and conditions that our bodies must meet. As expressed by the 'NHS Five Year Forward View, a document also produced under the coalition government, being healthy has economic values. It states that:

> 'sickness absence-related costs to employers and taxpayers have been estimated at £22 billion a year, and over 300, 000 people each year take up health-related benefits' (NHS, 2014, 11).

The responsibility to self-regulate our health is evoked by the strategic reference to the financial cost for taxpayers of 'unhealthy bodies'. It is assumed then, that 'healthy' adults are more likely to economically contribute financially, whilst unhealthy bodies are suggested to 'take from society'. The document similarly states that 'we do not have to accept this rising burden of ill health' (NHS, 2014, 10) a rhetoric most notably associated with the public health concern of 'bodily size'. Indeed, what is considered to be an unhealthy body size is condemned as

financially unattainable, a similar status to the 'dependent' body previously presented within the 2014 SENCoP. The NHS continues, warning that:

> 'as the nation's waistline keeps piling on the pounds, we're piling on billions of pounds in future taxes just to pay for preventable illnesses' (NHS, 2014, 9-10).

Child obesity in particular is mentioned, stating that:

> 'the number of obese children doubles while children are at primary school' (NHS, 2014, 9).

These statements make explicit the inclusion of 'being healthy' in the code's definition of adulthood. Appealing to our cultural, social, and political spheres, obesity is routinely placed in a dialogue of disgust, as its presence is perceived to be a preventable risk that we have a responsibility to prevent. This message is dominant in the modern word, particularly expressed in the outlets of media. For example, headlines that state that 'Obesity crisis costs the country BILLIONS more than we spend on police and fire services' (Davdison, 2016) and 'Hidden fat around your waist increases the risk of early death from heart attack and cancer' (Parry, 2016), present an explicit message of danger, risk, and cost of the higher than average body size. Obesity, much like disability, is supposed to be everyone's worst fear (Mollow, 2014) and we must, therefore, be responsible enough not to choose this particular lifestyle (Finkelstein, 2014). That is, we must engage with the regulatory practices of diet and exercise (Dean, 2010).

The 'fear' of obesity that we are persistently reminded of is similarly alluded to in the 2014 SENCoP, as the document continually references the role of education in ensuring that children and young people are 'kept healthy and safe'. In this narrative, being 'healthy' is presented to be safe and responsible, while being 'unhealthy' or 'obese' as we are often told, is an irresponsible risk that has consequences far beyond the parameters of bodily composition. The code's articulation of 'being as healthy as possible' can thus be presented as a process by which the body becomes subject to economic interrogation. Indeed, it is not ironic that the mandatory regulation of our own health has coincided with years of financial challenges in the NHS. Adulthood, in this way is not only characteristically normative, but also physically sculpted, made 'an object of certain disciplinary technologies of power' as a 'kind of anatomo-politics

of the human body and control of the population at large' (Peters, 2001, 172) dictates the choice that we must make in our personal spaces.

Conclusion

Following Campbell (2013, 50) I have shown how 'technologies can make possible the tiniest of operations, but in assemblages they make realizable the most complex of political programmes'. Specifically, this paper has argued that the 2014 SENCoP is a technology of government that positions adulthood as an assemblage of particular strategies and techniques that are deployed by the State. Such techniques, it has been argued, are designed to ensure the creation of self-regulating future citizens. A critical deconstruction of employment, independent living, participation, and health considers adulthood not as a single entity, but as a matrix of dreams, strategies and maneuvers (Rose & Miller, 1992) that are neoliberal in style. Indeed, as the coalition ambition of a 'Big Society' has become the zenith of the educational agenda (Dean, 2013) the 2014 SENCoP exemplifies 'an education system that is now run along homogenized neoliberal lines' (Kaščák & Pupala's, 2012, 152). Following the publication of the 2014 SENCoP, this analysis has shown how the same strategies are being deployed in the present day under a Conservative government premised upon the creation of a 'shared society' (May, 2017) and the 'world's greatest meritocracy' (Conservative and Democratic Unionist Party, 2017). Raised by Mitchell:

> 'educating a child to be a good citizen is no longer synonymous with constituting a well-rounded, nationally oriented, multicultural self, but rather about attainment of the "complex skills" necessary for individual success in a global economy' (2003, p. 399 cited in Kennelly & Llewellyn, 2011, 899).

Indeed, these more recent political discourses are fundamentally concerned with the generation of citizens.

While employment and independent living are coated by a guise of freedom and fairness, this analysis has identified their presence in the 2014 SENCoP to be economically oriented predicated upon the value of responsibility. Specifically, the coalitions' aim to increase both employability and independence is inextricably bound to wider ambitions of reduced welfare expenditure. This finding delineates how political programmes are created through the careful

merging of different technologies. Positioned within a 'Big Society', these mentalities of employment and independence blur the line between the political and the personal, and thus bridge an alignment between the aspirations of authorities and activities of the population (Rose & Miller, 1992). This legacy has remained firmly rooted in the 'shared society' which requires 'discipline and focus, effort and hard work' (Conservative and Democratic Unionist Party, 2017, 4). Similarly, increased participation in the community, is suggested to be bound to the governmental concerns of anti-social behaviour. Therefore, participation through the means of voluntary work and youth services are offered as an alternative to exclusion, a site for the production of self-correcting and well-behaved beings. Finally, I have revealed the call for being healthy as being tied to wider public health matters that aim to control and manage the bodies of the population and, in turn, health care expenditure. Bodily management then, is no longer understood as a personal issue, but a highly politicised, public health priority.

The claim that the 2014 SENCoP is focused on the 'outcomes' of education is thus untrue. Meticulous as it may seem, it is more realistic to remove the sense of plurality that 'outcomes' suggests, and replace it with the singular noun 'outcome'. That is, the 2014 SENCoP is in fact, outcome-based; yet it is based upon a particularly normative creation of the autonomous, self-regulating, self-correcting subject. This single outcome remains manifested within our society today, where continual cuts to welfare expenditure and increasing pressures to be employable, independent, and healthy are bound to the Conservative's plan for a 'stronger Britain and a Prosperous Future' (Conservative and Democratic and Unionist Party, 2017) fulfilled by the actions of responsible citizens.

Exposed by this analysis, responsibility is demanded at every stage of adulthood. Ability expectations required future citizens to be employed, independent, active and healthy as a gesture of responsibility to the state and one another. The 2014 SENCoP renegotiates relations between the citizen and the state, enforcing the conditionality of rights on the acceptance of personal responsibility (Dwyer, 2004). Inclusion in the 'Big Society' is awarded in accordance to the adoption of political mentalities as one's own aspirations. It seems then, that 'to remain affiliated one must "enterprise" one's life through active choice, within authoritative terms and limits that have become integrated within all the practices of everyday life, sustained by a heterogeneous array of "civilized" images and devices for lifestyle promotion' (Rose, 1996, 340). The values of freedom, fairness, and responsibility are heralded by the Conservative rhetoric, 'we're all in this together' (Cameron, 2010b) and that, 'we will, as a nation, go

forward, together' (Conservative and Democratic Unionist Party, 2017, 10). On the one hand, we are 'all in this together' as the intimate spheres of our minds and bodies are governed to the expectations, values, and aspirations of the 'Big Society' and the 'shared society'. However, the inclusion of 'all' in this dialogue is dependent on our flexibility to this process of governance. For those who do not meet such requirements, the category of 'all' becomes yet another prized and out of reach circle of inclusion. For many disabled people, confinement to the 'Other' of this style of society is a reality, not due to impairment, but due to the rules and rituals designed by neoliberalism without human diversity in mind. It is contended that neoliberal forms of government maintain exclusion in society, as:

> 'outside the communities of inclusion, outside the control of society, exists an array of micro-sectors, compromised of those who are unable or unwilling to enterprise their lives or manage their own risk, incapable of exercising responsible self-government, attached either to no moral community or to a community of anti-morality' (Rose, 1996, 347).

Indeed, while the 2014 SENCoP and wider policy documents are very clear in their expectations and desires of what constitutes a successful adulthood, they are less open in sharing what happens to those who get left behind.

This analysis has exposed serious concerns regarding the 2014 SENCoP as it has been produced within an era of neoliberalism. However, we must recognise the disruptive potential of disability. Posited by Goodley & Runswick-Cole (2016, 2), 'disability has the radical potential to trouble the normative, rational, independent, autonomous subject that is so often imagined when the human is evoked, social policies are made, social and human sciences are developed and forms of activism are enacted'. That is, disability offers a dialogue of opportunity where the narratives of activism, and the experiences of marginalisation can be brought together to demand a political response. Since power is bi-directional, the relationship between children labelled with SEN and the 2014 SENCoP is not one of imprisonment. Power 'produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth' (Foucault, 1991b, 194). Children labelled with SEN, or those that occupy 'a body that sticks out' (Goodley, 2013, 635) have the potential to proliferate resistance-practices (Beckett & Campbell, 2015). When the political system is defined by and enmeshed within neoliberalism, it will never represent ways of knowing and being outside of the political sphere (Springer, 2016a). Thus, if we are to move

towards an education system that is outcome-focused, let it emanate from the disruptive potential of disability firmly located in a social justice approach. Raised by Griffiths (2016), we need an education system that can encourage critical thinking and resist the very normativity of structural marginalisation and systematic oppression. We need a democratic society that celebrates and empowers the human in its diversity.

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