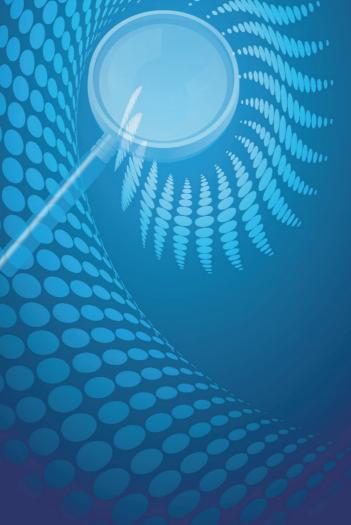# A Journal of
Youth Work

Research and Positive Practices in Work with Young People

The Journal of Youth Work: research and positive practices in work with young people

The Journal of Youth Work provides a forum for critical reflection on practice and for the dissemination of research that contributes to the development of youth work and to understanding the conditions in which young people live, rest, work and play. The Journal of Youth Work is concerned with the transfer of knowledge about issues that affect young people and about analysis of the circumstances that enable them to flourish. The Journal of Young Work provides a forum for academics and practitioners to pose problems, consider policy and practice, and create hopeful multidisciplinary conversations. At its core, the Journal of Youth Work seeks to reverse age-based discrimination, to ensure that young people thrive and are regarded in a positive light by each other and by the rest of society. The Journal is therefore concerned with, for example, education, health, housing and policy fields, including interests in social and cultural capital, social psychology and a variety of other contemporary research and practice matters. Drawing often, but not exclusively from Scottish experience, the Journal is published on-line three times a year and contains refereed articles, research papers, policy analysis and book reviews. It is addressed to academic specialists, researchers, practitioners in a range of disciplines and to those involved in making policies affecting young people.

Editorial Board

Books for review should be sent to the Editors, Annette Coburn or Brian McGinley, Division of Community Education, University of Strathclyde, 76 Southbrae Drive, Glasgow G13 1PP.

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Editorial

Towards the end of last year the editors of the Scottish Youth Issues Journal and YouthLink Scotland, our partners in the production of the Journal, met to discuss its viability and future direction. We are pleased that, following a series of meetings, we have now agreed on publishing an academic journal that will be produced three times each year, as a refreshed online publication. The new title, A Journal of Youth Work: research and positive practices in work with young people, will be hosted on YouthLink Scotland's website for six months, with back copies available at the University of Strathclyde website, Community Education Division. The new Journal will focus on examining issues and practices that contribute to the development of youth work within dedicated youth work settings, but will also examine practices across changing and emerging contexts, where the values and principles of informal educational youth work prevail in working with young people.

These new arrangements provide an effective way of disseminating research and practice information in a way that is both accessible and sustainable. Our colleagues at YouthLink Scotland will continue to produce the journal to a high specification that facilitates access and, when downloaded, provides a printable version that is exactly as it would appear in a paper edition.

We continue to seek and support authors to publish their research findings, practice explorations and book reviews. The procedures for submission are exactly as before and we remain committed to providing youth workers and others from across a variety of disciplinary areas, with an opportunity to exchange knowledge, understanding and ideas that are relevant to contemporary practices in work with young people. We are therefore, pleased to introduce our first three contributions to the Journal of Youth Work.

Dr Judith Bessant is a frequent commentator on the rights and entitlements of young people and in this article she examines the prejudices and value frameworks that inform policy and practice development. Judith questions current generalizations of young people that perpetuate a socially constructed 'youth of to-day' and argues the need to reality-check the 'evidence' that is currently the foundation of age-based discrimination.

Prof. Trudi Cooper examines contemporary approaches to youth participation and how a social capital approach might be conducive to the possibility of more explicit links to democracy. By exploring well known models of participation and examining the implications for youth work, Trudi develops ideas that are of interest to anyone involved in facilitating more effective participation.

Following on from the media obsession with youth gangs, Dr Ross Deucher writes about a pilot study of young people who are living in some of the most deprived areas of Glasgow. He is particularly interested in how their experiences impact on the generation of social capital. By examining a youth work case study, Ross identified how youth work might assist in the re-building of social capital and found that this had implications for future practices and highlighted the need for more research in this area.

We are also pleased to include two book reviews that will be of interest to the Journal of Youth Work readers. First, Gordon Mackie affirms 'Community Development in Theory and Practice' (Craig, Popple & Shaw, 2008), as a thought provoking text and landmark publication that reflects on community development theory and practice over 30 years of publishing the Community Development Journal. Then, Anne Ryan recommends, 'Informal Learning in Youth Work' (Batsleer, 2008) as essential reading for anyone involved in youth and community work, but also across other disciplinary fields. As experienced practitioners and colleagues who are research active, we know that neither Gordon nor Anne provide such affirmation lightly, read their full reviews for more information.

And finally… We hope that the refreshed Journal of Youth Work will continue to receive feedback from readers and contributors alike, we look forward to hearing from you.

Annette Coburn and Brian McGinley
Editors

URBAN YOUTH CULTURES AND THE RE-BUILDING OF SOCIAL CAPITAL: ILLUSTRATIONS FROM A PILOT STUDY IN GLASGOW
by Dr Ross Deuchar

'They take you places and we can trust them ...':

Abstract

The demonization of youth in urban communities is on the increase globally, and the recent media obsession with youth gang culture has added to this moral panic. This paper examines evidence from a small qualitative pilot study of young people in some of the most deprived urban communities in Glasgow, Scotland. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with disaffected young people between the ages of 14-19 years as a means of exploring their experience of urban phenomena and the impact this experience has on the generation of social capital. The findings illustrate that the young people feel stigmatised, victimised and excluded from urban space, and that territorial issues restrict their social mobility. Although gang membership provides some young people with a source of bonding social capital, the reality of their lives is one devoid of trust, reciprocity and agency. The paper presents evidence from a case study of a new community-based youth work initiative in Glasgow and the impact it has on re-building social capital among young marginalised men. The paper ends with implications for practice and suggestions for future research.

Introduction

Urban youth is currently the focus of suspicion and concern, and young people are increasingly alienated from the communities in which they live (MacDonald, 1997; Kelly, 2003; Deuchar, 2009). Indeed, some have argued that there is a 'moral panic' about young people's apparent disengagement with public life and the alleged rise in anti-social behaviour (Cohen, 1972; Waiton, 2001). Cognisant of this moral panic, there has been a growing interest in wider claims about the depletion of social capital within urban communities (Putnam, 2000). Building on previous, related research (Deuchar and Holligan, 2008) and as a prologue to more substantial research in this area (Deuchar, 2009), this paper thus draws upon both theoretical and small-scale empirical research as a means of examining the relationship between urban youth cultures and the building and depletion of social capital.

Social capital theories and young people's behaviour

Although social capital theory has been around since the early part of the 20th Century (Hanifan, 1916), it is recognised that it is still a contested concept (Baron *et al.,* 2000; Catts, 2007; Deuchar, 2009). Bourdieu (1986: 243) defined it as a resource 'made up of social obligations ('connections') which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital'. Others believe that social capital has at its heart the need for networking as a means of facilitating community-based action (Coleman, 1990; Putnam, 2000; Field, 2003; AERS, 2004). Indicators of social capital have been outlined by authors such as Ruston (2002) and Leonard and Onyx (2004), which include perceptions about community structures and characteristics; civic participation, control and self-efficacy; social interaction, networks and support; and trust, reciprocity and social cohesion (Ruston, 2002; AERS, 2004). Putnam (2000) focuses on a distinction between two basic forms of social capital: bridging and bonding. While bonding social capital tends to reinforce exclusive identities, maintain homogeneity and mobilise solidarity, bridging social capital tends to broaden identities and reciprocity, bringing together people across diverse social divisions. The common argument is that young people need to move from *bonding* to *bridging* networks, where they transcend their immediate social circumstances as a means of equipping them for broader social inclusion (Putnam, 2000).

However, contrary to Putnam's views, it has been argued that deprived communities may benefit most from having closely bonded groups (Bassani, 2007). Conversely, others have highlighted that young people in these communities can often generate intense in-group ties which result in outsiders being rejected (Leonard and Onyx, 2004). This may be a result of deficits in social capital in other parts of their lives, where dysfunctional family lives combine with school disaffection, unemployment and exclusion from urban space. Indeed, Pope (2006, cited in Catts, 2007) argues that associational and community networks can include the formation of youth gangs, particularly in stigmatised urban communities. However, it could be argued that gang membership produces positive forms of bonding social capital for some young people living in such communities.

Territoriality, gangs and urban youth

The current concern about gang culture is a symptom of the wider anxiety about anti-social youth, and this interest and concern is manifest in the British media

(see, for instance, Forrest, 2008; Leask, 2008). It has been claimed that there has been a recent increase in youth gang membership in Britain among younger adolescents and an increasing involvement in more serious crimes (Bennett and Holloway, 2004; Morton, 2003; Thompson, 2004). However, we must recognise that the word 'gang' is a highly contested term, and that the criteria necessary to classify someone as a gang member are debatable. Some writers have defined gangs as durable, street-oriented youth networking tools which engage in some form of illegal activity (Van Gemert and Fleisher, 2005). Others argue that gangs are characterised by behaviour such as milling, movement through space and conflict which results in solidarity and attachment to a local territory (Thrasher, 1927).

Territoriality can be defined as a 'spatial strategy to effect, influence or control resources or people, by controlling area' (Westwood, 1990, cited in Watt and Stenson, 1998: 252). Further, the term may be used to describe a 'spectrum of behaviour that has street-corner activity at one end and violent or delinquent behaviour at the other' (Wallace and Coburn, 2002: 76). Some writers claim that territorial gang membership is brought about by the search for youth identity and by the expression of aggression, often based on narrowly-defined views of masculinity (see, for instance, Murray, 2000; McDowell, 2003). Although it has often been claimed that gangs are male-dominated and that females tend to play only a subordinate role, some research suggests that females do form their own gangs and that many compete with males in gang fighting related to territorial issues (Campbell, 1991).

Recent reports in Glasgow, Scotland, have focused on the rise of younger gangs and that the claims that, unlike before, youth members often find themselves 'on the edge of organised crime' (Thompson, 2004: 397). However, others have challenged these views, arguing that gang culture is no more serious than ever it was. For example, Davies (2007) highlights that the majority of Glasgow gang members in the 1920s and 30s were aged between 17 and 21, regularly used dangerous weapons and were involved in racketeering and property crime. For young Glasgow boys, interest in gang membership may be driven by the Glasgow culture of 'self-assertion and rebellious independence against authority as a means of attaining masculinity' (Patrick, 1973: 170). Indeed it may be that, where youngsters have failed to succeed in education or in the workplace, the gang provides an important vehicle for bringing about a sense of inclusion and

community identity and may create denser layers of social capital in either a positive or a negative sense (Deuchar, 2009).

The Research Study

This small-scale pilot study aimed to explore young people's experience of a range of urban phenomena and the impact this experience has on the generation of social capital. It was focused on young people who have become disenfranchised by educational failure, unemployment and poverty and who could be viewed as being part of, or on the margins of, the so-called NEET (not in employment, education and training) group. The research sought to examine these young people's perceptions about the social and community support structures in place within their communities; the territorial issues and how they impacted upon them; the current public perceptions about youth and youth gang culture, and the subsequent implications for social trust and cohesion. It was felt that the implementation of this pilot study would provide the researcher with an opportunity to explore themes which could be developed more fully in later, more substantial research.

Drawing upon the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2006 (SIMD), the fieldwork was focused on six urban communities in Glasgow, each of which has high indicators of deprivation in terms of local income, employment, skills and training. Data was collected in four voluntary youth organisations and two secondary schools spanning across the six communities. Youth workers and teachers were asked to identify populations of young persons (aged 14-19) who were either part of, or at risk of becoming part of, the NEET group and voluntary participation was then sought. Initial open-ended interviews with community leaders and teachers in each of the venues were combined with informal interaction with young people, in order to build rapport and establish trust. This was followed by the implementation of semi-structured interviews with twenty young persons (aged 14-19 years), seventeen of which were male and three of which were female (thus representing the gender imbalance which currently characterises the NEET group in Scotland). Through a grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), the data was coded and emerging themes were analysed.

In the sections which follow, the key themes emerging from the analysis of interview data will be presented. Key quotations that were seen as being

representative of participants' views will be highlighted. Thereafter, the indicators of social capital will be used as a lens through which to explore the participant responses. Finally, a case study of one new diversionary project which sought to combat territorial issues will be presented. We will highlight why the young people found their experiences within this initiative significant and, in our analysis, will examine the relationship between these experiences and the social capital indicators generated by recent research (AERS, 2004).

Views on urban localities

The majority of youngsters associated Glasgow primarily with drink, drugs and violence. Many of the young participants felt that drinking had become a hobby because there was 'nothing else to do'. Lack of facilities for young people was a commonly recurring theme, and several participants described their neighbourhoods as 'ghettos'. Some of the young people highlighted the stigmatism that arose from simply being young, and felt that members of the wider public were too quick to judge them. One young man summed up the views of many (Deuchar, 2009):

> *I think some of them… when they walk past you, they're intimidated because we're all thingmyin' aboot… shoutin' n' that… I think some of them get paranoid when they see us… because of the stuff they've seen on the telly.* (Gordon*, 16)

These views were also expressed by the three females within our sample; one sixteen-year-old girl in the south side of the city highlighted that everyone in her family and her wider community felt she had a 'bad attitude' and that there was nothing for her to do except 'walk aboot the streets' at night. Thus it seemed that the young people generally had low opinions about their local communities and the levels of social networks and community structures in place to support them (Furedi, 2002; Ruston, 2002; AERS, 2004). They were clearly conscious of a negative perception of youth, and the feelings of alienation and social distance between generations that this encouraged (Waiton, 2001).

Territoriality and gang culture

Almost all of the youth participants referred to the impact of territorial issues within their urban communities. Some young people admitted that they were

actively involved in youth gangs and described the sense of 'buzz' that emerged from participating in gang fighting. These participants had drifted into gangs as a source of excitement and as a remedy for boredom (reflecting earlier findings by Murray, 2000), and alcohol was a major stimulus for engaging in street fights. Youngsters talked about a sense of confinement that arose from being unable to walk into opposing housing schemes because of the fear of violence; one conversation with two young men in the south side of Glasgow illustrates this well:

> *It's just like trying to go down to (housing scheme X) or something, people try and chase you and everything.* (Willie, 16)
>
> *What and like if they caught you then ….?* (Interviewer)
>
> *They'd batter you.* (Joe, 16)
>
> *Does that not make you feel under stress?* (Interviewer)
>
> *It makes you feel paranoid, a bit.* (Willie, 16)

The three females in the sample agreed with these views. However, although they admitted that they would not feel safe going in to rival gang territories at night because of their relationships with boys who were gang members, they also felt that young males were at greater risk of danger then they were:

> *Boys… fight and lassies don't really, but you still don't feel safe in other schemes.* (Amy, 16)

The sense of limited social mobility often restricted the young people's participation in wider hobbies and interests:

> *Obviously you wish you could… walk up the street and go and play fitba' at the complex up there instead of getting chased right back.* (Paul, 16)

Others talked about the fact that territorial issues prevented them from going for job interviews, engaging in training opportunities or visiting family members. Some admitted that they would carry weapons with them if they had to walk through a rival territory; while the 'lock-back' knife was a popular means of protection, others tended to carry weapons that were less likely to draw attention from the police (Deuchar, 2009):

> *I'd probably take somethin' with… but I wouldnae want to take a blade in case you walked into the polis… I'd probably take a golf club and a ball wi' me.* (Stu, 17)

Several participants described the sense of bonding that emerged from the gang, which in some cases resulted in the emergence of dense layers of social capital:

It shows you who your real pals are, who's gonna be there for you (Stu, 17)

It shows you who you can f**** rely on (Barry, 17)

Stigmatism and victimisation

It was clear, then, that many of the young people drifted into gangs at some point during their adolescent years for a variety of reasons, including the search for power, excitement and status (Patrick, 1973; Murray, 2000; Canham, 2002). The resulting emphasis on territoriality led to a sense of confinement and a restricted sense of social mobility for young people (Winton, 2005). However, of more concern was the young people's inability to leave the stigma of gang culture behind: at the time of the interviews many of the youngsters no longer associated themselves with gang membership:

I'm not (in a gang) anymore… naebody is, we don't even fight anymore, man. Obviously we fought wi' people before but we don't fight wi' them now. If we see them we'd be fightin' but we just don't go looking for a fight or anythin' anymore. (Hutchie, 19)

I stopped 'cause I started goin' to college, 'cause if you're got a criminal record, you cannae go. (Scott, 18)

In spite of this, the experience of being wrongly accused of gang membership or participating in gang violence was a common one. Several young men explained that, if they were seen to be hanging around on the streets with more than two other people, the police and wider members of the local community assumed they were a 'gang'. But, in many cases, they felt that they had left the gang culture behind and were simply hanging around on the streets in friendship groups, having a laugh. Females also felt that they were wrongly accused of being in gangs:

I hang aboot wi' lassies so people think I'm a part o' a gang but it's just lassies. (Amy, 16)

Indeed, one young girl described her perceived feelings of victimisation that arose from being moved on from a youth gathering, because she was part of the *Mosher* sub-culture:

> *We've been banned from Borders… you know the Mosher people. We haven't done anything, right, and they banned us from Borders, Like, see all the people that go to the Sub Club and Cube, they're all at MacDonalds and they're all like stabbing each other and we are just standing about Borders, you know meeting people, and they banned us from it and they have like the police coming around. Sorry but it annoys me. And they don't give us anywhere else to stand.* (Emma, 17)

Some described the way in which judgements were commonly made about their style of clothing, and if they were wearing tracksuits then it was often assumed they were part of a gang. Indeed, this feeling of perceived victimisation was a common finding among the participants: several young men talked about getting handcuffed and searched by the police just because they were hanging about in a group with more than two other boys:

> *You get pulled up by the polis every two minutes for nothin'* (Gordon, 16)
> *They also ask you what you're doing, have you been drinking or anything like that… it's always when you're in a group they're going tae dae that because they don't want any trouble.* (Danny, 16)

There was thus a lack of trust among the participants towards the police and a common feeling that police officers made unfair judgements of young people, based on where they lived, who they hung around with or which youth subculture they belonged to (reflecting earlier findings by Fine *et al.,* 2003; Kelly, 2003; Waiton, 2001).

Discussion of findings

Social capital is generated through trustful, reciprocal relationships and through creating social connections as a means of facilitating collective agency (Coleman, 1990; Putnam, 2000; Field, 2003; AERS, 2004; Leonard and Onyx, 2004; Deuchar, 2009). It is clear from our data that many young participants felt that that there was a lack of positive, supportive social and political structures around them in Glasgow's housing schemes. The current social and political tendency towards expelling youth from public space had clearly resulted in the young people feeling that they had no place of their own for social networking and recreation (Robinson, 2000). Young people felt victimised by authority figures and this resulted in a deficit in reciprocity and trust between generations of adults and youths (Ruston, 2002; AERS, 2004).

For some, membership of youth gangs created some opportunities for dense, durable layers of social capital to emerge through social bonding within urban housing schemes, and young men were particularly vulnerable to seeking an identity in this way. However, gang membership resulted in a sense of confinement, the constant threat of violence and a sense of social distance from other communities (Leonard and Onyx, 2004). There were young people who strived to avoid becoming involved in the gang culture but whose lives were still affected by it because of the lack of social mobility that territoriality brought about. Youngsters often felt trapped in the confinement of their housing schemes, and this limited their sense of trust and agency (Leonard and Onyx, 2004). However, it was evident that the root cause of the gang culture was the inter-connecting and cumulative forms of deprivation to which the young people were exposed, including poverty, dysfunctional home lives, educational failure and unemployment. Gang culture thus provided emotional security for many, but also created a new set of challenges related to the generation of social capital (Patrick, 1973; Waiton, 2001). Those young people who had left gang membership behind or, indeed, had never been members of gangs, felt stigmatised because of issues connected to their locality and the current tendency towards the institutional mistrust of youth and the demonization of their subcultures in urban space (Thornton, 1995; MacDonald, 1997; Kelly, 2003).

Case study of a new diversionary initiative

One of the housing schemes with a high rate of multiple deprivation in Glasgow is situated north of the River Clyde and just to the east of the city centre. The main youth gang associated with the area has a long history of territorial rivalry with members of the neighbouring housing scheme. *New Frontiers* is a registered charity which was established in the 1980s and has been involved in designing and implementing initiatives to combat territorial issues in the east end of Glasgow for many years. One particular project aims to divert young people's attention from territorial issues by encouraging them to become involved in recreational activities with other young people, including those from 'rival' housing schemes. Young people are provided with informal opportunities to meet and socialise with other young people and to participate in a range of sport and leisure activities.

In November 2008, a new version of the project was launched in the focused housing scheme described above. The project was coordinated by 'Kenny', a full-time youth worker who has extensive experience of delivering initiatives of this type in both schools and community education venues. The project began with a long period of detached streetwork, where Kenny and several youth work colleagues made contact with young people and encouraged them to participate in a range of new diversionary initiatives centred on sport, physical and recreational activity which ran on Friday and Saturday evenings in venues around Glasgow. One young man, Scott, was identified to *New Frontiers* by local police as having a long history of gang involvement, although he had recently become engaged in a full-time vocational education course at a local FE college. Youth workers from *New Frontiers* focused on developing a strong relationship with this particular young man over a period of several months, and ultimately recruited him as a junior youth worker with a particular responsibility for encouraging other local young people to participate in the new initiative.

By March 2009, a large group of local young men between the ages of 14 and 19 years had become regular participants in the recreational activities, and a Wednesday evening youth club was established in the young people's housing scheme. The youth club created an opportunity for the young men to explore the characteristics of teamwork, behavioural issues and conflict resolution and the young people were encouraged to take ownership, establishing effective ground-rules for the club and considering how they could work towards positive destinations. Focused sessions included an anti-gang awarenesss workshop, where youngsters explored the consequences of gang involvement and the range of alternative choices available to them. Interviews were also arranged for the young men with the army and a range of community regeneration agencies, and several participated in the research interviews described earlier in this paper.

Between April and May 2009, further interviews were conducted with a cross-section of the young men during the Wednesday evening youth club sessions, as a means of exploring whether the initiative had any impact on their social capital. The young men described the way in which they had first become aware of the new initiative run by *New Frontiers*. It was evident that Kenny's informal immersion into local youth culture had first inspired the boys to participate, and that Scott had played an important and successful role in engaging others:

Me and Mark started talkin' to Kenny 'cos we all went to that mad fitba' thing, and we seen Kenny and he said, 'how would you feel if I got a wee 5-a-side thing booked for you?' and we started goin' to Laser Quest and go kartin'. (Johnny, 14)

*I was walkin' about wi' Kenny and talkin' to a few of the boy*s (Hutchie, 19)

I was talkin' to Kenny and he said did I know a few boys, and to see what they'd like to do… like, go go-kartin' and Laser Quest and stuff like that. (Scott, 18)

Once the youngsters were drawn in through detached streetwork, the value of the diversionary initiatives for maintaining their interest and motivation was beyond question:

There's been a couple of other things like this but it wasn't as good as this. They didn't take us to places, they just let us play pool or on the computers. (Mark, 14)

The boys highlighted the enjoyment they had received from taking part in recreational activities on Friday and Saturday nights. They highlighted the real value of these initiatives in terms of the opportunities they provided for moving away from the pressures associated with their own housing schemes and the temptation to become involved again in gang fighting:

Getting' away from this scheme… it gives you somethin' to dae and gets us off the streets. Instead of fightin', we come here. (Davie, 16)

It's got the computers and stuff, and just sittin' wi' your pals and not out fightin'… they take you places and you get away fae this scheme. (Scott, 18)

It was evident that the mentoring approach within the project enhanced young people's confidence, self esteem and trust. In particular, the young men highlighted the relationship they had with Kenny as an important factor for wanting to participate in the activities and they clearly saw him as a supporter, counsel and guide:

With Kenny an' that you get a pure buzz – a bit of a laugh… He doesnae tell you what to dae… he doesnae try and get you chucked oot… he tries to help you. (Mark, 14)

The boys were asked to identify what it was that made them trust and respect Kenny and the other youth workers on the programme. Their responses highlighted the time and energy they spent taking them to new places and signposting them to organisations which give support with employment, health and leisure:

> *All of them are sound – Kenny, Cathy, Stevie n'all that… 'cause they take you places and we can trust them. We can't trust the police.* (Davie, 16)

> He (Kenny) tries to help you… he's settin' stuff up for us n'all, like that *Impact Arts*… he took us down to that and got us an interview…
> (Hutchie, 19)

The young men were clearly of the mind that they wanted the new youth club and the diversionary initiatives to continue. They were hopeful that, by continuing to participate in the club, new opportunities might arise for paid employment. Indeed, further evidence of the young people's desire to engage in this way was evident at the end of April 2009, when a careers advisor attended the youth club and attracted the highest turnout of attendees to date.

Conclusions

It has been argued that communities which are rich in social capital are ones where people feel supported by local facilities and feel safe, integrated and empowered to engage in local issues. They are also communities where socialisation networks are characterised by high levels of trust and shared social values (Ruston, 2002; AERS, 2004: Leonard and Onyx, 2004). In Glasgow's deprived housing schemes, it seems that young people's experiences are far removed from this illustration. Our pilot data illustrates that the young people were often victims of a 'culture of fear' (Furedi, 2002) which served to demonise youth and exclude them from public space (MacDonald, 1997; Robinson, 2000; Kelly, 2003). The apparent lack of youth facilities and negative social perceptions of youth was reducing the young people's confidence in public services and opportunities for building reciprocal relationships with other community members. For some, the cumulative effects of poverty, deprivation and exclusion of youth led to an identity with youth gangs and these became vehicles for achieving denser layers of bonding social capital (Putnam, 2000). However the territorial issues which were evident within the housing schemes restricted the

building of wider socialisation networks and resulted in low levels of trust, agency and feelings of safety (Leonard and Onyx, 2004). For those who moved away from gang membership or who had never become engage with it to begin with, the perceived stigmatism and victimisation from authority figures led to further deficits in reciprocity, trust and youth empowerment.

Our case study illustrates the enormous potential that youth work has for re-building social capital among those who have experienced this social and institutional mistrust of youth (Kelly, 2003). McGinley and Watson (2008) highlight that young people value meaningful, mature relationships with youth workers, and this was at the heart of the project being implemented in the east end of Glasgow. First and foremost, the lead youth worker ensured that he deepened the young men's social contacts through the combined experiences of detached streetwork and diversionary activities that were of genuine interest to them. The medium of sport was drawn upon as a means of enabling personal and social development among the young people, and an initial catalyst for deepening their networks and addressing social issues (Sandford *et al.,* 2006). The appointment of a junior youth worker from the young people's own peer group combined with the opportunity to have a voice in the setting up of the youth club enabled the building of positive citizenship and the generation of social capital among the participants. For the young men participating in the project, the biggest impact came from the opportunity to escape from the oppression of their local housing schemes to participate in recreational sport. The mentoring approach adopted by the youth workers clearly resulted in increased levels of confidence in public services, and the young men became more inclined to seek out opportunities for recreation, training and employment (AERS, 2004). Most of all, their levels of trust increased and reciprocal relationships therefore emerged.

Although the evidence outlined in this paper has been derived from small-scale case study research, the findings suggest that the current social and political demonisation of youth has led to increasing levels of stigmatism about young people hanging around in groups on the streets of Glasgow. And yet, the street is a very important source of youth development, particularly for those who lack the stability of a supportive family or a permanent source of employment income. The lack of urban youth space and facilities combined with the lack of

opportunity to develop positive relationships with institutional figures and wider community members is impacting negatively on young people's social capital. Youth work which combines a mentoring approach with opportunities for engaging in recreational sport clearly plays an important role in tackling social exclusion and building social capital, enabling young people to gain a voice and a recognised place in society (Scottish Executive, 2007). However, one recommendation from this study is the urgent need for closer consultation between youth services, local residents, young people and the police in Glasgow's housing schemes, as a means of developing more positive relationships and localised trust (Nayak, 2003).

The case study outlined in this paper is focused exclusively on the impact of one initiative in one area of Glasgow, and is gender specific. More research of this kind is needed, in order to explore the extent to and ways in which community-based educational initiatives may generate social capital among wider groups of young marginalised people.

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* Please note all names (of individuals and organisations) are pseudonyms

THE POLITICS OF SCARY YOUTH: POLICY MAKING AND PREJUDICE
by Dr Judith Bessant

> *There is an old Chinese parable about a man who discovered his prize axe was missing. He assumed it stolen and quickly formed the view that his neighbour's son was the thief. After all he was young, had plenty of time on his hands and he knew where the axe was kept. The more he looked at that boy, the stronger his conviction that he was the thief. After all, the young man walked like a criminal, he talked like a delinquent and his shaven head was a sure sign of criminality. A few days later the man found his axe behind the shed where he left it. At once he noticed how the boy no longer looked like a thief, and was actually was quite a nice youngster.*

My mother has this 'thing' about red car drivers. Whenever there is a misdemeanour involving a car, she goes off her head blaming the world's troubles on red car drivers who are typically selfish, male, inconsiderate and a danger to all safe and responsible people. Then one day, much to the surprise of the family she purchased a new car – a red car. The boys in the family thought it was a great joke and took 'the mickey' relentlessly. However, as she explained, her new car was not actually red, it was maroon – which meant she did not fit the category of red drivers.

And then there's Bob, a 75 year-old man who always has a tale to tell about 4WD drivers. According to Bob 4WD drivers are reckless, typically middle-class, middle-aged women who hog the road, live in affluent suburbs and can always be found dropping their kids off at private schools while parked right across the pedestrian crossing.

Then there are the BMW drivers and we all know about them. They are arrogant typically male, they drive as if they own the road and deserve all they get in respect to traffic penalties.

And we won't talk about Volvo drivers…

This article is about the prejudices that many adults have about young people, and how those prejudices inform public discussion and youth policies. In having this focus, I am not suggesting that public discussion and policy making on issues like young peoples use of alcohol and other substances, or appropriate road laws to tackle the problem of unacceptably high rates of fatal car crashes involving young people can be reduced back to a problem of adult prejudices. There are problems like the fact that novice drivers are disproportionately represented in car crash statistics than experienced drivers (Ferguson, Teoh and McCartt 2007, pp. 137-145). There is no doubt there are serious issues that need to be effectively addressed: equally there are prejudices. As always the problems is how we tell the difference between having an accurate and objective grasp of what is happening and when we are relying on prejudices. And, while drawing this distinction can sometimes be difficult, it is none-the-less important to do.

The second matter I draw attention to the debate about the value frameworks we use when we think about how to do the best for young people. It is argued here that a tendency exists to rely on certain prejudices about young people that are then used to rationalize prohibitions and other similar responses. In this paper I consider briefly the choices between certain ideas regarding our duty of care to children and ideas about the need to ensure they develop in all the ways they possibly can.

Finally, while this article relies on Australian material there is sufficient commonality between the Australian experience of prejudice and youth policy and in most western countries for the material presented to have immediate international relevance.

I begin with the issue of prejudice.

Prejudices and Young People

Prejudices play an important role in what people know about the world. On the one hand we can say that prejudices are harmful ideas or dispositions. This is because to have a prejudice is simply to have a belief or a claim to know something

- that is not based on evidence, and
- that typically involves making a generalisation about complex issues.

We often rely on and construct prejudices about groups of people.

Someone for example will claim that 'Black Africans' are great track and field athletes, but terrible swimmers and score poorly on IQ tests. Or we might say that women are emotional and are poor at mathematics. To have a prejudice is to have a view or belief about a group that:

- is not based on any evidence or enough evidence, and
- relies on a willingness to generalise about that group

To have a prejudice is to 'know' that X is the case and that our knowledge or belief is protected from relevant evidence. Prejudices are also typically unhelpful and damaging especially when we generalise without evidence about a group of people and when we have negative things to say about them.

These points might indicate why prejudice is not a good thing. That is until we remember the point made throughout the twentieth century by philosophers like Hans-Georg Gadamer (1980) and Gerald Holton (1988) who said that all human knowledge rests on certain forms of prejudice. They referred to beliefs that are not based on evidence, but without them we could not begin to build what later becomes knowledge.

Thus it seems that while prejudices can be bad especially when we generalise without evidence about a group of people, it also seems they are also indispensible.

The problem of trying to get rid of generalisations completely becomes apparent when we consider the loss to language that would result from removing all nouns used to name groups of things. Consider for example how we use a word like 'animal'. We make assumptions every time we do this because we believe we can use the word 'animal' to nominate a class or set of creatures who are warm blooded have fur or hair, have four or two legs etc. Yet clearly the array of creatures that fit that category is large, diverse and complex. As zoologists know, identifying a species, and distinguishing it from another by reference to a list of alleged taxonomic characteristics isn't always a straight forward and clear task. What for example distinguishes dogs, from dingos, from foxes and wolves? Like

other human activities there is complexity, imprecision and ambiguity when we generalise or rely on certain convictions, beliefs or prejudices which we either do not want to check or which cannot be check against evidence.

Thus on the one hand while generalising about creatures or people may not always be a good practice, we continue to do it and sometimes this will be for reasons that are defensible. Given that we sometimes need to engage in generalizations, it is important to be aware of the dangers of doing so. Equally there is value in acknowledging the danger of relying on prejudices when we can do without them.

Having gone some way towards clarifying the complex issue of prejudice, I turn to the question of how many older people think about young people.

While many people are happy to make generalisations and funny jokes about BMW or Volvo drivers, it seems that many of us are also happy to generalise about young people (Dawes, 2002, pp. 195-208, Graham and White, 2007, pp. 28-35). It is those generalisations about young people that are now considered.

The key generalizations that often make a difference in how we know and relate to young people, and indeed how some young people sometimes know and experiences themselves include ideas that:

- everyone between 12 and 25 years share certain basic characteristics
- young people are inherently troublesome and troubled
- they are limited in what they can and ought to do because they can only accomplish certain tasks at specific 'stages' or ages
- they ought not be allowed to do things that 'only adults are capable of doing'

It is worth thinking about these claims not only because they have a direct effect on what we claim to know about young people, but also because they directly affect the policies that are made for young people, like local government policies on community safety, health promotion campaigns or young driver safety policies and laws. Such thinking helps when developing age-based policies (ie. the age at which a person can get their driver license, the mandatory school leaving age, privacy guidelines in hospitals, or ethics requirements for research about or with young people).

It helps because it involves an attempt to establish whether those decisions are based on negative and ill-informed stereotypes, or credible evidence and knowledge that connects with what is actually the case. My argument is that good policy and practice depends on a capacity to reflect on the assumptions and prejudices that we rely on when we generalize about groups of people, and to distinguish myth and prejudice from the often complex realities.

adolescence

Modern generalisations about adolescents started being assembled by the founding father of American scientific psychology Professor G. Stanley-Hall. He started the ball rolling in 1905 with his book *Adolescence* in which he depicted that category of people as difficult, often moody and even rebellious. Adolescence is a period of 'storm and stress'. 'They' always make trouble and they are full of anxiety as they confront that great challenge 'society' has posed, that is the need to make what is described as a 'precarious transition' from childhood to responsible adulthood.

G. Stanley Hall also thought sex was the key problem. Adolescence he said was a time of turbulence and explosive charge when hormones go rampant, and also paradoxically a time when young people should not give expression to their sexuality. That it was argued, had to wait until they matured into adults and were respectably and safely married. His preoccupation with the need to repress adolescent sexuality in the interests of social order had a major impact on the lives of young people and how many professionals and lay people came to know and relate to 'youth'.

In declaring adolescents to be naturally difficult, moody and rebellious, Hall launched the modern story about teenagers as problematic as deviant, difficult and a clearly different section of the population.

Hall positioned adults as normal and what children and adolescents were expected to mature into. Thus 'we' adults are alright because 'they' are the problem. The famous American sociologist Talcott Parsons was one of the first to write about 'youth culture'. He argued that *all* young people were part of a youth culture antithetical and hostile to adult values and norms, and that their behavior was marked by anti-social conduct and irresponsibility. We need only

pause to consider the time in which Parson made these observations – the mid 1940s. As he wrote that account, western governments run by 'responsible adults' were placing millions of young men under 25 into military uniforms to kill each other and civilians.

In the decades since only some of the detail of the stereotypes have changed and the primary message remains the same. We need only quickly survey the media, and particularly weekend newspapers or TV evening magazine programs to find examples of this kind of message. It is a message of 'youth'–as bothersome and bothered risk–takers that gets continually recycled and reinforced by journalists and experts.

In the last year or two for example some experts have used quite important brain scan technology like MRI's using the authority of this science to make fantastic claims about how:

- there is something called 'the adolescent brain',
- that the part of the 'adolescent brain' said to control moral and practical judgment is structurally different from 'the adult brain', and
- this explains why young people under the age of 23-25 are so impulsive, risk-taking and irresponsible, and who therefore ought to be more tightly governed.

Yet neuroscientists have long understood that simplistic claims about identifying physical structures in the brain to locate certain capabilities or functions is ill-founded and reject the idea that a single specific brain structure determines complex human cognitive or emotional judgment. As Gazzanigam Ivry & Mangun (2002: 74) observe:

> *Major identifiable systems can be localized within each lobe, but systems of the brain also cross different lobes. That is, those brain systems do not map one-to-one onto the lobe in which they primarily reside… (see also, Kosslyn and Andersen,1992, and Damasio 2006)*

Equally they may generalise about something called the 'adolescent brain' revealing a lack of intellectual rigour. To be direct, what we see here yet another example of a longstanding historical problem that involves the harnessing of

legitimate scientific techniques and perspectives to prejudices that too often lead to quite appalling behavior. Briefly recall for example the use of such scientific talk about the 'female brain', the 'negro brain' or the 'Jewish brain' in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and how that was used to 'justify' some the most horrific policies (Bessant 2008, pp. 347-360).

As mentioned earlier prejudice entails at least two practices. Firstly it involves generalising by deploying stereotypes or essentialist thinking that the 'all X's are Y' kind of people. In the case of 'young people' all of those who belong to the 'youth' category are the same. Secondly there is the tendency to use negative stereotypes to mobilise resentment, anger or fear and anxiety. Thus, young people are subjected to stereotypes about being risk-takers, lazy, self-absorbed, immoral, lack judgment, impulsive, irresponsible and so on.

Seeing a group or person as different is not necessarily a problem in itself. When it becomes problematic is when the alleged differences or deficiencies are used to justify why 'they' ought to be treated differently, in ways that other groups are not, and in ways that harm them. In other words, being treated differently in itself does not involve unjust, unfair or harmful policies and practice. But the potential is there, especially if the group subject to those stereotypes are seen as a source of trouble to the community.

The history of the twentieth century and the beginnings of the twenty first century provide an abundance of evidence of the dangers and horrific consequences of using negative stereotypes. Such lessons indicate why it is good practice for policy makers and practitioners to refrain from doing it.

As a teacher one of my tasks is to ask students to consider the stereotypes they carry with them. Given that much of my teaching is with youth work students, I emphasize the importance of reflecting on the generalisations they construct about young people. I ask them to consider popular ideas that adolescents are irresponsible, impulsive, risky and dangerous and do this by having them to do a reality check. I suggest that we need regular checks about what is in our heads and hearts and how our thinking and emotions work and inform our views of the world and action. One way of doing that is to use a standard check-list.

If we are to 'build communities' that are safe and in which people have the chance to develop and who are not abused etc, then we need reality checks. There is also a need to call to account experts, professionals of all kinds, including journalists, some of whom can be the worst perpetrators of stereotyping and prejudice about young people. This point was bought home to me at a youth conference I recently attended where one of the keynote speakers addressed a 400 strong audience claiming that 'expecting a 16 year old to be able to reason is like asking your dog to recite Shakespeare'. The claim was followed up by a 'humorous' story reporting on the stupidity of the psychologist's son to support his claims that the 'adolescent brain' causes risky and other worrying behaviour in 'adolescents' and to demonstrate just how lacking in reason and good judgment all young people are.

Reality Checking

As mentioned above, one way prejudices can be detected is to pay attention to what is said and then to consider the degree to which we can use the standard practices that scientists and researchers apply when they assess the merits of any claims about any state of affairs.

- Is there evidence for the claims?
- How relevant is the evidence, how was it obtained and is it credible?
- Are there any fallacies in the argument being promoted (ie. a reliance on minimal evidence to make general claims about large numbers of people).

The dominant account of 'youth' or 'adolescents' rests on the assumption 'they' are a group or section of the population who all share certain essential features. This has long been understood as a process of stadial development (ie., development through certain cognitive, intellectual, social and moral stages in the life-cycle) (Piaget 1932, Piaget 1953). An underlying premise in this framework is that 'they' are substandard adults: that is one day they will develop into adults, but the younger they are the more different they are from adults. These differences largely understood in terms of a deficiency model.

From here it is a small step from saying they are less able to reason, to understand complex ideas or make sophisticated judgments than adults to saying they are irresponsible, dangerous, deviant, 'anti-social', 'delinquent', wayward or

maladjusted (Piaget, 1953; Kohlberg 1976). From there we find it very easy to make claims in the ways we talk about youth cultures and sub-cultures like Generation X, Generation Y, or talk about 'alienated youth', 'the selfish' generation' and 'new youth tribes' that then inform our responses to social problems like crime, homelessness, gangs and drug use.

One of the first points any reality check will make is that we cannot generalise very easily about young people on the basis of one characteristic – that is their age. Having said that however it also needs to be said that young people as a group do experience certain commonalities. Like any group or age cohort their lives are variously influenced and shaped by significant historic and cultural events that occur in social contexts in which they 'grow up'. Historic events like war, natural disaster, economic recession or depression are shared experiences that influence in different ways the identities and lives of young people. This is not to assume that all people in a particular age cohort experience the same event in the same way or that their lives are shaped in the same way. Different people experience the same thing or event differently depending on their social class, their gender ethnicity or personal dispositions like their inclination towards an optimistic or pessimistic outlook.

One common experience young people as a group experience is persistent disadvantage, discrimination and unequal access to resources. Most young people are responded to in biased and unfavourable ways which tends to fit the description of ageism. And, while it is not necessarily a problem that a group is treated differently, it is when it's done on the basis of unwarranted and ill-informed stereotypes about people of a particular age, when its assumed the quality of 'youth' provides a justified basis for large scale-generalisations and reason for different treatment which has adverse consequences. When this happens then we have age based discrimination.

Due to the fact that young people experience age based discrimination in varying ways they share and confront certain basic and persistent political, legal, social and economic inequalities of opportunity, power, rights and access to valued resources or capabilities. They are the result of prejudices and relate directly to the difficulties many experience in accessing full-time employment, in being a student, or simply a citizen, all of which point to patterns of ageism, significant

power differentials, and an array of barriers to participation in democratic practices and other general social activities like using public space.

This commonly shared status of young people is complicated by other factors like ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, socio-economic status or geography that can compound, or mitigate the initial source of disadvantage. Like any other age group young people are incredibly diverse, and do not all share the same interests and values or do the same kinds of things. We find young Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists and atheists. And for some, gender differences or ethnicity are more important than age. Young people also engage in an extensive array of activities and have a diversity of leisure tastes from reading, to attending live music concerts to dog walking.

A reality check can show that the prejudices or generalisations about 'youth' like those mentioned above are simply wrong. Consider for example the popular idea that 'today's youth' are an irresponsible and self-absorbed generation. This is inaccurate. Surveys like the Australia's National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling (NATSEM) (2007), and the 2006 Mission Australia National Survey of Young Australians tell very different stories. Rather than being egotistical or selfish we see evidence of a high level of involvement by young people in community and voluntary activities reflecting commitment and engagement with their communities.

Or take the stereotypical stories about lazy, work-shy and 'parasitical' young people. A reality check suggests that an overwhelming majority of young people want to get a job and be able to support themselves (NATSEM 2007, Mission Australia 2006 see also, The Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2006, data from *the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia* (HILDA) *survey 2004, Australian Electoral Commission, 2005)*. According to the NATSEM report, the young people surveyed (those born between 1976 and 1991) are more responsible that often thought; they are focused on education and their careers and thinking about their future. According to the Report nearly half of all young people who study full-time also have jobs, while 70% of those who study part-time also work full-time. Moreover, those under 30 years of age spend less money on clothes, alcohol and food than did the age groups who are now aged 30 to 40 at the same age. Indeed as the findings of NATSEM Report reveal:

If we look at some of the generalizations made about Gen Y, they are indeed ambitious, but they do not seek immediate gratification; in fact they are working and studying harder than previous generations at the same age (2007, p.2)

Similarly, other surveys show that far from being alienated and 'disconnected' 94% are in some form of education or training, most consider family very important, along with health, and education and 87% who were aged 18 years or older report that they are on the electoral role (Australian Democrats, 2007). Likewise a 2006 Western Australian survey of 2,700 young people found that those surveyed expressed confident and positive outlooks about their future (Synovate 2006).

This raises the interesting question of what counts as credible evidence for a reality check.

Credible Evidence
Arguably, social inquiry is best carried out as a scientific and/or inductive reasoning processes in which evidence is central for securing the credibility of claims being made. The question remains however, what counts as credible evidence. A general answer is that good evidence and or rational inquiry are claims made which appeal to evidence that is relevant to and which verify the questions being asked and the claims being made.

The quantity of evidence needs to be enough to secure agreement on the part of a 'reasonable audience' that the evidence warrants the conclusions being drawn, and that the quality of the evidence provided relies on the researcher acknowledging the conventions or assumptions operating in the particular discipline and/or theoretical traditions they work in as to the appropriateness and quantity of the evidence being 'discovered' or selected to render the claims credible.

This answer none-the-less begs a number of other questions and fails to acknowledge that more detailed or specific answers are inherently controversial and contestable. Referring for example to 'particular disciplines' and/or 'theoretical traditions' reveals there are a range of often divergent conventions about what constitutes good evidence. Both positivists and empiricists for example claim that social reality exists as an 'objective' phenomenon and that

only through a systematic *scientific* inquiry drawing on natural scientific methods, using our senses using various technologies of operationalisation and measurement and statistical techniques of analysis that we can discover the true nature of the world and 'discover' data that counts as evidence. These social researchers use 'scientific tools' like surveys, to produce numerical data which they use to create statistics, to cross tabulate, index, describe, classify and explain. It's a 'naturalistic' disposition that tends to assume causality and makes a number of other assumptions which treat social phenomena/categories like 'homelessness', 'youth at risk' or 'youth unemployment' etc exist in an objective way and can be known and measured.

Other researchers operate from what an 'interpretivist' or 'symbolic interactionist' framework. This set of approaches have their origins in a range of Idealist, phenomenological and hermeneutic traditions. Its proponents begin from an ontology which sees social phenomena as socially constructed and symbolic in character. They reject the traditional empirical-positivist ontology and the consequential understanding of evidence, and are more interested in understanding the meanings people give to social interactions, events and the descriptions of reality which social actors give. They assume we can only know about our social world by interpreting how people create and use language, gesture and behaviour with shared and discrepant meanings. This results in a quite different idea of what constitutes as credible evidence. For example rather than treating 'delinquency' or 'homelessness' as objective phenomena these kinds of researchers treat categories like 'delinquency' or 'homelessness' as a label which is applied by socially powerful actors to other people and/or their conduct. Operating within the interpretativist tradition does not mean dismissing empirical research so much as changing the way it gets done. This can take the form for example of ethnographic research and various kinds of participant observation and provides a valuable source of information.

For the purpose of this article, credible evidence is that which provides insight into the experiences of the people being research, talked about or having policy made 'for them'. It is credible if it is 'evidence' they can recognize and confirm as an accurate account of their lives or the particular issues in question whether that be the problem of 'youth poverty', chroming or young drivers. If it obeys conventions of its discipline and theoretical traditions, which entails for example

the absence of any misreading and fallacies in the argument used as well as an understanding of the limitations and appropriate use of methodologies, so their application produces accurate accounts of the social life being investigated. The relevant question here is whether categories like youth, youth at risk etc describe the issues and experiences pertinent to the lives of the young people being researched?

Being able to answer these questions relies on an ethical and intellectual capacity that includes a will and ability to engage in critical thinking and good judgment so as to determine when evidence is not reliable and/or based on prejudicial assumptions which perpetuate discriminatory attitudes and practices.

Returning to the task of a reality check by using of reliable evidence, we discover the big news is, although we are unlikely to see it in the daily press, young people are 'normal'. I refer here to ideas of normality that reflect the power of individuals and groups who succeed in having their ideas of healthy or natural imposed and established as social rules, conventions and law, rather than making a statement about the existence or virtues of any dominant ideas of normality. While noting that contemporary dominant definitions of 'normal youth' or 'healthy adolescence' are infused with the kind of popular and scientific prejudices identified above, I simply make the point that based on the evidence available most young people are normal. Most have quite conventional aspirations, ideas and lives rather than the pathologies, deficiencies and vices ascribed to them courtesy of 'respectable' fears and fantasies about 'scary youth'.

Despite the tendency to market prejudice and generalisations about young people, the research evidence demonstrates that most young people are 'normal' as conventionally understood and indeed tend to be like their parents. To quote the recent NATSEM report (2007) '… in many respects, Gen Y is no different to other generations in what they aspire to …(2007, p. 2). This point was also made some time ago in a life-long research project carried out by two psychologists, Daniel and Judith Offer. Their conclusion is a less sensational headline than the ones we are used to seeing.

In a series of significant publications Daniel and Judith Offer (1968, 1969, 1972) contested the popular idea that young people are confused, consumed with inner turmoil, and generally troubled or troublesome and more so than any other

section of the population. While recognising the challenges to be met while growing up, they showed how most young people are able to meet them intelligently and without trauma (1988, p. 110). They made the point that:

> *Interestingly, investigators who have spent most of their professional lives studying disturbed adolescents [ie., patient populations] stress the importance of a period of turmoil for the developmental growth of the individual, while investigators who, like us, have studied normal adolescent populations find a minimal amount of turmoil displayed (1972, pp. 62 -63).*

The point is that popular notions of adolescence or youth as a time of storm and stress owes much to research on disturbed or problematic minorities of young people; in other words, it relied on an atypical fraction of the entire cohort (see also, Gilligan, Ward, McLean-Taylor, 1988). It also draws on a psychological tradition and culture that is primarily Euro-centric as well as an intent on identifying universal laws of logic which explain how adolescent thinking and behaviour developed regardless of space and time (Cohen 1983, Burman 1994, Lancy2008, McNaughton 2005).

Given the above, it seems that claims that all young people can be defined by reference to their age and their place in a life cycle-stage simply does not stand up to critical scrutiny.

The myth of adolescence as a unique period of storm and trouble ignores one further reality. That is the experiences of life in one's thirties, fifties or even seventies can be just as marked by trauma, crisis and transition, full of 'storm and stress' and trial and tribulations as our teenage years. Older people like young people worry about their body image and how they look. They get anxious about work and friends. Older people like young people use drugs, feel insecure, get into rages, experience angst about who they are as workers, parents, retirees, divorcees, etc. How helpful is it to become preoccupied with young people and 'their' 'revolting clothes', baggy-bum jeans, body piercings or 'strange' haircuts? Aren't these just minor differences? If appearance is the issue let's look around at the grooming habits of adults with their bulging bellies, balding heads, wrinkled faces, 'old fashioned and distasteful clothes' and attempts to 'look cool' in 'young clothes'.

In short, we will not get too far harping on about minor differences while ignoring the common issues and challenges we all face simply because we are human beings.

This raises a second point. If we can get past some of the prejudices and stereotypes about young people how can we think and act better towards young people? If for example we accept the need to avoid relying on stereotypes about young people what does that mean for policy and practice?

This question is important because a long standing dominant idea held by many adults has been that we need to prevent or prohibit young people from doing certain things deemed risky, dangerous or beyond their capacity.

A Duty of Care and Developmental Rights

The notion that we should prohibit young people from doing certain things relies on the idea that parents and adults generally need to exercise a 'duty of care' or guardianship. This entails claims that parents or guardians know what is in the young person's interest better than the young person themselves. The premise operating here is that guardians are duty bound to ensure the young person's interest is served even if that means not obtaining their consent or overriding their wishes. Those advocating the guardianship or duty of care tend to favour the curtailment or prohibition of activities that a young person can engage in. This is justified by claims young people need protection because they are unable to make good judgments themselves because they do not have the intellectual, moral or social competence to determine what is in their own best interest.

In this way duty of care or guardianship arguments can be confused with the popular idea that young people ought to be prohibited from doing X because they are inherently troublesome as well as incompetent (ie., morally, socially, physically under-developed). In other words, given their innately unruly character and relative incompetence, young people cannot be trusted to know what is in their best interest and to act accordingly. Guardians on the other hand do. They are said to be more knowledgeable and more experienced and therefore know better what is in the interest of the young person than the young person them self. For this reason guardians have a duty to exercise authority by making decisions for the young person. (One problem with this, as recent revelations of systemic abuse reveal, is that we can no longer assume an accord exists between

the interest of the young person and the interests of those responsible for their care and welfare).

This perspective produces policies that restrict or exclude young people from activities deemed inappropriate or dangerous such as drinking alcohol or making decisions about matters like the kind of education they want, the kind of government they would like governing their country or state, or the even parent they want to live with after a marriage break-up. In the UK this argument went so far as produce school policies prohibiting students from playing of marbles and 'conkers' in the playground *(http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7637605.stm)*. Guardianship arguments in social contexts now characterized by politics of fear in which the 'youth at risk' discourse runs rampant, we see young people swaddled and prevented from engaging in various activities in the name of 'safety' and 'their best interest' that paradoxically thwarts opportunities for development in its various forms (Furedi 2005). This in conjunction with various problem setting activities in which young people are framed as dangerous, knife wielding threatening ferals as a prelude to punitive policy and law making has seen the steady extension of governance over the lives of young people in ways that not only reflect a disturbing fear of young people or ephebiphobia, but which also work to inhibit opportunities for young people to learn from mistakes and exercise good judgment.

Another perspective starts from a different place. It begins with an idea about the rights of young people specifically about developmental rights. It refers to ideas about the ability to develop and learn through experience. Indeed, one basic human right is to develop to the full and experience basic attributes and enjoyments that are part of being human. And as John Finnis (1980:205) explains, this also matters because rights talk is a way of articulating the requirements of justice – that is what do we owe to each other. For proponents developmental rights educational opportunities of various kinds are critical because they facilitate the growth of a young person by building their knowledge, skills and confidence.

Rather than accept that developmental rights compete with or oppose guardianship or a duty of care options, I suggest both positions are compatible. Both have a place in guiding decisions about what we think about and do in respect to young people.

Clearly most adults appreciate that they have a duty of care to young people and that young people have developmental rights that ought to respected in practical ways. Where there is disagreement is in how this is best done.

One way to begin working this out is to acknowledge that while a duty of care involves protecting a young person, that *does not by itself provide the grounds for denying young people's developmental rights*. In other words, because a person might be – or might be considered – less able does mean they should not exercise their rights. Moreover, denying young people their right to development can harm a young person and the community. Being denied the opportunity to learn from experience means they are without the chance to develop. What being less experienced, less well resourced, etc means is that *others have an obligation to support young people in ways that enable* them to enjoy their rights and in particular their developmental rights. Recognising this takes us some way towards seeing how a duty of care and developmental rights can be complementary.

Proponents of developmental rights say they are obligated to provide supported access to certain activities so young people can have experience and learn from it. Such experiences they argue play a critical role in helping young people build a repertoire of skills, knowledge and experiences from which young people can later draw on to make to the right thing and make good judgments – like how to vote responsibly, how to handle money or how to drive safely. On this last point, research confirms that inexperience is the primary contributing risk factor in serious car crashes (Senserrick and Haworth nd, see also Ferguson et.al, 2007, pp. 137-145, Shope 2007, pp. 165-175). Policy makers who recognise the significance of this risk factor and the role of developmental rights, will sensibly promote initiatives like learner driver experience logbooks and training opportunities for parents/teachers as instructors. By these and other means adults make it possible for young people to get the practical skills and knowledge that help them to overcome errors in attention, in their visual search, in their judgments about speed relative to conditions, and hazard recognition in emergency manoeuvres and other skills that contribute to safe driving.

This suggests that developmental rights can be given effect to and are entirely compatible with a duty of care, and how both are necessary for good and effective policy.

Good policy also begins by acknowledging the moral status of young people as human beings with full human rights entitlements. As mentioned earlier, getting to this point is not such a simple task because it means recognizing and successfully challenging prejudices that young people are different, incomplete and for those reasons should not exercise basic rights. (ie., They are not intellectually, morally socially able, or they are too small, too inexperienced etc).

Recognizing how a group might be different is not a problem. However, using that difference to deny their human rights is. In other words, because a person is smaller, less able, less experienced etc does not make it right for others to override their basic entitlements. Indeed given our fiduciary duty towards young people such differences obligate older people to act in ways that help secure their rights. This is a duty of care.

Just policy entails recognising prejudices that inform our thinking and being able to distinguish between those prejudices and what is actually happening. Part of that recognition entails seeing how young people are in fact sometimes at risk or troubled, but also realizing that that is not because they naturally that way, but rather because they simply have not had the experience or opportunity to developed the skills and judgment which engagement in those activities and experiences supply.

Just and effective policies and practice also means thinking about the fact that many of those who restrain young people in oppressive ways – wittingly or otherwise – have an interest in preserving the way things are. Some people who for example make daily decisions for young people about their interest without consulting them find it hard to see how they are doing wrong. They may also find it difficult to envisage how else they might act in their professional practice and personal lives. *In this way, anyone who works or lives with young people is an interested party*. It is something that makes the task of developing an awareness about popular prejudices more of a challenge.

A duty of care entails both an interest in as well as a responsibility to help young people realize their development rights and gain the relevant skills and knowledge. This entails recognizing how programs that expose young people in supported ways to particular experiences have value because participants enjoy

the activity and develop proficiencies. Indeed prohibiting young people from engaging in certain activities can be counter productive because they then lose opportunities to develop good judgment and intuition and yet the quality of our intuition is critical for good decision-making:

> *… depends on how well we have reasoned in the past; on how well we have classified the events of our past experiences in relation to the emotions that preceded and followed them; and also on how well we have reflected on the successes and failure of our past intuitions (Damasio 2006, xix).*

If we refuse young people opportunities to build a repertoire of experience and chances to reflect on what works and what does not, then we deny them opportunities to develop their capacity for good judgment. In other words, young people also change in what they can do and what they know they can do because of what their community allows them to do. As Harre observed, while some groups have certain rights and obligations to display their competences, others, regardless of their state of knowledge and ability are forbidden to make use of them (1986 p.294).

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DEMOCRACY, COMMUNITY AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION: A COMPARISON BETWEEN 'HART'S LADDER' AND A SOCIAL CAPITAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Practices to promote young people's participation in communities are contested, even though the principle of 'youth participation' has support across the political spectrum. One contributory factor rests with imprecision in conceptualisation of 'youth participation', and denial of its essentially political nature. Many critiques of practice in 'youth participation' derive, either directly or indirectly, from Hart's 'Ladder of participation'. This article contrasts the assumptions and values implicit in Hart's 'ladder' with those implicit in an Australian 'social capital' based framework used to measure participation as an indicator of community strength. The comparison highlights the strengths and limitations of each approach. From discussion of these two approaches the following conclusions are drawn. First, Hart's ladder does not provide an adequate basis for development of youth participation practice. This observation has profound implications for goals and methods of youth work practice to promote participation. Second, the discourse on young people's participation would benefit from a more explicit link with concepts democracy. This was present in Arnstein's original 'ladder of citizen participation', but is absent from Hart's adaptation. This article concludes that the connection needs to be re-established.

Introduction

Concepts of 'youth participation' and 'democracy' are 'slippery' terms used with a variety of meanings by politicians, policy makers and practitioners. This enables almost universal apparent support for the principle, at the cost of loss of useful content and clarity of meaning. Imprecision about the meaning of 'youth participation' permits politically divergent parties to support the idea, in principle.

The pseudo-consensus has enabled diverse bodies to claim that they promote youth participation. Critics have already argued that 'youth participation' is often tokenistic see, for example (Hart, 1992). In his arguments against tokenistic

practices in youth participation Hart used a metaphor of 'rungs' on a 'ladder' of participation. Others, for example (Chan, 2003; Driskell, 2002; Howard, Newman, Harris, & Harcourt, 2002; Shier, 2001) have adapted the detail of Hart's 'ladder', but retained an essentially similar schema. In the first part of this article I will present Hart's 'ladder' and his critique of youth participation and then critically examine the adequacies of Hart's approach. I will argue that although Hart correctly identified the problem of adult power, the limitations of Hart's approach have caused specific problems both for the development of youth work practice and for discourse on youth participation.

In the second part of the article, I will present an alternative conceptualisation of participation developed within a 'social capital' framework of community development. Comparison between the two approaches, in the final part of the article, identifies what each perspective can contribute to youth work practice in development of young people's participation and to discourse about young people's participation in society.

Current debates in 'youth participation'

Within current debates on 'youth participation', two concepts of participation emerge: participation as 'taking part'; and participation as 'influence or empowerment'; Boyden and Ennew (1997). Within the first concept, which they call 'taking part in', 'attendance' constitutes the central measure of participation, as for example, when claims are made about school participation rates, or rates of young people's participation in the labour market. Within the second concept of participation, which they describe as 'knowing that one's actions are taken note of and may be acted upon', 'influence' and 'power' constitute the central measure of participation. In the literature on participation, Boyden and Ennew acknowledge that this second concept is sometimes referred to as 'empowerment'. Writers within social capital literature call this 'governance' participation (Pope, 2006b).

Hart (1992) used the metaphor of a 'ladder' to differentiate between different degrees of control, power and influence implicit in common modes of participation available to young people. Hart identified eight 'rungs' or levels, of participation, see Table 1.

Table 1 Adapted from Hart's typology of young people's participation (Hart, 1992)

Rung	Participation
8	Initiated by young people, shared decisions with adults
7	Young people directed and initiated
6	Adult -initiated, shared decision-making with young people
5	Young people consulted and informed
4	Young people assigned to a role but informed
3	Tokenism, adult control of decisions, consultation with young people illusory
2	Decoration, young people used to promote adult cause, but without manipulation
1	Manipulation, young people are manipulated to promote adult cause

The central organising feature of Hart's ladder concerns the influence and control exerted by young people relative to adults. For Hart, control by young people is the single central issue. At level 1, adults exert total control and young people have no control. At level 8, young people have all the control, and adults are informed about decisions. There have been many adaptations of Hart's 'ladder of participation' for example (Chan, 2003; Driskell, 2002; Howard et al., 2002; Shier, 2001) and this approach become a 'standard treatment' of the topic, used as a conceptual framework for empirical studies, for example, (McNeish, Downie, Newman, Webster, & Brading, 2004, p. 33-35)

Holdsworth (2003) simplified Hart's ladder to five 'rungs' instead of eight, without loss of meaning. The explanatory literature on 'governance participation' has burgeoned; it differentiates, analyses, and discusses degrees of governance participation by young people but, with a few exceptions, the focus of conceptualisation remains firmly on the locus of control between adults and young people and the nuances of relative power between adults and young

people. Strongly influenced by the work of Boyden and Ennew (1997) and Hart (1992), the literature on young people's participation has placed emphasis upon 'governance participation' and has dismissed the importance of forms of participation that do not involve influence or control.

Critique of Hart's work

Hart's (1992) schema was based upon work by Arnstein (1969) who developed a typology she called the 'Ladder of Citizenship Participation'. Her purpose was to distinguish between different forms of citizen participation (and non-participation) in political processes. Arnstein's concept was explicitly political, and explicitly related to the debate about the nature of democracy. Arnstein's schema represented a critique of mainstream liberal forms of democracy. The gist of her argument was a critique of the political machinery of liberal democracy, because it does not facilitate direct citizen participation in government or decision-making. Arnstein argued that liberal democratic practices, whereby democratic control is limited to periodic election of parliamentary and local government representatives, who have no accountability once elected, does not offer real participation opportunities to either adults or young people. For Arnstein, democracy means direct citizen self-governance, a concept closely aligned to anarchist political philosophy. Hart's concept of participation seems to be similar to Arnstein's but the implication of his analysis is that only young people (not adults) lack opportunities for real participation.

Arnstein's analysis appears more correct when she argues that most people (young and adult) are similarly disempowered. When Hart (1992) adapted Arnstein's (1969) work, he broke the political link with the debate on forms of democracy and citizenship. In its place, he proposed an opposition between young people (as a monolithic class) and adults (also a monolithic class). The strength of Hart's work was that he identified and named the direct and indirect power that adults may wield over young people. Many weaknesses, however, derive from his decision to focus his model exclusively on the locus of power between 'young people' and 'adults'. Hart's conceptualisation of power and influence is too simplistic. Two weaknesses are especially problematic.

First, his focus on the power dichotomy between adults and young people means that other power differences are ignored. Young people's relationships in groups

demonstrate structural and interpersonal power differentials *between* young people. Similar power differential are also found between adults, as illustrated by standard texts from sociology or social psychology. This means that we should expect that young people exert power over other young people; some young people exert power over adults; some adults exert power over other adults and over young people. Since the 1980's, writers on youth work have cautioned against the assumption that young people are a homogeneous group, (Carpenter & Young, 1986; Jeffs & Smith, 1988) and have discussed the significance of this for youth work practice. A major task for youth workers has been to find ways to give voice to those who are habitually excluded, but in the context of young people's participation, this requires attention to how young people exclude their peers, in addition to how adult authority figures exclude young people.

Second, adults are not all powerful. Adults' lives are constrained by both their circumstances and through their relationships with others. Structuralist social analysis provides many examples of social institutions that sanction and formalise adult power over young people. For most young people, school, and the family provide examples of social institutions that sanction adult power. However, classical empirical studies, for example, Willis (1977) demonstrated that even when social institutions appear to support total adult control, as in school, groups of young people find ways to subvert and limit adult power, even if their victory is ultimately pyrrhic. Moreover, in 'Westminster' systems, law limits formal parental power over children, and legal interpretation conceptualises formal parental power as being maximal at birth and diminishing steadily as young people approach the age of majority ("Gillick -v- West Norfolk And Wisbech Area Health Authority and DHSS," 1985).

To summarise, a limitation of Hart's 'ladder' is that he conceptualises power differential only in terms of formal adult control, focusing exclusively on the power relationship between young people and adults. Although there are significant spheres of life where adults hold power over young people, for example, in schooling and in family relationships, he fails to acknowledge that there are many spheres of adult life where adults are disempowered in similar ways. For example, work cultures are frequently autocratic leaving workers will little power in the work place. In family relationships, many adults do not have unlimited autonomy. There are differing degrees of disempowerment, which

mean that a simple dichotomy is not adequate. Power differentials between young people and adults are important, but his model, excludes important factors in the distribution of power and influence that are at least as significant as the degree of formal adult power.

The weakness of Hart's analysis is a problem for youth work for two reasons. First, youth work strategies to promote participation by young people should examine multiple sources of exclusion from power and influence, of which age exclusion is one factor, but not the only one, and not always the most important. Strategies to empower young people need to be developed in a social context that includes understanding how both young people and adults are disempowered. Arnstein's explicit statements about citizen participation avoid this problem, whereas Hart's exclusive focus on an adult/young person dichotomy is simplistic and encourages youth workers to over-homogenise both young people and adults. Second, Hart's model legitimates discourse about young people's participation in isolation from the larger political debate about the nature of democracy, and this has distorted debate about an essentially political phenomenon, and permitted young people's participation to be considered apolitically, primarily as an inter-generational power conflict. What is required is a more multi-dimensional understanding of power and its relationship to participation.

To provide an alternative perspective on participation, I am now going to examine a conceptualisation of participation based in social capital.

Social capital approach to participation

A social capital perspective on participation centralises the importance of relationships between people and social networks and provides an interesting contrast to Hart's conceptualisation of participation. Within social capital inspired community development literature there are a variety of explanatory models. In this article I am going to examine a framework proposed by Pope (2006a). The original purpose of Pope's framework was to identify a source of 'easy to gather' data that correlated well with systematic observations of community strength. After some empirical studies (Pope, 2005, 2006a; Pope & Warr, 2005) Pope recommended the use of data on participation, supplemented by data on personal networks. The data on personal networks did not relate to participation and is not discussed here. Pope uses a highly inclusive concept of

participation, as compared with Hart's typology. For example, measures of 'community participation' include: attendance at community events; participation in organised sport; membership of organised groups; volunteering; and, parental involvement in schools (Pope 2006a). Measures of 'governance participation' include: participation in local group action within the past twelve months; and, membership of a decision-making board or committee that influences community life (Pope 2006a).

Pope (2006a) provides a rationale for an inclusive concept of participation that encompasses both participation as 'taking part' and participation as 'governance'. She argues that before people become active in 'governance' participation, they need opportunities to build networks of social relationships through more passive forms of community activity. In the terminology of social capital theory, people use community participation to strengthen their 'bonding' links (links with people like themselves) and 'bridging' links (links with people unlike themselves and with whom they do not normally socialise). By this argument 'taking part' in community activities has an 'enabling' role as a precursor to 'governance' participation. According to this argument, people need the support of a strong social network through community participation to enable them to become active and effective in 'governance participation'. By this measure, even attendance at a community event is potentially a step on the way to more active forms of community participation. This potential exists even when the individual has no influence over the events that occurs. The potential lies in the *possibility* that through attendance at community events individuals build their connectedness with others. A second finding from empirical research about adult participation, is that very few adults become involved in 'governance' participation (Berry, Rogers, & Dear, 2007).

Critique of 'Stronger Communities' framework
The developers of the 'Stronger communities' framework are aware that the indicators of community participation do not capture young people's participation well (National Youth Affairs Research Scheme, 2006). By the measures they use, young people appear to participate less in communities than other age groups. They do not know whether this is an artefact of the measures chosen, or a genuine reflection of lower community participation by young people. For example, one of the measures of community participation was a

measure of parental involvement in schools. As few young people are parents of school age children, this measure would not be sensitive to young people's participation. Other more relevant measures have not yet been developed. Other critiques of 'social capital' theory argue that the theory is unclear about whether the 'capital' resides with individuals and their relationships, or whether it is a property of the networks themselves. A final criticism of some forms of social capital theory is that in some formulations, for example Putnam (2000), there appears to be a tacit assumption that 'strong communities' are necessarily good. Vinson (2004) rejects this assumption and argues that some 'strong communities' perpetuate oppressive relationships between people that are not beneficial to their members.

Discussion

There are several interesting contrasts between these two frameworks. Two in particular have significance for youth work. The first concerns the significance of forms of participation where people do not have power or influence, and the second concerns the process through which people become 'empowered'. These two issues are related, and will be the focus of discussion in this section. An example is used to elucidate differences.

Suppose a young person takes part in a community basketball event. Assume that the young person took no part in organising the event, was not consulted about the event, but decided to attend as a spectator because some of their friends were playing. On Hart's ladder, this form of participation would be 'rung two', assuming the young person's participation was not the result of manipulated by their parents or another adult (in which case it would be 'rung one', the lowest form). Hart (1992) would argue against such forms of participation, where adults 'take the decisions' or where young people are 'decorative', because young people do not control decision-making. By contrast, within the 'Stronger Communities' Framework, attendance at a community sporting event, even as a spectator, counts as participation. Attendance or participation in organised sport has value, because it provides opportunities to strengthen community relationships, and potentially increases likelihood of future governance participation (Pope 2006a). How has such a different valuation occurred?

Implicit in the disagreement about the value of participation, are theorists' assumptions about the impediments to empowerment. For Hart (and those who

have developed derivative models) adults are the impediment to young people's empowerment. For Pope (who was working with adults and who observed that only a minority of people became involved in 'governance participation') the impediments to empowerment participation are more complex. These include: lack of time; lack of knowledge; lack of networks; lack of skills; disinclination, including apathy. For Arnstein (from whose work Hart adapted his ladder and who discussed adult populations) the impediments to active citizen participation stem from the limited concept of democracy implicit both in present day social institutions and in popular expectations about involvement in decision-making. This explains both adult apathy about governance participation and the limited availability, to both young people and adults, of real opportunities for empowerment.

From Hart's (1992) perspective, young people's governance participation will increase if adults step out of the way. On the basis of Hart's analysis, the role of youth workers should be to ensure that young people's power is not fettered by adult input. For Pope (2006a), governance participation occurs when sufficient circumstances in the person's life are supportive of their participation. From a 'stronger communities' community development perspective, only some of these factors are easily mutable. For example, successful community development can build 'bridging' networks between people who do not normally socialise and who have differential access to social power. By contrast, personal networks of family relationships are not directly changed by community development methods. On the basis of Pope's analysis, bridging networks enabled empowerment because they provided conduits to informal power to people within the community who were previously excluded from social power.

Berry et al. (2007) and Pope (2006a) observed that few adults become involved in governance participation. Hart does not discuss this, but for Arnstein (1969), this is explicable because the dominant form of democracy offers adults few opportunities for meaningful participation. Arnstein understood that to increase adults' and young people's participation in decision-making our shared vision of the meaning of democracy requires a stronger concept of self-governance in everyday life. From a 'stronger communities' perspective, adults will engage more willingly in governance participation when social institutions demonstrate a willingness to accommodate active citizen participation in a meaningful way. A consequence of Arnstein's analysis is that political awareness is the central issue

for increasing participation by both adults and young people and this has consequences for both Hart's analysis and for the 'stronger communities' approach to community development.

To summarise, comparisons between models shows that each model has some strengths Hart's (1992) contribution is that he reminds us that adults do have formal (and informal) power over young people, and that adults often unnecessarily restrict opportunities for young people to achieve autonomy. Arnstein's (1969) model reminds us that there is an important connection between participation and democracy, and we live in a society that does not offer most adults any real opportunities for self-governance.

Pope's (2006) contribution reminds us that typically adult rates of 'governance participation' are low, and that, for a variety of reasons, willingness individuals to become involved in 'governance' participation is an important factor in participation, and is influenced by the relationships they have built through other forms of participation.

Implications for youth work

The biggest problem with Hart's model as a guide to practice, is that it implies that empowerment of young people can be achieved simply. Application of Hart's framework implies that all that is required is for adults to 'get out of the way' and young people will be empowered. Hart's analysis is inadequate as a guide to *processes for development* of youth work practice, because it does not adequately acknowledge the difficulties for both young people and adults posed by the current political system. As a guide to youth work practice Hart's ladder under-emphasises the diversity of impediments to effective participation for both adults and for young people, namely political apathy and passivity, tokenism inherent in consultation structures, disinterest in the formal machinery of political power and diversity of interests within both the youth and adult population.

Strategies to increase adult participation require a sustained process of political capacity building skills building and relationship building Bentley, McCarthy, and Mean, (2003); Vinson (2004). These goals are congruent with the form of youth work as social education conceived by Davies (1979) or associative youth work (Smith 2008). If this analysis is accepted, youth work needs to reaffirm its

connections with community development and with community activism. A central task of youth workers is to work with young people to gain the confidence, interest, skills and networks to influence institutions important in their lives, and to build bridges between young people and adults, where a coalition will offer mutual benefit and increase effective participation. This is not an easy task within a political system that does not support a highly participative vision of democracy.

Hart's ladder is particularly inadequate as a guide to practice in contexts where young people are not motivated to participate, and lack confidence or skills, which is exactly the context in which many youth workers operate. By naming adults as the main impediment, Hart ignores observations of community development practitioners that effective political participation involves relationships, knowledge, skills and awareness of both self and others (Pope, 2006a; Vinson 2004). Nor does he acknowledge the importance of the political context, and the reasons why participation by both adults and young people are thwarted.

The social capital /community development model implicit in the work of Pope (2006) provides some useful guidance about processes for empowerment of both young people and adults. This approach suggests that relationships and skill building are essential pre-requisites to effective governance participation for adults. If adults need relationship and skill building as pre-requisites to effective governance participation, then the same is likely to be required by young people. Many of the traditional practices of youth work have value as preparatory strategies for successful participation by young people. 'Associative' approaches to youth work (Smith, 2008) where relationships between people are valued as an end, will in addition build relationships that enhance young people's willingness and capacity to choose governance participation; informal education supports young people to build skills in leadership and interpersonal relationships through activities of their own choosing; community-based youth work engages with young people in the context of their community, and offers opportunities for supported community activism about issues of relevance to young people. A weakness of social capital inspired theory as a guide to practice, is that at best, the social capital literature ignores potentially negative effects intergenerational power. At worst, in some formulations, its lack of critique of the potentially oppressive nature of close personal ties is particularly damaging as a guide to practice with young people. In addition, 'community' in social

capital literature implicitly means 'geographic community', a definition that may be less relevant for young people than for other age cohorts, as young people's virtual social networks transcend geographic boundaries.

The political context implicit in Arnstein's (1969) analysis suggests that political education remains an essential element in youth work to promote effective participation, and is also central to community development. In the 1970's and 1980's there was a strong awareness of the political and activist nature of both youth work and community work, but by the 1990's, this paradigm for practice had became less dominant (Jeffs & Smith, 2001). Arnstein's analysis supports the contention that the kind of political education that encourages young people to scrutinise the concept of democracy must have a central role in any youth program that aims to promote maximal forms of participation by young people. This implies a return to political education role for youth work.

Conclusions

Hart's typology is seriously flawed as a guide to program development for youth work, and as a basis for evaluation of programs to promote young people's participation because it emphasises apolitical inter-generational impediments to young people's participation, but disregards other impediments. A consequence of this is a lack of attention to effective development participation strategies common to both adults and young people and the absence of a well-considered process to overcome these institutional impediments. From a social capital perspective, Hart seems to have set the bar too high, given the low-level of adult participation in even the limited forms of 'governance' participation examined. Hart may be criticised for his exclusive focus on adult/ youth power differentials, but social capital based theories risk ignoring adult/ youth power differences. Taken together, each provides a useful counter-balance to the deficiencies of the other.

From the perspective of youth work practice, Hart's ladder must be supplemented by a more nuanced understanding of politics and power and the process by which both adults and young people move towards self-governance and empowerment. Activist approaches to youth work practice fill this void. An important part of an activist approach is recognition that learning occurs through shared leadership. The process of development for activism usually begins through participation in activities where others lead, or where leadership is shared. From

this perspective both social capital frameworks and Arnstein's original typology can provide useful additional perspectives because they articulate developmental processes to build towards effective governance participation.

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Title: **Community Development in Theory and Practice**
Author: *Edited by Gary Craig, Keith Popple and Mae Shaw.*
Date and Publisher: **2008, Nottingham, Spokesman**
Reviewer: *Gordon Mackie*

This book includes 30 articles form the Community Development Journal over the past 40 years of publication, as selected by the three editors. The 5 criteria applied to the 1,000 articles competing for inclusion were geographical spread, chronological development, practice from different settings, theory, and to have 'important social divisions' represented. In that sense, as is pointed out in the editorial foreword, it is not necessarily a 'best of' but a pulling together of articles that are 'representative of the time when they were written, of the different countries and contexts in the world where community development is practiced… taking into account considerations of size and cost' (p.10)

In her introduction, Mayo acknowledges the difficulties with splitting the book into different periods of time but it falls loosely into three sections– firstly the post colonial legacy, then, community work and the state and finally, the impact of social movements in a globalising world. She remembers as a student that there were 'no lessons form history' and Marx's comment that history repeats itself, the first time as tragedy, the second as farce. Mayo completes this section with lessons to be drawn from the past and concludes that the key lesson is 'the importance of strategic thinking'(p.25).

What follows are a series of articles with a wide range of interests beginning with 'Community Development on Britain' by Peter du Sautoy (the journal's first editor) from 1966, article by UK authors such as Batten (1974) and Bryant (1974). The sixties and seventies are 'represented' by 3 articles apiece, which gives the majority of the book over to the period between the eighties and the present day. In that historical frame, there are articles from Brazil, Singapore, New Zealand, India, Canada, the US, Australia, South Africa, Rwanda Belgium, Nigeria Tigray and the UK. They cover such topics as community action and anti-poverty strategies, social welfare and community development, gender and poverty, the bridge between theory and practice, community work and the state,

participation, self help citizenship and democracy to name just some of the areas examined.

Two questions come to mind when reading such a collection – 'why now?' and 'who is going to find this interesting? The first is answered by Mayo when she states 'Community development has continuing relevance, I would argue. And community development workers can continue to make significant contributions as reflexive practitioners in the current context' (p.26). The second question is partially answered by the first, and people involved in community development work will find this book interesting, relevant and hopeful. Others will too. Academics and scholars of this type of work will find this a rich and thought-provoking reader. The editors have the final say where they state their view that 'the chapters all reflect the commitment of community development theorists and practitioners to engage critically with the key values of social justice – equality, fairness, participatory development and respect for difference. This book will become a key text for those concerned with implementing these values in practice'. Having been drawn to various sections of the text, I have found it useful in affirming the value base and inspirational practices that have developed over these forty or so years. Thus, I am in full agreement with the editors in their suggestion that this book will indeed become a key text for anyone who is already thinking strategically about, or who is passionately involved in, community development work.

Title:	**Informal Learning in Youth Work**
Author:	*Janet R. Batsleer*
Date and Publisher:	**2008, London, Sage**
Reviewer:	*Anne Ryan*

Janet Batsleer is Principal Lecturer and Head of Youth and Community Work at Manchester Metropolitan University. Her main areas of interest include all aspects of informal education and empowerment.

This invaluable book from Batsleer builds on the work of Jeffs & Smith (1996) and lays emphasis on the need for informal educators to recognise that *learning through dialogue is a key part of the empowerment process*. Informal Learning in Youth Work is aimed at students and practitioners studying and working within a youth and community setting but will be useful resource for those working with young people regardless of the setting.

This book explores key theoretical questions in relation to informal learning and draws on practice examples to inform and extend discussion. It will encourage students and practitioners to explore sensitive issues for youth workers such safe professional boundaries, friendship and professionalism and work with culture specific groups.

Written in four parts, themes concerning 'gender, sexuality, race discrimination and social class' are ever present. An early chapter deliberates on informal learning and informal education and emphasises the importance of conversation and dialogue.

Part One, 'Whose Agenda? explores identity, discourses of exclusion and inclusion and the effective use of reflective practice. Part Two, offers an understanding of young people and the importance of creating professional boundaries and a 'safe place'. Part Three, considers different types of groups and what happens once they are established, the voluntary nature of the relationship between young people and the youth worker and the role of youth workers as 'animateurs'. Part Four, discusses the direction of the conversations with young

people, and explores issues such as bullying, mental health, risk taking, democracy and participation.

Each of the sixteen chapters, whilst intrinsically linked around the theme of the title, is nonetheless accessible as independent sections addressing various perspectives and issues of informal learning.

The book is structured in an accessible manner which is easily read with discussion points at the end of each chapter designed to engage the reader in a critically reflective process, which can be both challenging and thought provoking. In addition to this, each chapter is accompanied by a series of key points, glossary of terms used and suggestions for further reading with a short synopsis of its relevance. Case studies reviewing current practice facilitate the translation of theory to practice.

Batsleer delivers a key text which will not only inform the work of youth work practitioners but will also be a valuable reader for those undertaking academic courses in the realm of youth and community work. Although set in the context of youth work, this nonetheless will prove an interesting read to all practitioners engaged in informal learning. As a Lecturer on Community Education programmes, this is a book that I will be recommending as essential reading for both new students exploring informal learning and to experienced educators to facilitate reflection and extend their current practice.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

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- Recognises the centrality of theory and reflective practice to the development of academic and professional understanding.
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