

## Reshaping the field: building restorative capital

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### Abstract

Restorative justice is best known as an alternative approach for dealing with crime and wrongdoing. Yet as the restorative movement has grown it is increasingly being deployed in different arenas. Based on a two-year study funded by the UK National Lottery, this article provides an early glimpse into how people experience the introduction of restorativeness as cultural change within an organisational context. Using a combination of observation, in-depth interviews and focus groups, this research explores how different staff groups react to, adapt to and resist the introduction of a new ethos and language within their organisation. Drawing on the ideas of Bourdieu (1986), it appears that a new form of restorative cultural capital is emerging that threatens the very integrity of the values restorative justice claims to uphold.

### 1. Introduction

#### *1.1 Building a restorative organisation*

Restorative justice has rapidly gathered pace over the last twenty years, to the point where it is now widely practised in many juvenile justice systems and some adult justice systems. There are now a variety of models and contexts in which restorative justice is practised around the world. The results and effectiveness of these approaches have been much researched in the

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We would like to thank all the staff at the Goodwin Development Trust for their time and help in conducting this research. Particular thanks must go to Kathryn Sowerby for her coordinating role at Goodwin and to Rebecca Shipley for her invaluable help on the project. We would also like to thank Keith Tester, Mark Johnson and Mike McCahill for their advice and comments on parts of this article.

criminal justice sphere and there are countless research studies that demonstrate the benefits of restorative justice for victims and offenders (for good examples, see Braithwaite, 2002; Daly, 2005; Shapland, Robinson & Sorsby, 2011; Sherman & Strang, 2007; Strang, 2002). This has helped to fuel the evolution of restorative justice beyond the criminal justice arena and its influence is increasingly being felt in a diverse range of social settings including schools, workplaces, children's homes, neighbourhood disagreements and divided and transitional societies (such as South Africa, the former Yugoslavia and Northern Ireland). Although restorative justice is still most commonly practised in the criminal arena, it is rapidly undergoing both an upward and downward expansion from 'ordinary' crime into many new fields (Green, Johnstone & Lambert, 2013, forthcoming; Johnstone, 2011: 142–159).

This downward expansion sees restorative projects taking root in schools, businesses, children's homes and community centres. Existing discussions of this development tend to focus on implementation, justification or outcome evaluation for interrogating restorative justice (Asmal, 2000; Braithwaite, 2002; Hopkins, 2003; Mirsky, 2007; Morrison, Blood & Thorsborne, 2005; Wearmouth, McKinney & Glynn, 2007). Whilst important, this research tends to ignore how people experience the introduction of restorativeness; how they struggle to adapt and make sense of its ethos and goals; and what they do when it goes wrong. Our research is an attempt to redress this imbalance by empirically investigating how restorativeness is experienced in a setting outside of the criminal justice sector. What can restorativeness offer in the workplace and how do people react to its introduction? This study begins to put flesh on the bones of these questions by asking people and watching what they do.

In trying to understand the answers to these questions we have drawn upon the concepts developed by Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1988, 1993; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1993) in his quest to articulate a sociological method that bridges objective and subjective, interactive and deterministic forms of sociological knowledge. In particular, we employ his concepts of field, habitus and capital to make sense of the interpersonal and organisational dynamics that are affected by the introduction of restorativeness. To be entirely clear, our project was not conceived of in Bourdieuan terms and has not been conducted according to his ethnographic and methodological prescriptions (see, for example, Bourdieu et al., 1999). Instead, we are merely borrowing from his repertoire of insights to interpret ours.

We feel this is justified on the grounds that what begins to emerge from the empirical data is a complex array of shifting interpersonal, professional and organisational dynamics that lead to reconfigurations in authority, hierarchy and interaction within the workplace. This hints at the

introduction of a new form of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) which we have tentatively called restorative capital. This restorative capital helps explain why some people reacted more quickly and adroitly to restorativeness than others and provides a conceptual device for understanding the relationship between the individual's inclinations towards restorativeness and the effect on the organisation's social system (or in Bourdieuan terms, the field). It would appear that the introduction of restorativeness subtly begins to reshape the field through the predilections of particular staff groups. Being restorative can therefore be likened to Bourdieu's (1977, 1984, 1990) concept of habitus, which can be understood as a predisposing mentality towards a particular set of values and actions that affect how a person interacts and behaves. During the fieldwork it was not uncommon to hear comments along the lines of: 'Did you hold the meeting restoratively?' or: 'That's not very restorative of you'. What these sorts of comments signalled to us was that there was a sense of both restorative ownership and hierarchy that was held by certain individuals who possessed greater levels of restorative capital. These people then began to occupy informal positions of restorative seniority within the organisation and provide advice, information and sometimes adjudication on how to behave restoratively.

While we would in no way wish to suggest that all, or indeed most, of the people we spoke to were so powerfully predisposed, it was clearly the case that some people were converts. In a sense, they converted to restorativeness in much the same way that some people convert to a new faith or creed (religious, political or otherwise), becoming fervent in their demands that others see the world and act in it in a restorative manner. As a result we conclude this paper by speculating whether a new priesthood of restorative champions is emerging and what the implications of this might be for the restorative movement. In particular, does restorativeness, quite unintentionally and perhaps even unavoidably, begin to re-create the forms of symbolic violence (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) that it has sought to oust from criminal justice and other types of social practices it sees as exclusionary and domineering?

## ***1.2 The research context***

Kingston-upon-Hull is located on the north-east coast of England and is a medium sized city by UK standards. Built on the back of both the shipping and fishing industry, the city fell upon hard times as these industries declined. Decimated during the Second World War due to its strategic significance as a port, the city has struggled with both its local economy and identity. However, since the turn of the millennium there have been encouraging signs of positive

change and a real sense of renewed vision and purpose in how the city has started to think about itself. Good examples of this are the recent promotion of its football team (Hull City) to England's Premier League and the city being shortlisted for UK City of Culture 2017. In addition, a new football stadium, two thriving rugby league teams, a plan for developing the port infrastructure, a new shopping centre and heavy investment in the schooling system all suggest a new lease of life for the city. Part of this revival involved a significant investment of time, energy and money in becoming a 'restorative city'. This is grounded in a vision that the city can build confident, enterprising and empowered citizens who will help deliver the city's prosperity. Hence a restorative city is a vision for restoring a whole city and its sense of self-respect, identity and hope for the future. This is a long-term and ambitious project that we are seeking neither to judge nor evaluate in this research. As researchers interested in restorative justice but not directly involved in the city's plans, we were offered a unique opportunity to conduct a more contained study of how the introduction of mass training and wholesale 'buy-in' to restorativeness is experienced. To this end we were invited to supervise and support one local organisation's experiment with restorativeness. The part of the experiment we focus upon here is the adoption of restorative principles and values as the basis for managing relationships within the workplace. This tends to operate at two distinct levels: between staff members and with service-users or customers.

The Goodwin Development Trust is one of the largest and most successful development trusts in the UK. Development trusts are community organisations designed to help build sustainable social, economic and environmental development in their region. They are:

- engaged in the economic, environmental and social regeneration of a defined area
- independent, aiming for self-sufficiency and not for private profit
- community based, owned and managed
- actively involved in partnerships and alliances between the community, voluntary, private and public sectors. (Locality—Communities Ambitious for Change, 2012)

Goodwin was created in 1994 by a group of local residents from the Thornton Estate, an area located in the heart of Kingston-upon-Hull. In 1994 the Thornton Estate was in need of socio-economic investment. Of its 3,500 residents, 74 per cent did not own a car, unemployment levels were at nearly 14 per cent and 26 per cent suffered from a limiting long-term illness (Lewis & Maitland, 2004). Initially the Trust focused its attention on the needs of the Thornton

Estate and gradually created employment opportunities for local residents by developing the Estate's infrastructure.

More recently, however, Goodwin's aims have become more ambitious and its work has become citywide. It operates a diverse set of schemes and projects, ranging from Children's Centres for 0–4 year-olds, a Not in Employment Education or Training (NEETs) scheme for young adults, a preventing prisoner reoffending project, Doulas (post-natal support volunteers), smoking cessation classes, a health champions project, new business and enterprise support, the Hull Community Warden Scheme, and a project that supports tenants' and residents' associations. It also has a more corporate dimension and it owns and hires out conference facilities and operates a park-and-ride scheme. In addition to the expansion of its services portfolio, Goodwin has acquired several buildings across the city. Consequently, over the last 15 years Goodwin has grown into one of the country's largest development trusts with an employee base of over 300 people that operates across 38 sites. As such, not only are the services it delivers complex but the geographical spread of the organisation is constantly evolving.

Kingston-upon-Hull, in which Goodwin is located, embarked on an initiative in 2008 to become the world's first restorative city. Spearheaded by the local authority's Children and Young Peoples' Service, the goal was to train approximately 30,000 local authority employees in the ethos and skills of restorative practice. Predominantly focused on schools, social services, youth justice, children's homes and nurseries, the aim was to ensure that all services that engaged with children and young people used a common restorative platform that would begin to build an integrated approach across all youth services. The vision was to create a city that would have a common language and set of goals throughout services engaging with children and young people. By using an inclusionary, empowering language that encouraged emotional literacy and problem solving, the hope was that children and young people in the city would:

1. experience a better quality of service
2. become less reliant on services
3. develop confidence, independence and social awareness, and
4. become more entrepreneurial.

As an organisation Goodwin operates a number of children and young peoples' services and is a close partner of the local authority and many other youth-focused agencies across the region.

It was therefore deemed both commercially sensible and ethically sound for Goodwin to develop restorativeness within its organisation.

There are several reasons why Goodwin chose to implement restorativeness. First, it felt that restorative processes would enable it to improve the quality of service delivery. Second, the internal use of restorative processes would provide each employee with a series of skills and techniques that they could use to strengthen and build colleague relationships, as well as share ideas and problem solve. Finally, because the Thornton Estate and Hull share similar problems it was hoped that the community-building dimension to restorativeness would be beneficial both to the citizens of Hull and to those residents from the Thornton Estate who access services provided by Goodwin. It must be stressed that the Goodwin did not want restorativeness to subsume the way the organisation worked; rather they wanted the processes of restorativeness to sit alongside their existing practice. As one Senior Manager told us, 'Goodwin is not a restorative organisation, it's an organisation that uses restorative practices'.

## **2. Methods**

### ***2.1 Ethical approval***

Ethical approval was granted by the University of Hull's Ethical Approval Committee in accordance with the wishes of the funder. The research conformed to the British Society of Criminology's Code of Ethics.

### ***2.2 Participants***

The research was conducted with staff working at the Goodwin Development Trust (hereafter Goodwin) in Kingston-upon-Hull. We interviewed a range of staff from different teams, working at different levels across the organisation and conducted further supplementary interviews with other restoratively trained practitioners who had regular interactions with Goodwin or its service-users, most notably the police and local schoolteachers. The internal and external teams we interviewed comprised: local schoolteachers, community police officers, children's home staff, children's centre staff, family support workers, nursery nurses, family group conference workers, NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) workers, middle managers and senior managers. These were largely small teams working closely together and it has proved impossible to present our findings in such a way that the different teams are identified without compromising the anonymity of individuals. We have therefore

opted to use four broad categories of staff across the organisation: Team Member, Team Leader, Middle Manager, Senior Manager.

### ***2.3 Procedure***

We conducted over 500 hours of observation, 50 in-depth interviews and two focus groups between July 2009 and March 2011. Prior to July 2009 some members of staff had received training in restorative techniques and had begun to use them in the workplace, but most staff were given the training and introduced to restorative processes during the period of the research project. This provided us with an opportunity to study how both staff and the organisation as a whole experienced the introduction and development of restorativeness in the workplace. Training in restorative practices was provided by the Hull Centre for Restorative Practices, which use a modified training package originally developed by the International Institute for Restorative Practices.

The methods used in this research combine 12 months of observations of team meetings, workplace interactions and training events with in-depth interviews and focus groups. The interviews and focus groups addressed the question: *How do Goodwin employees perceive, or describe, their experiences of implementing and using restorative approaches?* This was broken down into subthemes that broadly related to the different workplace-based contexts in which restorativeness was introduced to employees. These were:

1. experiences of training in restorative approaches
2. understanding of what restorative approaches are
3. experiences of using restorative approaches
4. experiences of organisational change.

A senior researcher and research assistant were based within Goodwin and they began by visiting the various teams and explaining the research project and answering any questions. During this stage a concern emerged from several teams about whether the research findings would be used in any personal performance evaluation or team auditing. The researchers were therefore explicit that all data would be treated confidentially and anonymised. Furthermore, they emphasised that the purpose of the project was to explore how an organisation reacted to the introduction of restorativeness and to provide guidance to other organisations; not to assess or report on the performance of individuals or teams. This phase of establishing contact allowed

the researchers not only to build a rapport with the different teams but also to begin to familiarise themselves with the internal dynamics of the organisation. To that end, the senior researcher also attending key management and team meetings over the duration of the project. Careful notes were kept that summarised early impressions within Goodwin of restorativeness and these were eventually collated and turned into a series of working papers that gave both narrative and understanding of what was happening in the organisation. No data from these meetings and observations has been used in any published form as all were undertaken on the understanding that they were for informal background research rather than data collection. This allowed people to relax and talk openly in front of the senior researcher in team meetings and further facilitated the development of rapport and familiarity between the researchers and the different staff groups. The semi-structured interviews and two focus groups that were conducted provide the core of data collected and discussed here. These were conducted by the researchers in spaces chosen by the interviewees, who all gave their written consent to take part in the project. Interviews lasted between 30 and 90 minutes and were recorded unless the interviewee requested otherwise.

The major justifications for approaching this research qualitatively are twofold. First, the aim was to begin to provide an empirical base for understanding and discussing the transition of restorativeness from a criminal justice intervention to an organisational ethos. Second, we wanted a methodology that captured the richness of people's experiences of restorative principles and processes and which explored in depth people's knowledge of, and reaction to the introduction of, restorativeness.

### **3. Results**

#### ***3.1 Becoming restorative***

From Goodwin's earliest attempts to introduce restorativeness it was apparent that their reasons for doing so were a combination of a general desire to improve the working environment and to position themselves within a city investing heavily in restorativeness. Of particular interest to them was how people's attitudes towards restorativeness changed as they became more familiar with it and the ways in which the organisation learnt and adapted to the introduction of restorativeness over time. Exploring this dynamic was intended to help contribute to the city's restorative evolution by providing an implementation model alongside good practice guidelines (see Lambert, Johnstone, Green & Shipley, 2011). Consequently, Goodwin saw its adoption of restorativeness very much as a positive experiment and seemed largely happy to

let this experiment evolve naturally and at its own pace. While there was most certainly a sense of strategic positioning, there was much less of a sense of specific deliverables beyond a natural experiment to introduce a restorative ethos into the workplace.

Early experiences of restorativeness were therefore rather mixed, with some ringing endorsements and some rather ill-advised early forays into conferencing. Before the training some staff members expressed dubiousness about it and likened it to 'just another new management fad' (Team Member). However, once they had completed training most responded positively and felt very motivated to start using restorative justice in the immediate aftermath. The model of training used was a modified version of that used by the International Institute of Restorative Practice (IIRP) broken down into different levels of depth according to staff group and training need. It was delivered locally by a team of trainers who provided such training across Kingston-upon-Hull. They were therefore very experienced and passionate about restorativeness and this seemed to rub off on the staff at Goodwin. The most common comment made by employees after they had attended the training sessions was that they had found it interesting and relevant to their jobs. At the same time a sizeable minority said that while they found it interesting they viewed it as a supplement to rather than a replacement for the methods they already used.

In those instances where members of staff expressed some negative reaction to restorativeness, these experiences seemed associated with poorly conducted or inappropriate use of restorative processes. For example, in one case a negative reaction resulted from a restorative conference being used to resolve a situation which, in our view, clearly required a one-to-one meeting. On another occasion, where a restorative conference created more tension than there had been before, it seems clear that the conference facilitator's inexperience led to some participants feeling that the encounter lost focus and direction.

Furthermore, some of the early concerns regarding restorativeness centred around where it fitted within Goodwin's complaints and grievance policies and procedures. Staff were concerned that if they said or did something in a restorative conference, it might be used against them during a more formal hearing. Consequently, on issues such as lateness and frequent absence from work on the ground of sickness some managers experienced a lack of confidence in using restorative processes to solve or address these concerns. However, by late 2010 most of these types of concerns had subsided as staff realised that the restorative conference was not designed to 'catch them out' and increasingly restorative techniques became normalised as an informal stage to mediate issues such as colleague conflict, lateness and sickness-related absence. Most of these difficulties and anxieties about using restorative practices can therefore

be largely attributed to early teething problems and to overenthusiastic employees organising and facilitating conferences for which they lacked the requisite experience and skill. Once confidence had grown with using restorative conferences to resolve problems and a clearer appreciation emerged of where these processes sat within broader human resources (HR) policies, restorative techniques became perceived as more useful for improving communication and resolving workplace problems.

As a result, over the course of this research project, most employees began using restorativeness directly within their team structures. By the end of the project, they were using them in the following ways:

1. to solve HR issues such as lateness or absence
2. to collaborate and solve team or departmental problems relating to workloads and contracts
3. to share ideas on the future direction of the team and department
4. to solve inter-personal problems such as arguments between members of staff.

Similarly, from a management perspective the use of restorativeness provided four key changes in the way they worked:

1. Managers felt less pressure in the decision-making process, as the entire team now had some input in key decisions.
2. Managers felt that they were holding their team more accountable for the way they worked.
3. Managers felt they were communicating better with their staff and this created a better working relationship.
4. Managers were dealing with fewer problems in the team as colleagues were now resolving issues amongst themselves.

### ***3.2 Restorative communication***

Communication was the first and arguably most obvious theme to emerge from the fieldwork. Three distinct components of communication were identified by respondents. First, employees felt that general communication improved because issues were now openly discussed through the use of circles, and as such participants felt that there were no 'private' or 'hidden' issues

that clouded any decisions made by the manager. Indeed, both managers and team members felt that this created better team understanding as to why decisions had been made and the reason behind those decisions. Statements that represent people's broad experience of improved communication include the following:

It enables you to talk about difficult situations in an open manner and if you've been listened to and had the chance to discuss and you have heard then you have to accept to agree or disagree. (Team Member)

Staff meetings now are much more open, more people are getting involved. (Team Leader)

This sense of improved workplace relations contributed directly to the second communication theme—that of teambuilding. As communication improved, the use of restorativeness helped to strengthen teams and provide a more harmonious working environment that provided the opportunity and space for all team members to contribute meaningfully. These findings suggest a link between improved communication and productivity as restorativeness begins to provide both the space and support needed within teams to foster stronger group dynamics. Repeated comments from the interviews and focus group appear to show this:

Restorative practices helps you to find out a bit more about each other and this did help build teams and I think I probably hadn't realised how much it would do to make us work more effectively. (Team Member)

It gives quieter people more confidence to speak because they know it's their turn and it stops the louder ones taking over and making sure everyone gets a fair say. (Team Member)

I think the team is developing more. Since we started using it they're starting to have staff nights out so they're getting to know themselves better and the team is developing a lot stronger than it used to be. (Team Leader)

Thirdly, communication was strongly associated with an improved problem-solving culture in the workplace. By using restorativeness to facilitate team meetings and enabling each person to contribute to them, one of the unanticipated benefits was a stronger, more confident and

more cohesive group dynamic which began to pay dividends in terms of decision-making and problem-solving. For example, one manager said:

I'm dealing with less problems now than I used to because they'll discuss something directly with their line manager rather than jump a couple of levels up and come to me. So it's been a time saver for me certainly and it's improved that communication link.  
(Senior Manager)

At another level, team members were able to use restorative practice techniques, such as circles, to air their work-related problems, which in turn allowed other team members to offer advice. For example, one participant noted:

If someone has a problem and they've tried so many things and it's not happening the circle thing allows that individual to say what the problem is. The fact is that there is a means for that individual in the team to be able to share when they're actually struggling so you're not struggling without support. (Team Member)

Given that one of the benefits of using restorativeness is to create a forum for people to come together to repair harm and solve problems through improved communication, it is not surprising that the most striking experience across all staff groups was the gradual reduction in the number of complaints that were dealt with between 2009 and 2011. This was essentially because team members were solving problems using restorative processes between themselves before they reported it to the management. One middle manager, for example, noted how in 2008 (before the introduction of restorativeness) they spent many hours a week resolving minor disputes within their team but by late 2010 the perception was that this had reduced considerably.

From a HR perspective this meant that issues, which before the implementation of restorativeness would have ended in more formal grievance procedures, began to be solved using restorative conferences and circles, saving time and resources. Most managers also experienced a change in the atmosphere within the team. Specifically, they felt that team members were coming forward to see them more often about issues related to work that in 2008 would not have been raised. Through this an improved relationship and level of trust between

manager and team members developed over the course of the project and this, as we shall see below, has benefits for team morale and productivity.

The experiences of the Senior Management Team (SMT) were not dissimilar to those of their junior colleagues. All members of the SMT noticed a marked reduction in complaints in the period from 2009 to January 2011. The greatest impact of restorativeness from an SMT perspective was that it dramatically improved the way in which team members participated in departmental meetings. Several SMT members stated that they now felt more comfortable bringing departmental problems to the team since the introduction of problem-solving restorative circles. For the SMT this reduced the pressure on them as they now felt the whole team was actively contributing ideas to departmental problems. Indeed, by early 2011 the SMT felt that their teams were now taking more accountability for the direction of their departments. As their confidence in the principles and techniques of restorativeness developed, some SMT members began to adapt the use of circles to assess specific areas within their departments. In 2010, for example, one member of the SMT started to use circles to address their department's progress:

It was about giving everybody an opinion on why we were under-performing and pull out four or five tangible things that we could very quickly use to effect an improvement on that contract. (Senior Manager)

Further, circles became a companion to the more usual one-to-one meetings used by the SMT to assess the mood in their departments and to see if any colleagues required extra support. By late 2010 both senior and middle management were also employing the use of restorativeness in their regular management team meetings. The way the restorative approach was used in these meetings broadly followed the same method that managers were using in their own teams. For example, at meetings members were asked to mention things that had challenged them over the last month, or in what ways a new government initiative might affect how their departments sought funding.

The impact on the workplace can therefore be primarily understood in terms of reorganising the ethos, or working culture of how decisions were made, meetings held and problems dealt with. Restorativeness in this context is about the introduction of a new style of communication that is premised on a set of open, inclusionary and respectful values. The consequence of this for reshaping the workplace is not insignificant as it requires managers to approach more junior

staff members in a different fashion, where engagement and motivation, rather than orders and delegation, become the tools for getting things done. This requires managers to willingly cede some of their authority and responsibility for decisions to more junior colleagues. This also involves a greater voice being given to the rank and file who become more involved in making decisions and therefore more responsible for them. Consequently, the dominant social hierarchy of the workplace is challenged through the process of restorative communication and reshaped around a new set of working relations that suggest not just a flattening of hierarchy but a reordering around those staff members and groups who can using this new style of restorative communication to best effect. We shall return to this issue shortly, but before doing so we mention a second key theme that emerged from our study that also has a bearing on this emerging dynamic.

### *3.3 Developing restorative skills and sensibilities*

It soon became clear that those who liked restorativeness felt that it developed their personal and work-based skills. Although the enhancement of personal skills has been associated with restorativeness in relation to changes in offending behaviour (Daly, 1993; Johnstone, 2009), it has not often been highlighted as a particular theme in the literature. However, the evidence from this research shows that the overwhelming majority of participants felt that restorativeness had provided them with skills they did not have before.

The most visible aspect of this increase in personal skills occurred when problems arose either within the team or with members of the public. The result of this change was that the participants noted that they now felt more confident to deal with problems:

I think it gives you those life skills to be able to talk about and discuss difficult situations in a calm manner. It's about valuing and empowering everyone in the workplace. (Team Member)

I think it builds confidence as well as giving new instruments to use a new tool, a new way of working. (Team Member)

Most of the participants commented on the fact that physically participating in a circle changed the way they approached work. For instance:

It changed the way we work because now we can spend more time with people and get down to the real reasons behind why they have done something. (Team Member)

I really like this. I like the collaborative thinking. I was probably guilty in the past of not asking people their opinion and just expecting them to get on with it. (Middle Manager)

Although a large proportion of the respondents said that restorativeness gave them new knowledge, it must also be noted that some staff members felt that they did not develop new skills. The most common explanation for this was that respondents felt they were already working restoratively *before* they were introduced to the concept of restorative practice:

I listen and put my ideas forward, I've always done that in any case and if that's the Restorative Practice way then I think I've been working that way for the last 18 years. (Team Leader)

On a personal level it identified the way that I work naturally. I would say I've always worked restoratively without even knowing it; the more I got to be made aware of it, the more I realised that we used it. (Team Member)

In particular, staff who worked with children and young people felt that they were more naturally restorative because the type of work they do attracts people who behave, communicate and work in certain ways. When asked why they felt restorativeness had been so easily adopted, this staff group replied:

That's probably something to do with working with children. (Team Member)

Working with children means you have to encourage them to talk and develop their communication skills. This is part of a child's development and they're therefore more naturally receptive to restorative practice—which means we are too. (Team Member)

This sentiment was repeated across those staff that worked with children and young people and was generally explained in terms of their job leading them to have a general predisposition for working in a restorative way.

The research findings therefore support the idea that restorativeness helps to develop interpersonal skills that can lead to new and improved working practices. Most respondents felt that restorativeness gave them the following restorative skills that were valuable in both their work and personal lives:

1. more confidence to talk about issues
2. more confidence to handle difficult situations
3. better communication skills
4. new tools to deal with issues differently
5. a greater sense of empowerment.

By the same token, some people clearly found restorativeness more alien and struggled with its communicative style. Whilst most people we interviewed identified these types of problems in relation to particularly 'difficult' individuals or circumstances, it quickly became apparent that concerns about restorativeness emerged in working cultures where staff did not have specific 'people' skills or customer service functions as part of their day-to-day work:

Somebody that doesn't have professional training, they don't have to watch what they say, or act a certain way. They're not going to necessarily act a certain way or speak a certain way in a restorative circle. That's what and how they are. (Team Leader)

Many people don't have the ability to explain themselves and can fly into anger and insults because they cannot vocalise their true meaning. If they feel like they are losing an argument they will get up and walk out because they have not learned to do things any other way. (Middle Manager)

What this suggests is that staff groups involved in either specialised or routine communication roles are more accepting of and comfortable with restorativeness than those involved in other areas. In particular, those staff that worked with children and were used to having to talk openly about their feelings seemed to feel at home with restorativeness. Other staff groups who routinely engage with service-users or customers tended to see it in similar terms to a form of customer service training, while those who had little experience or prior training in communication skills found restorativeness the most difficult to absorb. At one level this is

perhaps unsurprising, yet it does demonstrate that some people appear to have greater restorative resources than others.. It is to this question that we shall now turn.

#### **4. Discussion: building restorative capital**

Analysis of the fieldwork results suggests that people's experiences of restorativeness were predominantly focused around improved communication in the workplace. Although some teams took to restorativeness more readily than others, the general experience was that, once people were familiar with them, the new processes helped to build stronger team and interpersonal dynamics. This in turn helped either to prevent or resolve workplace disharmony in such a way that employee contribution and problem-solving were encouraged and supported. Where participants stated that they had always worked restoratively they also said that it had changed the way they approached work by either providing them with a better structure or giving them a deeper appreciation of the types of work they were engaged in. In particular, this seems to have meant that restorativeness had changed the rhythm and focus of their work routine rather than introducing a new set of values or practices. However, this change in routine does seem to have helped some participants develop new skills, find new confidence in the way they approach work, become more empowered in the workplace (and sometimes at home as well), and feel more comfortable and valued as part of a team in which they know and appreciate each other more fully.

Although this might accurately describe how people experienced the introduction of restorativeness into the workplace, it offers little explanatory understanding of what this means for the reshaping of an organisation or the social system within it. To help shed some light on this we shall draw on Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of field, habitus and capital. For Bourdieu (1991, 1995) a field is a concept designed to indicate separate spaces within the social world. Good examples are the religious field, the literary field and the educational field. Each field contains its own set of social hierarchies, relations and activities that follow a particular logic or set of principles. A field is therefore intended to show that in societies there are multiple social systems that cannot and should not be reduced to a single system and each can exercise its own logic upon any given question. For the purposes of this discussion, we therefore see the workplace as a field. A workplace is typically organised around a particular logic and hierarchy of management, productivity, profit, customer service and so on. We are mindful that Goodwin is a particular type of organisation and there may well be a sound basis on which to disaggregate the workplace into different categories such as corporate, public, self-employed and so on.

There may be some important distinctions that this research misses as a result of its focus, yet we feel that because Bourdieu (1991, 1995) offers a conceptual framework for thinking about Goodwin's workplace as part of a wider field of activity it can provide significant interpretive value in this context of our research.

In this field of activity it quickly became apparent during the research that some people were far quicker, more enthusiastic and better engaged with restorativeness as a set of values and communicative processes than others. In our discussion of restorative skills we found that staff groups who work with children or who had a customer service role were overwhelmingly the groups who were more comfortable with restorativeness. The reason given for this comfort was usually that restorativeness dovetailed well with the existing training, ethos and personal qualities required for their day-to-day work. In other words, they had a combination of personal, educational and experiential resources to draw upon that they felt were broadly the same as restorative skills. It is here that Bourdieu's (1986) concept of capital, and in particular cultural capital, is useful. For Bourdieu, capital means something different from either the general or Marxist connotation, instead denoting a combination of material and cultural resources that are reproduced within social groups in particular fields of social space. Bourdieu most famously distinguishes between economic capital (material wealth), social capital (influential networks) and cultural capital (symbolic capacity), and it is the last of these forms of capital that is of relevance here.

Furthermore, Bourdieu distinguishes between three forms of cultural capital: embodied, objectified and institutionalised. Embodied cultural capital can be understood as personal, emotional, intellectual and physical (for example, fashion or style tastes). Objectified cultural capital includes physical cultural goods that we possess such as books, musical instruments and machinery. Institutional cultural capital consists of various forms of institutional recognition such as educational qualifications. These are useful categories that enable us to make sense of people's reactions to restorativeness at Goodwin and, through this, what is happening across the restorative movement more generally. Crucially, at Goodwin, those people who quickly became adept at being restorative and claiming a degree of restorative prowess commonly came with cultural capital from other parts of their life that predisposed them well to restorativeness. The ability to empathise, a counselling or therapeutic background, working with children and dealing with difficult people or circumstances all require training, skills and perhaps even a particular type of personality. It is these types of skills in particular that we see as beginning to form the basis for what we tentatively call restorative capital. We would not be the first to try to disaggregate Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital and apply it

to more specific aspects of culture; indeed, one recent study in the UK has explored gender and geographical forms of cultural capital alongside Bourdieu's more typical interest in the arts, media and sports (Bennett et al., 2010).

A further aspect of Bourdieu's (1977, 1984, 1990) thinking that relates to this point is his use of the concept of habitus. Habitus can be understood as the predispositions that individuals, or groups of individuals, share that provide strategies for how they think and behave. For Bourdieu this was about weaving a path between voluntarism and determinism in explaining human behaviour and in particular about understanding how different social groups develop a 'sense' of taste and discernment that can be empirically investigated in relation to social class. However, for the purposes of this discussion habitus helps us to understand why some groups of people in the field of the workplace seem to be more readily predisposed to restorativeness than others. This seems to have its root in embodied and institutionalised cultural capital (ie training and skills) alongside a related habitus which was most commonly expressed to us as: 'I think I'm naturally restorative' (Team Member).

It is this intersection of cultural capital and habitus that we find interesting in Goodwin's restorative experiment. As we suggested earlier, at the heart of being restorative is a set of values and a style of communication (see also Green, Johnstone & Lambert, 2013, forthcoming) and in the case of Goodwin the introduction of this restorativeness had the effect of beginning to reshape the social system within the field of the workplace. In particular, restorativeness leads to more participatory decision-making, which creates a flatter decision-making process. This is not to say that the managerial hierarchy of the organisation was undone but that the introduction of restorativeness influenced the basis on which the staff groups interacted with each other and their shared sense of responsibility for decision-making. This seems an entirely positive outcome and that is certainly how it was expressed to us during the fieldwork. However, there is a deeper, more critical dimension to this dynamic that presents some difficult questions for the restorative movement. As we mentioned at the beginning of this article, it became increasingly common across the course of our fieldwork to hear people both question and remonstrate with others about how restorative they were being. The implication of this is that some people are naturally better placed to be restorative and judge the restorativeness of others. Furthermore, it also implies that restorativeness is an aspirational worldview that is based on an intrinsically, or self-evidently, higher set of values and behaviours, and as a consequence being restorative makes you an intrinsically and self-evidently better sort of person.

The consequence of this within Goodwin was that a shadow, or dual hierarchy, began to emerge that was shaped around restorativeness and ultimately led to the formation of a restorative 'Champion' group just as the fieldwork was drawing to a close. This group of individuals were trained to a higher level and were more experienced and knowledgeable about restorative approaches. Colleagues could ask their advice about the best restorative process to use or even ask them to facilitate a restorative process on their behalf. The broader consequence of this for the restorative movement is that as it grows in stature it increasingly needs to demonstrate its credentials if it is to be taken seriously. Accreditation, benchmarking and standardisation are becoming more and more central to quasi-governmental bodies which have umbrella responsibilities for restorativeness, and these all carry with them the germination of a restorative cultural capital comprised of restorative people with restorative qualifications who are restoratively equipped to do restorative work. This tension presents a real and present danger to the restorative movement, which has its roots in voluntarism, de-professionalisation and participatory engagement of people and communities to solve their own problems (cf Johnstone, 2012).

Even more troubling is the sense that an emerging restorative capital carries with it a hierarchy that contains not only restorative skills and processes but restorative values which are then held in higher regard than other sorts of values. Such is the manner in which social hierarchy is justified and established within Bourdieu's (1984, 1990) critical thought. Developing his concept of symbolic violence, Bourdieu and Wacquant (1993) argue that particular types of symbolic systems such as religion or art are grounded in a tacit acceptance of the natural order of the organisation. For religion this is salvation or holiness and for art it is aesthetic expression. In other words, we believe that the symbolic system is neither arbitrary nor random but constructed to reflect the naturally occurring order of things. A simpler example might be academic marking, where we award a particular percentage to a particular quality of work that then denotes a particular level of excellence (in UK Higher Education 70 per cent is a first class honour, 60 per cent an upper second class honour and so on). Over time, academics, students and employers come to believe that these standards are self-evident, that this is the natural benchmark of academic ability—whereas in fact academic marking is entirely arbitrary and there is no reason beyond the symbolic importance we collectively give it as to why 70 per cent rather than 90 per cent or 30 per cent could not provide an alternative and suitable benchmark. Symbolic violence is therefore the combination of our complicit acceptance of the infliction of something arbitrary as necessary and a claim to a sublimated legitimacy that creates symbolic power that inexorably leads to forms of exploitation and domination that then shape worldly

conditions. Crucially, and of central importance to the point we wish to make here, symbolic violence is premised upon the social actor's sense of *faith* in something taken for granted. It is not deemed either problematic or chosen but something that simply is. It is in this way that the restorative claim to higher values or the accusation that something is not being done restoratively imposes a sense of symbolic violence. We do not stop to think that restorative values might be arbitrary or dominating because they are unconsciously adopted into our cultural perspective as values to which we should aspire (Pranis, 2007).

Pulling together these threads of critical thought leads us to three observations. First, our small study of how people experience restorativeness provides insights not only into one organisation's restorative journey but also into the emergence of a new form of cultural capital—which we have tentatively labelled restorative—and how this can be used to understand both acceptance of and resistance to restorativeness. Second, through this, we can see how a social movement begins to assert itself in terms of how it justifies, formalises and institutionalises its authority. Third, this then leads to a new form of symbolic violence grounded in a new saleable currency of restorative capital and a culturally resonant set of values that are held out as intrinsically better and more desirable for ourselves and society.

## **5. Conclusion: a restorative contradiction?**

We find ourselves at the end of this piece of research with three quite different conclusions. The first is that Goodwin's restorative experiment seems to have met with some success and a lot has been learned during the process about how people experience the introduction of restorativeness. Most people we spoke to were positive about restorativeness and found it useful in both their professional and personal lives, particularly in relation to improved communicative style. Yet perhaps the most significant finding from the fieldwork is that while most staff groups did have a positive experience of restorativeness, the degree of this positiveness varied. We have tried to stand back and turn a more critical eye on this to explore not only the roots of this variation but also the wider implications of it.

Drawing on the prodigious body of ideas produced by Pierre Bourdieu, we feel that we are witnessing the emergence of a new type of cultural capital and symbolic power in the form of the restorative movement. Having taken a unique glimpse at the organic evolution of a restorative system we have sought to understand people's reaction to restorativeness in the context of their predispositions and levels of restorative capital. This in turn has led us to our second conclusion: that if restorative capital continues to consolidate itself, this raises a very

real dilemma for the restorative movement which has at least partially emerged from a fundamental commitment to taking authority out of the hands of professionals and placing it back in the hands of lay members of the community. If an increasingly institutionalised body of restorative professionals claiming symbolic ownership of restorative capital emerges and if they claim an authority others do not have to work restoratively, does this not contradict one of the fundamental tenets of restorativeness?

Further, the inbuilt sense that restorativeness contains a set of naturally higher values that lend those wielding it a symbolic power on which they legitimise themselves and judge others seems problematic. Of course, it is neither the values themselves nor the people espousing them that are the problem. To be clear, we are not suggesting that there is some cynical power-grab being perpetrated by restorative practitioners. Rather, our claim is that beneath the well-intentioned and committed activities of many restorative people and organisations there lies an emerging systemic logic that replaces one system of symbolic power and violence with another. As the movement matures, professionalises and institutionalises, it relies on its values to sublimate legitimacy precisely because these values are the bedrock on which many other religious, humanitarian and ethical worldviews are founded. Consequently, they are easily and naturally absorbed as the basis on which we should conduct ourselves and judge how others conduct themselves.

This leads us to our third and final conclusion: there is a contradiction at the heart of restorativeness. This contradiction is that the restorative movement justifies itself on the grounds that it provides better values and a better process for (re)building relationships and overcoming conflict and harm than more orthodox approaches. The claim to be better is at least partially based on an eschewal of elitist, specialised, technical, exclusionary, intolerant and sometimes inhuman processes that dominate and correspondingly further damage relationships and remove from people the authority to make meaningful decisions about their own lives. Restorativeness is therefore about participation, inclusivity and ownership. Yet it uses these values to assert its own dominance over other social practices and fields of activity. Thus the contradiction contained within restorativeness is that although its legitimacy relies on a better, more egalitarian and participatory set of values, it recreates the conditions for its own domination through its assertion of their superiority. While being installed, these superior values are colonised by those people holding restorative capital who are then in very real danger of inadvertently replacing one form of symbolic violence with another.

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