

Institution: Liverpool Hope University
Unit of Assessment: Social Work and Social Policy
Title of case study: Re-establishing radical social work practice
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>The research has explored the impact of welfare transformations on the activities of social workers on the frontline. A key concern has been to explore the gap between, on the one hand, social work ethical statements and the commitments of practitioners on entering the field and, on the other, the workplace reality of marketization, austerity driven cuts and a range of restrictions placed on workers by new regulatory regimes. The research explores the potential, internationally, for a new 'engaged' social work practice that draws service users, carers, academics, and practitioners together in defence of good quality, value driven social work.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Professor Lavalette has established himself as a well-known critic of the present social work business. He was one of the authors of an on-line 'Manifesto for a new engaged practice' which was printed in hardcopy in 2007 within the book <i>International Social Work and the Radical Tradition</i>. The Manifesto has been widely quoted and has been translated into Greek, Cantonese, Spanish, Russian and Japanese.</p> <p>The Manifesto argued three things. First, that good social work helps people to address a range of problems and traumas in their lives. Good social work is, therefore a 'profession worth fighting for'. Second, most entrants to social work are drawn to it as a 'helping' profession committed to a range of values associated with meeting human need, social justice and equality (values that are all enshrined in the international definition of social work). But that third, the growing reality of welfare transformations, marketization and an increasingly 'neo-liberal' social policy regime produces a 'disconnect' within the profession where work expectations and requirements increasingly clash with the professional and ethical commitments of practitioners in the field.</p> <p>Lavalette's work therefore exposes the 'gap' between the value base and ethical commitments of practitioners and the restrictions placed upon frontline workers by present social work regimes and policy requirements. These concerns have also led him to explore 'alternative social work futures'.</p> <p>Lavalette's research has included writings on the impact of marketization on children's and adult services. In 2009 a short book '<i>Social Work After baby P</i>' saw a joint authored piece by Lavalette commented upon by a range of academics, practitioners, service users and national trade union figures. The aim of the book was to open up debate about the social and public causes that were part of the hidden story behind the death of Peter Connelly. The success of the book and its unusual style (of bringing academics, practitioners and service users together to debate key topics) has now been taken up in a series published by Policy Press (with Lavalette as one of the series editors). Six books have been planned (on poverty, ethics, personalisation, children's services, mental health and adult social care) with Lavalette co-authoring the book on the marketisation of adult social care.</p> <p>Lavalette was also centrally involved in organising a conference to mark the 35th anniversary of Bailey and Brake's classic book 'Radical Social Work' and produced an edited collection <i>Radical Social Work Today: Social Work at the Crossroads</i> (Policy Press) which drew links between radical social work of the 1970s and what has sometimes been termed 'second wave radicalism' in social work today.</p> <p>Lavalette's own work would question the notion of the present being a 'second wave' of radicalism. One of the themes in his work is that there has always been a 'radical kernel' within social work. To establish this he has produced a number of books that look at radical examples of social work</p>

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internationally and historically. Further he has recently developed the concept of 'popular social work' to account for examples where communities and social movements address individual and collective trauma in innovative and dynamic ways – in the process pointing out potential social work developments and alternative approaches to social problems.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

I. Ferguson, M. Lavalette, and G. Mooney, *Rethinking Welfare: A critical perspective* (London, Sage) (2002)

I. Ferguson, M. Lavalette, & E. Whitmore, (eds) *Globalisation, Global Justice and Social Work* (London, Routledge) (2005)

M. Lavalette and I Ferguson (eds) *International Social Work and the Radical Tradition* (Birmingham, Venture Press) (2007)

Ferguson, I and Lavalette, M *Social Work After Baby P: Issues, debates and alternatives* (Liverpool, LHU Press) (2009)

Lavalette, M (ed) *Radical Social Work Today: Social Work at the Crossroads* (Bristol, Policy) (2011)

Lavalette, M & Ioakimidis, V (eds) *Social Work in Extremis* (Policy Press, Bristol) (2011)

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Lavalette has been asked to present his research to a range of meetings, conferences and gatherings of social work practitioners both nationally and internationally. He was the keynote speaker to BASW's conference in 2009 (in Liverpool), he has spoken to adult and emergency team practitioners in the North West of England about the impact of social policy changes on social work regimes (2010, Manchester). He is a regular speaker at the MerseyCare annual conference to mental health workers and service users (he has spoken at each of the conferences from 2010-2013). He has also addressed national practitioner groups across the globe including keynote addresses to the annual social work conferences in Spain (2009) and Portugal (2010), to a group of over 100 radical practitioners in Hong Kong (2010), to practitioners in the Espirito Santo state, Brazil (2011), and to practitioners in Ireland (2013). In 2013 he gave a keynote address to the trade union led European Anti-Poverty Network meeting in Lisbon.

His reputation as an engaging speaker of interest to practitioners has led to invitations to speak to the Social Work Brain Injury Group, where he was the 2012 keynote. In November of the same year he was the keynote speaker at the launch of the practitioner led UK-Palestine Social Work network organised by BASW members.

His work was central to the creation of the Social Work Action Network (SWAN). Formed in 2006, SWAN is an organisation of social work academics, practitioners, service users, carers and students. SWAN has held a national conference since 2006. In 2009 and 2012 these events were held at Liverpool Hope University. In 2012 and 2013 the SWAN national conferences drew 500 people to the events – making them the largest social work conferences in Britain in these years. Lavalette has been the national co-ordinator of SWAN since its inception. More recently SWAN groups have formed in Canada, Australia, Hong Kong, Ireland and Greece. The SWAN network internationally has grown directly out of Lavalette's work.

SWAN works closely with other practitioner and service user organisations. It is formally recognised by the trade unions Unison and Unite and has formal recognition agreements with DPAC (Disabled people Against the cuts), Autism Rights (UK), Shaping Lives and RAPAR (a campaigning asylum rights organisation). Lavalette has regular meetings with each of these organisations to organise joint research and campaign work.

It was his central role within SWAN that led to him being profiled in the Guardian newspaper as a 'radical voice' of note in social work.

Recently Lavalette has become the series editor of a new initiative that aims to address 'critical

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and radical social work debates'. Launched in 2013 and published by Policy Press this series of books invite a lead author to write on a relevant topic and then includes pieces by practitioners, service users, carers and academics. At the heart is an attempt to provide a location where radical conceptions of social work can be debated – doing so in a way that actively includes practitioners and service users.

2013 also saw the publication of a new international journal Critical and Radical Social Work, with Lavalette as one of the two editors. The journal includes space, within each edition, for 'Voices from the Frontline'. In its first year practitioners contributed from Hungry, Greece, Ireland, Malta, Hong Kong, Turkey, South Africa and Spain.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. 'Care in the global community' Clare Horton (The Guardian 25 July 2012) <http://www.guardian.co.uk/social-care-network/2012/jul/25/care-in-global-community?INTCMP=SRCH>
2. 'Time is of the Essence' Helen Carter (The Guardian 11 March 2009) <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2009/mar/11/social-work-action-network?INTCMP=SRCH>
3. Letter from Ciarrai Ni Ghoilla Coisle (Kerry Cuskelly), National Co-ordinator, Social Worker SWAN Ireland thanking Professor Lavalette for his keynote address to the inaugural SWAN Ireland conference.
4. Letter from Dan Morton Social Worker, London and Coordinator of London SWAN. Emphasising the centrality of Professor Lavalette's work for the growth of the 'new' radical social work.
5. Letter from Rupert Franklin Social Worker, Organising Committee, BASW Palestine-UK Social Work Network thanking Professor Lavalette for his keynote address at the founding conference of the Palerstine-UK Social Work Network
6. Letter received from Emad Lilo Training Officer Mersey Care, Liverpool thanking Professor Lavalette foir his continuing support for the Merseycare conference.
7. Letter received from Elena Badallo Presidenta del X Congreso de la Asociación Española de Trabajo Social y Salud. Thanking Professor Lavalette for his keynote to Spanish social workers