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YOUTH CITIZENSHIP, SOCIAL CHANGE AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

KEYWORDS: Youth, Citizenship, NGOs, Empowerment, Ethnography

This thesis is grounded in a 16-month critical ethnography of two voluntary sector youth citizenship projects, based in the UK, which supported young people's participation in community action and political lobbying. It is about the role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as civic intermediaries for young people, in particular about the kinds of citizenship that they foster. The research focuses on thick description of organisational frameworks for youth participation to offer a contextualised account of young people's citizenship practices, their relationship with social policy and the institutionalised promotion of citizenship 'best practice'. This account is juxtaposed with popular representations of young people as divorced from mainstream politics, either because they are disenfranchised, or because they are presumed to be reinventing the wheel through subversive sub-cultural practices that portend wider social change.

This thesis examines the meanings and practices that voluntary sector staff, volunteers and young people attach to citizen empowerment, supporting the idea that NGOs can be valued and effective civic intermediaries for young people. It also advances an unfixed understanding of youth citizenship through an approach which acknowledges ambiguity in the practice and performance of citizenship for employability and empowerment alongside the promotion of resilience. It argues that youth citizenship cannot be divorced from the pervasive influence of a neoliberal consensus in mainstream UK politics, but also that this relationship supports a continuum of possible outcomes. Katz's (2004) theory about the relationship between acts of 'resilience' and 'reworking' with acts of 'resistance' is employed as a means to critically interpret NGOs' and young people's citizenship practices. Key themes that emerge from this analysis include: the role of NGOs in supporting 'opportunity' and 'process' aspects of citizenship; how NGOs are implicated in the social reproduction of 'differential citizenship' through processes of professionalisation; and the coexistence of 'active' and 'activist' forms of citizenship.

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Author's Declaration

The work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of Leeds. The work is original except where indicated by special reference in the text. No part of this work has been presented to any other University for examination either in the United Kingdom or overseas.

The following publications and presentations have been based, solely or partly, upon this study's data or earlier drafts of the thesis' chapters.

Journal Article

Diprose, K. 2015. Resilience is Futile. *Soundings: A journal of politics and culture*, Issue 58, (forthcoming)

Blog

Diprose, K. 2014. Employable, entrepreneurial, empowered? How the voluntary sector supports youth citizenship. *NCVO website*, 25 February 2014

Conference Papers

Diprose, K. 2013. Employable, entrepreneurial, empowered? How the voluntary sector supports youth citizenship. *VSSN/NCVO Annual Voluntary Sector and Volunteering Research Conference*, Sheffield Hallam University, 10-11 September 2013

Diprose, K. 2013. Reinforcing and resisting neoliberal citizenship: Exploring youth participation as employability, entrepreneurialism and empowerment. *RGS-IBG Annual International Conference, Royal Geographical Society*, 28 August 2013

Diprose, K. 2013. Youth citizenship and non-governmental organisations: social change and status. *NYRIS 12: The 12th Nordic Youth Research Symposium*, Tallinn University, 14 June 2013

Diprose, K. 2013. Following the project: the boundaries of online and offline youth research. *NYRIS 12: The 12th Nordic Youth Research Symposium Postgraduate summer school*, Tallinn University, 10 June 2013

Chapter 1 Introduction

2011 was an eventful year to be researching young people's involvement in social and political projects. Campus occupations, riots, the Occupy movement and a series of uprisings in the Arab world meant that popular protest was rarely absent from current affairs. There was considerable debate about the seismic significance of these cracks in capitalism and of the role that young people played in their appearance. As each unfolded, I groaned inwardly as a carefully planned PhD on youth citizenship in the voluntary sector seemed eclipsed by the headline-grabbing antics of looters, protestors, would-be and real revolutionaries. My case study NGO projects dealt in unspectacular politics by comparison, but, this chapter argues, no less significant.

Young people were not necessarily the ringleaders of 2011's civil unrest, but their participation incited particular interest, including vehemently hopeful and despairing commentary (Feixa, 2013). The state of youth politics is habitually employed as a proxy pulse reading for society, with young people proclaimed both the activist vanguard of social and cultural innovation, and apathetic harbingers of democratic deficit and doom (Farthing, 2010). This public juxtaposition was unrepresentative of the experiences of my research participants; socially diverse groups of young people aged 16-29 living in UK urban centres. If the students, sixth formers and street gangs were revolting, were some of them not hypothetically prime recruits? This disconnect made me recast how I envisaged social and political action by young people. I wanted to understand how youth politics had arrived at such paradox, and how theory and research might better incorporate young people's diverse experiences of shaping society.

This thesis examines the role that the voluntary sector can play in supporting young citizens, and the kinds of citizenship that it fosters. Attention to the farthest extremes of apathy and activism can be hyperbolic, and of little help towards understanding how young people might be influenced by opportunities to participate within organisational contexts that support voluntary action. Alongside interest in young people's attitudes, dispositions and political sub-cultures, '…it also seems important to understand how institutions (and features of these institutions) can help shape students' ideological frames' (Kahne, 2006 p.47). Following this line of enquiry, this thesis reports on a 16 month ethnographic study of two youth citizenship projects run by non-governmental organisations (NGOs):

- Global Youth Advocacy (GYA)[1], a national environmental campaigning initiative run by and for young people aged 16-29 on a voluntary basis, which supported national and international policy training and lobbying.

- Youth in Communities (YIC), a professionally staffed active citizenship provider linked to post-16 formal education, which ran a nine month schools and colleges programme and was also a delivery partner in National Citizen Service.

My research within these organisations was guided by four key questions:

1. How do these NGOs make space for and support youth citizenship?
2. What are young people's experiences of participation in this context?
3. What forces constrain and enable this work?
4. How is citizenship practiced and performed by NGOs and their young members?

To first set the scene and then critically examine original findings, this thesis is organised as follows:

Chapters 2 and 3 review the literature to establish a theoretical and research context for this project. Chapter 2 addresses the paradoxical representation of young people as riotous and revolutionary, with a critical synthesis of the ways in which divergent ideas about citizenship influence interpretations of youth participation. The discussion encompasses key debates about youth citizenship and relates this analysis to public commentary on youth in the 2011 England riots, to illustrate how alternative readings pervade contemporary ideas about citizenship. It is argued that a nuanced interpretive framework is required to incorporate inconsistency when researching young people's citizenship practices. Katz's (2004) work on young people's varied responses to global economic restructuring, specifically the concepts of resilience, reworking and resistance, is proffered as a theoretical approach that allows for tension and unlikely convergence within everyday acts of lived citizenship.

Chapter 3 outlines the case for researching the voluntary sector as a significant 'civic intermediary' (LeRoux, 2007) and examines its relationship with public and private

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[1] Pseudonyms are used throughout this thesis for the case study organisations and their members. The reasons for this are discussed in the methodology, in Chapter 4 section 4.5.3.

spheres of citizenship. It argues that NGOs are poised to support young people's participation through the provision of services and solidarity groups, but also that they might aggravate 'differential citizenship' (Lake and Newman, 2002) as a result of partial and piecemeal coverage. It reviews the growth and professionalisation of the UK voluntary sector and the neoliberal policy context that has influenced this, from 'shadow state' governance innovation (Wolch, 1990) to active citizenship and the Big Society. It also examines geographical scholarship on 'working the spaces of neoliberalism' (Bondi and Laurie, 2005), which offers similar nuance to Katz's resilience/reworking/resistance framework as a means through which the actions of the sector, its staff, volunteers and activists can be interpreted.

These chapters raise some overarching themes and critical convergences for exploration in primary research. The overlap between active citizenship and activism (Staeheli et al., 2013) is of particular interest, especially the 'dovetailing' of neoliberal forms of 'entrepreneurial' (Swyngedouw, 2005), 'self-regulatory citizenship' (Simpson, 2005) with voluntary sector invocations of citizen empowerment (Changfoot, 2007). This required a methodological design that could engage with NGO workers' and members' sense of 'conscious engagement' in practice (Murdock, 2003). Chapter 4 outlines the ethical and epistemological assumptions underpinning my research design, including how I addressed some of the particular challenges of NGO and youth research. It discusses the merits of the critical ethnographic methodology employed and provides an overview of the two case study NGOs that formed the basis of empirical research. This discussion covers organisational context, an explanation of how I worked with each of these NGOs, an overview of key data gathering techniques and what they produced, and some critical reflections on the fieldwork process.

The findings from this research are organised into three empirical chapters on the themes of employability, empowerment and resilience. Chapter 5 discusses the pervasiveness of employability in ideas about, and training for, active citizenship. It extends existing research in this area (Baillie Smith and Laurie, 2011, Brooks, 2009, Staeheli et al., 2013) by illustrating how voluntary sector professionalisation processes and the 'economy of experience' (Brown et al., 2003, Heath, 2007) reinforce unequal citizenship. It looks at how funding and other incentives induce NGOs and young people to perform citizenship as a means to employment and to specialise in niche

markets. Although my participants sometimes criticised and contested this, they nonetheless engaged in activities that exacerbated the uneven diffusion of social and spatial mobility in local, national and transnational contexts. In principle employability was cast as a subsidiary aspect of citizenship work, but in practice its influence was considerable.

Chapter 6 discusses GYA and YIC's efforts to 'engage' and 'empower' young citizens, acknowledging the ambiguity of this claim (Changfoot, 2007) but also specifying practices that NGO workers and young people associated with empowering citizenship experiences. It highlights evidence of three interrelated and mutually reinforcing civic intermediary activities commonly practiced by the case study NGOs – amplifying, bridging and capacity-building – and on this basis develops a conceptual model of NGO youth empowerment work. Having a clearer understanding of *how* NGOs are working to support young people can illuminate how policy goals such as active citizenship assume more expansive meanings in practice. Some limitations are acknowledged and it is not claimed that the case study NGOs always practiced what they preached. The model I have developed can nonetheless support critical reflection on practice, offering an original contribution to citizen empowerment literature by elaborating on the meanings and practices attached to this concept within the voluntary sector.

Chapter 7 explores the influence of self-regulatory, entrepreneurial forms of participation that promote resilience, extending Chapter 5's discussion beyond employability and economic competitiveness, to look at how NGOs and young people exemplified the qualities of good neoliberal citizens. In particular, it discusses the implications of conflating self and social transformation in citizenship projects premised on a 'process of *personal empowerment* located in an ability to deliberate and participate in *collective action*' (Whiteside and Mah, 2012 p.931, emphasis added). It outlines how young people's experiences of personal empowerment included learning to cope with precarity, implicit acceptance of inequality, assumed responsibility for effective self-management, and deferred demands for social change. Young people and NGOs made sense of their experiences by narrating 'stories of self' and 'unfinished journeys', which seemed to support resilience. This reinforced an individualised, developmental view of citizenship as a 'becoming' (Lawy and Biesta, 2006). I argue that the synchronicity

between resilience, activism and youth empowerment rendered the achievements of the case study citizenship projects fairly modest, chiefly in the realm of personal development for their members.

Overall the research evidence highlights a complex picture of reinforcement, resilience, reworking and resistance within the citizenship practices of the two case study organisations and their young members. Chapter 8 summarises the key insights derived from this account that offer an original contribution to youth citizenship and voluntary sector research. It also discusses limitations arising from the scope of this study and some emergent themes that I have identified which could be more fully explored and understood through future projects.

Chapter 2 which follows is an important scene-setting chapter because it situates my research within the literature on youth citizenship and introduces analytical concepts that underpin all of the later chapters and my treatment of the research findings. By featuring commentaries on the 2011 England riots in this chapter, I also hope to remind the reader of the wider economic and political context in which my fieldwork took place. Being employable, empowered and resilient can be read as a response – at times creative, at times capitulating – to the particular challenges of that time, with ongoing relevance to the ways in which young people and the voluntary sector organisations that support them are experiencing and reconstructing citizenship.

Chapter 2 Youth Citizenship as Reinforcement, Resilience, Reworking & Resistance

2.1 Introduction

This chapter argues that debates about how young people ought to behave and be supported as present and future citizens are strongly influenced by moral-philosophical differences in the concept of citizenship itself (Osler and Starkey, 2003). It develops this case through an original critical synthesis of work in human geography, political theory, sociology, education, youth studies and social psychology. Across and within these disciplines the meanings of citizenship, its spaces and associated practices are contested. Exploring points of tension and convergence offers a way of understanding the ideological fault lines of citizenship in late modernity, including how young people's political practices are inconsistently interpreted and reinforced. I employ Katz's (2004) work on resilience, reworking and resistance as an analytical approach that can help researchers to navigate these ambiguities, whilst also paying attention young people's agency and lived experiences of citizenship.

The first section of this chapter outlines why youth citizenship is a popular focus of research and what might be learned from this vantage point. This is followed by discussion of some key ideas that underpin analysis throughout the chapter, specifically Sen's (2010) philosophical work on justice and Katz's (2004) critique of oppositional politics from the perspective of young people's everyday lives. Some divergent approaches to conceptualising citizenship are reviewed, to give an indicative account of points of tension and convergence. These sections draw on contrasting media commentaries on youth in the 2011 England riots as an anchor for theoretical discussion. I am especially interested in where distinct interpretations of the 'good society' and 'good citizenship' overlap, often uneasily. The chapter concludes by drawing out some critical convergences relevant to my research aims, in particular the conflation of 'active' and 'activist' forms of citizenship in narratives of empowerment.

2.2 Why youth citizenship?

Debates about citizenship are not confined to the young, but assume prominence for youth at a critical juncture between childhood and adulthood, with the supposition

that this is when civic identities are tried on for size (Arnett, 2000) and take root (Flanagan and Sherrod, 1998, Frazer and Emler, 1997, Levine, 2006). Researchers may take an interest in young people's citizenship because:

- they take a developmental view of young people as citizens in training (Kirshner, 2007, Larson and Hansen, 2005);
- young people are archetypal subjects of policy interventions to promote citizenship, such as 'moral and social training' in schools (Dewey, 1996 [1916], Durkheim, 1961), citizenship education (Crick, 1999) and National Citizen Service (Cabinet Office 2012);
- they seek to challenge young people's marginalisation from mainstream politics and political theory (Checkoway et al., 2003, Lawy and Biesta, 2006);
- young people's experiences in 'liminal' spaces between childhood and adulthood offer insight into how public and private, macro and micro spheres of citizenship are connected (Philo and Smith, 2003, Skelton, 2010, Wood, 2012);
- the social and political behaviours of young people offer a means of speculating on social change (Flanagan and Levine, 2010, Juris and Pleyers, 2009).

The latter point in particular is perhaps responsible for the more hyperbolic claims attached to young people's participation. Furlong and Cartmel (2007 p. 137) state that mainstream social theory does not support a view of young people as 'the vanguard of social change'. Nonetheless, young people attract more than their fair share of scrutiny for their perceived failings and virtues as present and future citizens.

On the one hand each younger generation is accused of apathy, and disengaged young people are often interpreted as a symptom of or scapegoat for deteriorating democracy that requires remedial action (Putnam, 2001, Stolle and Hooghe, 2004). Considerable concern with youth citizenship derives from anxieties about 'generational deficit' (Furlong and Cartmel, 2007, Osler and Starkey, 2003, Rheingans and Hollands, 2013, Wyn, 2007). This accounts for the widespread view that meaningful participation needs practice, to enable young people to claim rights and assume responsibilities as useful society members. Levine and Youniss (2006 p.3) state that '...citizens are made, not born; it takes deliberate efforts to prepare young people to participate effectively and wisely in public life.'

On the other hand, researchers have accorded significant weight to young people's preferred modes of participation. Youth sub-cultural practices, protest forms and proficiency with new communication technologies excite prodigious interest, as if they might spark the remaking of the world, or at least a part of it (Al-Momani, 2011, Cecez-Kecmanovic et al., 2010, Coleman and Rowe, 2005, Gerodimos, 2010, Juris and Pleyers, 2009, Rheingans and Hollands, 2013, Solomon and Palmieri, 2011, Theocharis, 2012, Vromen, 2008). Even if a more cautious theoretical approach is adopted, recognising that youth civic engagement is forged in relation to and influenced by prevailing social institutions, still young people's citizenship is portrayed as a realm of possibility. Recent research by Staeheli and Nagel (2013) and Staeheli et al. (2013) considers the 'indeterminacy' of outcomes in youth civic education programmes directed by Western governments, universities and civil society networks. Young people absorb citizenship lessons, but may also put the skills and knowledge gained through such interventions to use in unforeseen ways that disrupt the status quo.

To address these various concerns, youth citizenship research encompasses many different scales and approaches. It may include attention to citizenship education in formal schooling (Crick, 1999, Dewey, 1996 [1916], Giroux, 1989, Kisby, 2009, Osler and Starkey, 2005, Youniss, 2011); the geopolitics of national and international policy networks that promote citizenship (Auvachez, 2009, Baillie Smith and Laurie, 2011, Staeheli and Hammett, 2013, Staeheli and Nagel, 2013, Stasiulis, 2002); the intergenerational transmission and adaptation of citizenship in multicultural communities (Amin, 2002, Hussain and Bagguley, 2005, Kymlicka, 2001); and young people's lived experiences of citizenship in particular localities and identity groups (Biesta et al., 2009, Checkoway et al., 2003, Feixa et al., 2009, Weller, 2003). Multifaceted discourses of democracy, rights, responsibilities and belonging are the basis on which diverse debates about youth citizenship are cast. Choices about how best to approach youth citizenship research to maximise opportunities for learning depend upon the position taken up within these debates, so it is worth unpacking some core assumptions.

2.3 Incorporating inconsistency

Smith (1995 p.190) observes that 'the literature on citizenship often seems confusing because the concept means different things to different people.' This section outlines

two broad theoretical approaches that I have found helpful towards understanding why youth citizenship is inconsistently interpreted, and for thinking through how I might work with this underlying tension in my research. I employ Sen's (2010) work on justice as a means to conceptualise citizenship as a duality between institutional and interactional P/politics, realised through policies, procedures and everyday lives. This offers a useful basis for considering a core point of departure for liberal, communitarian and republican theories of citizenship. I also look at how Katz (2004) casts young people's responses to global economic restructuring. This discussion reflects on how youth citizenship research might incorporate ambiguous agency by exploring practices of reinforcement, resilience, reworking and resistance.

2.3.1 Sen, *The Idea of Justice* and citizenship

In *The Idea of Justice,* Sen (2010) provides an overview of what he perceives as two distinct Enlightenment philosophical traditions that influence contemporary beliefs about democratic societies, including presuppositions about what membership entails. This work is useful for understanding the conceptual assumptions of different approaches to political theory and citizenship. Sen draws attention to how divergent and irreconcilable notions of fairness influence interpretations of rights, responsibilities and spaces of citizenship. He identifies a key issue that I think is relevant to youth citizenship research: whether the onus for a flourishing society is located mostly within institutions, communities or individuals.

Sen identifies the principal Enlightenment tradition as 'transcendental institutionalism'. This overarching categorisation is attached to the work of political theorists such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Immanuel Kant and more recently John Rawls. Sen argues that what unites the diverse works of these scholars is their concern with theories of perfect justice and institutional arrangements that might best put them into practice. Social contract theories and Rawls' 'principles of justice' (1999 [1971]), to which he claims all would concur if governing rules were devised irrespective of vested interests, are archetypal examples.

This approach to political theory aligns most closely with liberal notions of citizenship, whereby the principal focus is the institutionalisation of citizenship (Schuck, 2002). Liberal theorists are interested in the relationship between individuals and institutions

that support their citizenship claims, and in rules that maximise individual freedom (Kofman, 2003). A key historic focus for such concerns has been the legislative and policy frameworks of nation states, suggesting a 'structural connection between citizenship and space' (Painter and Philo, 1995 p.111). Boundaries are blurred, however, by precedents set by supranational institutions such as the United Nations, European Union and European Court of Justice (Auvachez, 2009), by devolved responsibility to local government (Rose, 2000) and especially by prominent roles conceded to the market and civil society (Smith, 1995). Even focussing on 'transcendental' institutions alone leads to disagreement about where citizenship is located, as different tiers or types of institution may be the preferred means of delivery.

Various institutions and the people within them jostle for power and cannot be considered in a vacuum. Sen argues that this makes the use of transcendental institutional theories somewhat 'redundant' for addressing the experiences of citizens of real societies. He also finds fault with this approach because, he argues, no institutional arrangement could feasibly claim to be value-free. Even on the establishment of universal human rights, which Sen broadly supports, he cautions:

> 'Proclamations of human rights, even though stated in the form of recognizing the *existence* of things that are called human rights, are really strong ethical pronouncements as to what *should* be done.' (p.357, original emphasis)

This critique serves as a reminder that institutions that guarantee citizenship are geopolitical projects with contestation and human foibles at their core (Painter and Philo, 1995), not divine instruments of justice.

Sen additionally identifies and aligns himself with a second philosophical tradition, which he calls 'realization-focussed comparison'. This refers to a diverse body of scholarship concerned with the lives people are feasibly able to lead and their relative prospects of attaining a decent and desirable standard of living. As with the former group, Sen claims several prominent political theorists as proponents of this view. He reasons that Karl Marx, Jeremy Bentham, Mary Wollstonecraft, Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill and advocates of social choice theory all focus, in one way or another, on manifest inequality of outcome in real societies. For Sen, the key difference in these

theorists' work is not the absence of an institutional perspective, but a greater emphasis on personal and social contexts:

> 'The importance of human lives, experiences and realizations cannot be supplanted by information about institutions that exist and the rules that operate. Institutions and rules are, of course, very important in influencing what happens, and they are part and parcel of the actual world as well, but the realized actuality goes well beyond the organizational picture, and includes the lives that people manage – or do not manage – to live.' (p.18)

By appreciating that both traditions influence contemporary political thought, it is possible to see how research into 'actually existing citizenship' (Staeheli, 2010) in young people's everyday lives and the relationship between 'formal' and 'substantive' citizenship (Kofman, 2003) has gained traction.

A greater emphasis of substantive citizenship can be found within communitarian and republican theories, which stem from dissatisfaction with the individualism of liberal approaches. Communitarians draw attention to cultural communities as people's foremost means of belonging, identifying and participating (Delanty, 2002). They presuppose that citizenship depends upon the exercise of rights and responsibilities as a community member, recognition within a cultural community and recognition of that community by fellow citizens and the state (Kofman, 2003). Republicans alternatively conceive of community as a vessel through which people perform and build 'civic virtue' (Dagger, 2002), recasting citizenship as a practice through which people actively create 'publics' and, to a large extent, exercise self-government (Dagger, 2002, Delanty, 2002, Kofman, 2003). Putnam's (1995, 2001) work on social capital and 'the collapse and revival of American community' is perhaps the best known contemporary example of a combined approach, advocating for a more participatory 'republican-communitarian citizenship' (Dekker and Uslaner, 2001, Kisby, 2009 p.47).

Geographers' main contribution to citizenship theory has been to highlight the various scales and sites through which citizenship is claimed, practiced and contested (Kofman, 2003, McEwan, 2005, Painter and Philo, 1995, Staeheli, 2010). Spatial analysis reveals intersections of public and private, mainstream and marginal, international and local, formal and substantive citizenship. As with transcendental institutional theories, such analysis renders normative assumptions about community problematic because they

disregard its various and contradictory locations and drivers (Delanty, 2002). When researching youth citizenship, for example, is the relevant focus: young people's (non)status and rights according to state and international law; their economic activity; the civic education they receive in school; national identity; their role in families and neighbourhoods; youth subcultures; use of public space; their experiences as cultural minorities or majorities; membership of online communities; political action; voluntary action; everyday lives? The lives that young people manage to live clearly depend upon multiple pathways for participation.

Sen's argument is not grounded in citizenship theory, but his central concern with 'lives, freedoms and capabilities' (p.225) can inform work that deals with rights, responsibilities and spaces of citizenship. His differentiation of transcendental institutionalism and realization-focussed comparison offers a basis for understanding the various and divergent ways that citizenship is conceptualised. His analysis casts 'utility' and 'resource-based' approaches to understanding people's participation as insufficient without an accompanying understanding of 'actual opportunities for living' (p.233), favouring a substantive approach to theorising citizenship.

Sen's focus on the intersection of institutions with the 'realized actuality' of people's lives is a concern shared by geographers who focus on the practice and contestation of citizenship at different sites and scales (Brown, 1997, Kofman, 2003, Painter and Philo, 1995, Smith, 1995, Staeheli and Hammett, 2013). Youth citizenship research is about how 'macro-political' and 'constitutive' citizenship is made for young people (Kallio and Häkli, 2013), but it is also about 'lived citizenship' – how young people remake citizenship and what they experience through this process (Skelton, 2010, Staeheli et al., 2013). Katz's (2004) work on local responses to global economic restructuring offers a useful example of how to critically synthesise macro and micro P/political practices to write about citizenship from the lives that young people manage to live.

2.3.2 Katz, *Growing up Global* and citizenship as reinforcement, resilience, reworking and resistance

My research works with three key terms from Katz's (2004) ethnographic study *Growing up Global*. This book describes how children experience the impacts of and respond to global economic restructuring in Harlem, New York and Howa in rural

Sudan. Katz's dual site 'counter-topography' offers a sophisticated strategy for researching the multi-scale P/politics of social reproduction that constitute children's lived experiences of citizenship (Kallio and Häkli, 2013, Skelton, 2010). Katz disrupts a conventional view of mainstream and marginal spaces of the global economy and sees her young participants as competent social actors. Nonetheless, she situates their struggles as 'policy objects' (Kallio and Häkli 2013 p.4) in the context of macro-political trends such as neoliberalisation, workforce reconstitution and the expansion of education programmes. I am interested in three practices of 'sociosymbolic reformulation' that Katz identifies as being critical to young people's fates in relation to such trends: resilience, reworking and resistance.

Resilience refers to 'innumerable small acts' of adaptation, self-care and support that sustain young people and their communities (p.246). Such actions can transform lived experiences of citizenship, so that even those who bear the brunt of inequality, or who lack freedoms and entitlements enjoyed by others, are not necessarily reduced to 'immiseration and capitulation' (p.152). Katz describes, for example, how membership of street gangs or participation in the reorganisation of local economies may offer means of 'material and spiritual survival' and 'the recuperation of dignity' (p.246). Identifying acts of resilience offers one way to address the thorny issue of political agency in young people, even in contexts that might not be immediately recognised as political, or where institutional forces seem to subject and direct them (Kallio and Häkli, 2013, Skelton, 2013).

Reworking includes explicit recognition of, and efforts to reform, unfair social practices. In Katz's research, reworking is generally enacted by those who are at a disadvantage. She describes people's efforts to 'redirect' resources in their favour and 'retool' themselves as competent social and political actors. Two key examples offered are community efforts to disrupt racialized class patterns of disinvestment in urban public space in Harlem, and increased uptake of schooling among rural boys and girls in Howa as a means of 'steeling children for the future' (p.249). Acts of reworking illustrate that citizenship is 'not simply… conferred or denied' by institutions, but 'used strategically to secure basic rights' (Smith, 1995 p.193), including through reformative efforts directed at institutions.

Acts of resilience and reworking demonstrate that young people have agency within the 'realized actuality' of their lives, essentially through self-government and strategic claims for constitutive citizenship rights. Katz acknowledges, however, that resilience and reworking sustain 'the general trajectory of the developments that necessitated these acts in the first place' (p.246), in other words barely disrupting the geopolitical trends responsible for her participants' poverty. For citizenship to offer substantive opportunities for equitable treatment and 'the means to participate in and shape the future of at least a part of society' (Smith, 1995 p.192), further recourse is required.

Katz argues that acts of outright resistance are much rarer, including in this category only deliberately oppositional practices that challenge inequitable relationships and raise awareness of alternative possibilities:

> 'Practices of resistance draw on and produce a critical consciousness to confront and redress historically and geographically specific conditions of oppression and exploitation at various scales.' (p.251)

Acts of resistance may overlap with reworking, for example a literacy education programme in Harlem, inspired by the work of Freire (1970, 2005[1974]), that was both a means of 'retooling' community members and fostering social critique to support community activism. Resistance casts people's participation as troubling of the status quo. This is more akin to a radical democratic interpretation of citizenship associated with new social movements, which put into practice:

> '…an anti-essentialist politics that continually attempts to redefine itself in order to resist the exclusion of individuals and groups in the formation of the social order' (Rasmussen and Brown, 2002 p.175)

Though institutions may be the focus of some resistance acts, this approach to citizenship alternatively emphasises everyday forms of power, 'deep' democracy, new spaces of citizenship and struggles over hegemony at different sites and scales.

Katz's conceptualisation of resilience, reworking and resistance offers youth citizenship researchers a way of critically engaging with complex and contradictory processes of social reproduction, without negating lived experiences of citizenship. It is useful for theorising from 'liminal' spaces (Wood, 2012) and disrupting the juxtaposition of public

and private P/politics, without necessarily claiming that all of young people's citizenship practices have far-reaching political consequences.

As a tool for analysis, it is also helpful to admit a fourth possibility. Katz talks of 'revanchist' social policies that react against reformist and radical attempts to redefine citizenship, specifically in the context of institutional attempts to assert neoliberalism as 'hegemonic common sense' (Massey, 2013). Another potential outcome of young people's citizenship practices is therefore an element of reinforcement of the dominant values of the society of which they are a part. Reinforcement can therefore be considered alongside resilience, reworking and resistance to explore inconsistencies in young people's lived experiences of citizenship.

The following sections discuss some alternative approaches to conceptualising youth citizenship, exploring how Katz's and Sen's work might support a critical interpretation of inconsistency. This discussion encompasses youth citizenship and: social democracy, neoliberalism, social capital, 'alter-activism' (Juris and Pleyers, 2009) and consciousness raising. This work is not intended to serve as an exhaustive account of citizenship theory, but a means to explore how some of the ideological fault lines I have sketched generate different beliefs about, expectations of and support for young people's participation. This discussion draws on commentary on the 2011 England riots for illustrative purposes, but as Katz's work demonstrates, such analysis need not be limited to extraordinary events.

2.4 Youth citizenship and social democracy

According to Smith (1995), the 'key ideological struggle' underpinning citizenship is between a social democratic and neoliberal perspective. This section briefly outlines the influence and limitations of the social democratic perspective, before I examine the contrasting neoliberal perspective in the next section. Using Katz's analytical approach, social democracy can be understood as a somewhat successful aggregate attempt to rework liberal citizenship. It institutionalises the expectation that equality entails some redistributive measures as well as rights and responsibility, expanding citizenship from individual freedom to collective and social obligations. Using Sen's analytical approach, social democracy can also be understood as a transcendental institutional theory dissatisfied with the capacity of markets and 'weak' state interference to support

citizenship. This perspective envisages the state as a service provider as well as an arbitrator. Social democracy could also be understood as a response to realization-focussed critique concerned with material disadvantage, promising all citizens 'the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security' (Marshall, 1950 p.30). This approach has historically had considerable traction in UK politics, which combines 'the liberal with the social democratic and its more collectivist provision of services' (Kofman, 2003 p.395).

In the UK context, social democracy is associated with the 'emancipatory politics' of modernity expressed in concerns about 'life chances' (Giddens, 1991) and most clearly espoused in the Keynesian economic interventionism of the post war consensus. It goes beyond the idea of citizenship as a social contract based on balancing self-government with legal protection, to allow the state a greater regulatory role and promote a 'citizenship of entitlement' (Smith, 1995). This is the impetus behind the welfare state as a guarantor of social security for casualties of inequality (Basok and Ilcan, 2006, Esping-Anderson, 2002). In this view, public institutions play a crucial role in supporting inclusion and ensuring citizens can access essential resources. In 1950 Marshall gave schools and social services as the best examples, as they aimed to furnish everyone with at least a basic means of participation in social, political and economic life. Though Chapter 3 will explore efforts to reassign some of this role to civil society (Fyfe, 2005, Lake and Newman, 2002, Swyngedouw, 2005), traditionally in welfare states the public sector assumes significant responsibility for people's wellbeing.

Children and young people are key beneficiaries of integrative support. Social democracy invokes a paternalistic logic for looking after all citizens of the state, but especially young people who are considered to be minors, affording them rights through a protective focus on 'duty of care' (Marshall, 1997). As Checkoway et al. (2003 p.299) observe, viewing young people as 'deficient' or 'vulnerable' members of society lends emotional impetus to initiatives to 'save the children', 'defend their rights' and 'protect them from worsening conditions'. Welfare state interventions can lead to positive outcomes for young citizens, such as the provision of basic nourishment, housing, health and education services and protection from harm. Such provision may enrich young people's lived experiences of citizenship and help to develop their capabilities. However, this provisioning model entrusts young people's wellbeing to

guardians, risking abuse of power and disenfranchisement by casting them merely as policy objects or 'citizens in the making' (Biesta et al., 2009, Checkoway et al., 2003, Cohen, 2005). This could be construed as an essentially 'passive' form of citizenship (Basok and Ilcan, 2006 p.311).

To be substantive, a citizenship of entitlement depends upon young people's participation and representation in public life, to derive benefit from and safeguard entitlements. This brings focus to young people's involvement (or lack thereof) with the state through schools, social and health services, representative groups such as unions and voluntary associations, and systems of local and national democracy. From such a perspective some researchers endeavour to measure youth participation, comparing inter-and-intra group differences and variation across time and space, drawing attention to persistent underrepresentation in some quarters (e.g. Adsett, 2003, Bynner, 2005, Cainzos and Voces, 2010, EUYOUPART, 2005, Park, 2004). This approach can be helpful for identifying young people who might require additional support, but should be used with caution. Focussing on institutionalised participation alone risks disregarding alternative spaces of citizenship which may be equally or more relevant to young people's lived experiences as society members (Farthing, 2010, Stolle and Hooghe, 2004). This critique is discussed further in section 2.7.

A social democratic critique of the 2011 England riots might lay blame with the state, particularly with failings in public institutions that are supposed to provide for and support the integration of young people. Writing in *The Independent*, Batmanghelidjh (2011) charged:

> 'The insidious flourishing of anti-establishment attitudes is paradoxically helped by the establishment. It grows when a child is dragged by their mother to social services screaming for help and security guards remove both; or in the shiny academies which, quietly, rid themselves of the most disturbed kids.'

She was one of many commentators to interpret the riots as a product of young people's exclusion from citizenship; a last resort of defiance by the desperate and dispossessed. Here, riots are recognised as a symptom of an unjust society, where rights, resources and representation are disproportionately distributed to an intolerable extreme. Generational deficit is framed as a problem of disenfranchisement

(Edwards, 2007), with the state held accountable for failing to provide for young people, and also for failing to sufficiently regulate the market to altogether avoid or alleviate the impact of financial crisis.

This critique infers that better regulation by the state – of both its young citizens and the market – might avoid a repeat of such events. Young citizens' anger can be addressed through better institutional arrangements, including targeted interventions in communities that are most affected by austerity. Yet the riots could also be said to reveal limits to what reworking can achieve. A key criticism of social democracy is its deference to the market and faith in the state's ability to provide substantive equality through redress, without addressing root causes. Massey (2013 p.6) contends that:

> '...social democrats have traditionally confined their ambitions to altering the balance of distributions - between what is called the private and the public, the market and the state systems – while not seriously questioning the dominant architecture of the system.'

Reworking is a useful way of framing social democracy and citizenship claims made on this basis. Social democrats attempt to redistribute power and resources and retool the public, but within a context in which the general trajectory of capitalist states is taken for granted. I am sketching a complex political ideology crudely, but the point is to highlight the primacy of institutions in this approach. A particular limitation is the extent to which citizenship is confined to either the market or the state (Delanty, 2002), with an insufficiently acknowledged conflict of interest between the two. An appreciation of the concurrent influence of neoliberalism is necessary to understand why Smith casts this as an 'ideological struggle'.

2.5 Youth citizenship and neoliberalism

If social democracy is associated with efforts to rework liberal citizenship, then Katz's interpretation of neoliberalism as a 'revanchist' institutional response can be recognised to the extent that it is an attempt to reassert the primacy of individual freedom and limit the regulatory role of the state (Massey, 2013). According to Sen, liberal theories of justice are the most influential within Western democracies. The liberal state's fundamental ethical commitment to personal liberty – within a modicum of agreed and arbitrated boundaries – offers an expedient answer to living with

difference, and is relatively undemanding of its citizens (Rawls, 2005 [1993], Kisby, 2009, Kymlicka, 2001). Liberal transcendental institutional theories are effective because they maximise individual choice, at least hypothetically, appealing foremost to self-interest and self-direction (Massey, 2013). The pay-off of this pact for minimal interference is that people must assume a greater degree of responsibility for their wellbeing, as active rather than passive citizens. For proponents of neoliberalism, the market is the best means for delivering such an arrangement.

Since the 1970s, extensive reforms and valorisation of free market rationality have advanced a difference-blind social contract in which consumer choice is the measure and means of freedom. Though consumption appears to offer a realization-focussed means of enabling people to pursue lives that they deem worthwhile, on the other hand substantive choice about the shape of society is withdrawn (Massey, 2013). Critics of neoliberalism have argued that re-balancing the responsibilities of the state and the market has meant 'hollowing out' citizenship to reduce collective responsibility (Marquand, 2004). Neoliberalism has effectively repealed many social democratic interventions in public life, whilst also embedding market governance and exalting individualism in everyday spaces of citizenship (Bondi and Laurie, 2005, Dwyer, 2003, Harvey, 2002). Peck and Tickell (2002) identify this evolution from 'rollback' to 'rollout' neoliberalism as a critical development. Neoliberalism is effective because it appears apolitical, offering organising principles without utopian goals beyond choice and economic prosperity. Jessop (2002 p.467) observes that 'ideology is most effective when ideological elements are invisible', so the success of neoliberalism as a transcendental institutional approach rests on 'the assumption of the naturalness of markets' (Massey, 2013 p.16).

In youth research, the impact of neoliberalism has been explored through the idea of 'risk society' (Beck, 1992[1986], Beck and Beck-Gernscheim, 2003). Risk society research deals with material and symbolic impacts of neoliberalism such as economic insecurity, abrupt discontinuity in the roles young people are raised for, increasing inequality, and the reconstitution of identity from traditional communities to transient and cosmopolitan ties (Cieslik and Pollock, 2002). A major contention of this work is that as young people negotiate a new risk environment, their relationship with politics is largely expressed through individual lifestyle choices (Furlong and Cartmel, 2007).

Such an experience might also be described as a kind of precarity, which Waite (2009 p.426) defines as:

> '…referring to life worlds characterised by uncertainty and insecurity that are either thought to originate from a generalised societal malaise, or as a result of particular experiences derived from neo-liberal labour markets.'

Waite prefers to confine this term to analysis of labour market activism. In the context of youth geographies this specificity is perhaps less helpful, because deferred or denied labour market entry may be a key feature of young people's experiences of socioeconomic dislocation. Wyn (2007 p.170) argues that young people's life narratives are increasingly affected by 'a decline in the stability of social structures such as family, work and social security and a loosening of the links between structures such as education and work.'

Risk society is a useful way of understanding the relocation of responsibility for citizenship, from the collective provisioning of the state to neoliberal exaltation of choice-making. Giddens (1991) conceptualises this as a shift from emancipatory politics to 'life politics', situating the self rather than society as the critical terrain of struggle for recognition as people assume greater responsibility for effective self-management. He describes 'fateful moments' (p.113) as ones to which individuals respond through a process of risk-assessment, re-skilling and identity work, turning potential crises into opportunities as part of their 'project of self'. This bears some similarity to Katz's analysis of resilience as a practice through which young people may assert agency through their life choices, yet generally adapt to the status quo. The institutional promotion of 'active citizenship' (Chapter 3, section 3.5) likewise casts neoliberal citizenship as a kind of 'self-provisioning' (Smith, 1995).

The influence of neoliberalism is a central preoccupation of generational deficit accounts of youth participation (Rheingans and Hollands, 2013), with the fear being that it undermines social cohesion and fosters 'weak citizenship' (Davies, 2012). This is expressed in concerns about consumption as young people's foremost means of identity construction (Deutsch and Theodorou, 2009). This anxiety was reflected in commentaries on the riots that focussed on wanton consumption as the underlying driver. Bauman (2011) judged that 'These are not hunger or bread riots. These are riots of defective and disqualified consumers'; whilst in *The Telegraph* Whitehead

(2011) highlighted concerns about a 'something for nothing' society, quoting from the Riots Communities and Victims Panel:

> 'Increasingly we live in a society where conspicuous consumption and self-worth have become intrinsically interlinked. Some would argue consumerism is the 'new religion'... In the Panel's conversations with communities and young people, the desire to own goods which give the owner high status (such as branded trainers and digital gadgets) was seen as an important factor behind the riots.'

This commentary is consistent with a hollowing out hypothesis, despairing at young people's behaviour for reflecting deep civic malaise. Similar concerns were raised in Work and Pensions Secretary Ian Duncan-Smith's reaction, which blamed 'X factor culture' and 'get rich quick' work and celebrity role models (Metro, 2011). Jensen (2013) suggests that the riots were constructed as 'a problematic kind of wanting' symptomatic of 'rampant materialism and social decay', which meant that structural factors such as poverty and exclusion were overlooked. This illustrates how, though neoliberalism promises non-interference, it paradoxically deploys the language of hard work, 'obligations and altruism' (Smith, 1995 p.190) as a means of governing dissatisfied citizen-consumers (Davies 2012).

Peck and Tickell's (2002) terms 'rollback' and 'rollout' neoliberalism are useful for conceptualising critique of neoliberal citizenship as a shift from collective to self-provisioning. Neoliberal citizen-consumers are encouraged to value economic participation and choice first and foremost, to assume personal responsibility for acquiring the means of an acceptable standard of living, and to be resilient and entrepreneurial in times of crisis rather than make collective demands. This perspective attaches inequality to the idea that the advantages that some citizens enjoy over others are earned. This is tolerated as an acceptable arrangement if the public believe it reflects people's actual performance. For instance, bonuses paid to CEOs of failed banks are more questionable than high corporate salaries in general. Here material comfort and participation are not entitlements, but privileges earned through personal investment and responsible decision-making. Neoliberal citizenship could be likened to shareholding: in theory anybody can 'buy in' but inevitably a minority end up with a controlling stake.

Despite institutional incursions which naturalise neoliberalism, geographers and others have been eager to stress that it is not universally accepted (Bondi and Laurie, 2005, Gibson-Graham, 2008). Critics of risk society research argue that the extent of individualisation has been overstated, pointing to collective and structural factors that also influence people's participation (Rheingans and Hollands 2012; Waite 2009). In Katz' research, neoliberalism is demonstrated to have had profound, yet different, material consequences for young people in two localities, and community practices of resilience, reworking and resistance are diverse. For a more complete account of young people's lived experiences of citizenship, it is crucial to also consider how realization-focussed approaches and policy preferences interact with neoliberal institutional frameworks. The next three sections discuss examples of such approaches, working towards a more relational interpretation of youth citizenship.

2.6 Youth citizenship and social capital

Social capital theory is often proffered as a way of understanding political socialisation and patterns of participation. The term originates in de Tocqueville's (1969 [1840]) observations about the importance of vibrant associational life for sustaining democracy, later developed in Europe as a means to understand the social reproduction of class (Bourdieu, 1977), and in Putnam's (1995, 2001) account of its apparent decline in the United States. Social capital researchers highlight the value of social networks for enabling citizens to realise rights and responsibilities, such as the influence of families and neighbourhoods, and opportunities available through school, work and leisure activities. Social capital theory can be usefully envisaged as a republican-communitarian modification of the weak citizenship of neoliberalism (Davies 2012; Kisby 2009), emphasising personal and collective responsibility for civic health with particular attention to socially-embedded practices that reproduce responsible citizens (Kisby, 2009, Landrum, 2002).

Social capital theory has gained substantial traction in policy-making with a broad base appeal on the left and right of the political spectrum. Considerable divergence between the prominent social capital theories of Bourdieu and Putnam has led to quite different uses of the term being applied in research and practice at cross-purposes (Holt, 2008). On the one hand, taking social capital into account raises concerns about inequality of opportunity, the relativity of 'life chances' and the distribution of social investment

(Bamfield, 2004, Fairclough, 2000, Giddens, 1998, Raffo, 2003). This generates realization-focussed critique, for example scholarship on social capital as a key terrain of class struggle (Bourdieu, 1992[1979], Bourdieu, 1977, Brown et al., 2003, Butler, 2003) and its uneven socio-spatial distribution (Butler, 2003, Dowling, 2009, Mohan, 2011, Thomson et al., 2002). On the other hand, it can equally be used to find fault with deprived communities and muster support for meritocracy, for instance in Conservative rhetoric about 'Broken Britain' (Dwyer, 2003), 'charity deserts' (Duncan-Smith, in Mohan 2011), and a 'responsibility agenda' for society (Conservative Party, 2008).

Both perspectives offer an incentive for governments to invest in young people to develop their capabilities as active citizens (Lister, 2006). With support to develop appropriate skills, knowledge and social networks, young people are supposed better able to partake in and contribute to their communities (Helve and Bynner, 2007, Landrum, 2002). Social capital development requires intervention; to help young people accumulate socio-economic savvy and mitigate deficiencies arising from under-resourced circumstances. For instance, Gimpel and Lay (2006 p.10) conducted research in the United States to identify risk factors associated with 'poor socialisation' and youth civic 'cynicism', contending that each:

> '...is a kind of weight that adds to the inertia holding one away from moving
> towards the goal of responsible citizenship.'

They include indicators such as belonging to an ethnic minority group, immigrant or single-parent household, being female, secular, and having a negative attitude towards schooling. The inference is that if such factors can identify at-risk youth, then these young people can be targeted by civic education programmes and skills training to improve their citizenship prospects.

Social capital theory could on the one hand be interpreted as a benevolent attempt to understand and try to alleviate inequality of opportunity for young people as they enter civic life. Some scholars consider a focus on skills for responsible citizenship to be a pragmatic safeguard for young citizens. Lolichen (2006 p.21) makes the case that:

> 'People's participation is critical for maintaining a healthy democracy with
> egalitarian principles. However, if the socialisation process of individuals

does not encourage this and they have no experience of this as children, the 'citizen' does not activate his/her citizenship rights.'

Putnam (2001) similarly argues that *bonding* and *bridging* social capital support people's participation and benefit society as a whole. He envisages these as two distinct yet equally vital ingredients for healthy, harmonious social relations. Bonding social capital refers to relationships of trust and reciprocity with similar others in communities of belonging, for instance families, close-knit neighbourhoods and those sharing the same faith or culture. This is a core component of socialisation. Putnam argues it is also necessary for people to socialise with others who are *not* like them. This develops bridging social capital, strengthening diverse societies through relationships of mutual respect that help people to live peacefully with difference (see also Kymlicka, 2001). Putnam conceptualises both kinds of social capital as interdependent, suggesting that social fragmentation and isolation *within* communities risks a breakdown of good relations *between* them.

Social capital deficiency is often put forward as an explanation for civil unrest. This was another of the key factors raised in public commentary on the 2011 riots. For example, an article in *The Guardian* (Henwood, 2011) linked poor socialisation with a perceived breakdown of social order:

> 'In the aftermath of the 7/7 bombings there was a brief period of solidarity... The current riots that have swept through the capital and out to other main urban centres have been accompanied by quite different emotions. The feeling has been of mistrust and disunity... It isn't just about divorce and family fragmentation... It is symptomatic, though, of a deeper moral malaise, where fundamental values and social norms have seemingly collapsed.'

In this account social fragmentation in the home, the neighbourhood, the capital and the nation is envisaged as intimately connected. This is one of many ways that contemporary analyses of youth citizenship link public and private practices. Here a causal relationship is implied between the failure of the private and the collapse of the public, with both deemed unfit to perform bonding and bridging work. One of the key contributions of social capital theory has been to raise the profile of voluntary associations as spaces that span the public and private, providing curative opportunities

for skills development and relationship building (Jessop, 2002, McMurray and Niens, 2012). This hypothesised intermediary role of the voluntary sector is discussed at length in Chapter 3.

Some researchers are wary of the language of social capital theory, interpreting it as a deliberate effort to shift the burden of responsibility for citizenship from the state to civil society (Randel et al., 2004). Holt (2008) argues that Putnam's 'dominant conceptualisation' of social capital is popular with policy makers because it is:

> '...implicitly bound up with a particular neoliberal politics that shifts the cause of inequality, hardship, socio-economic exclusion and poverty away from the operations of the political economy ultimately onto individuals' and groups' civic engagement.' (p.230)

Its logic can be used to lay blame for inequality on 'communities characterized by bad citizenship' (Gimpel and Lay 2006 p.10), irrespective of people's experiences of historical and structural marginalisation. For example, this commentary on the riots from *The Daily Mail* (Hastings, 2011) conflates welfare dependency with a selfish attitude and poor socialisation:

> 'Most [rioters] have no jobs to go to or exams they might pass. They know no family role models... Liberal opinion holds they are victims, because society has failed to provide them with opportunities to develop their potential... Rather, they are victims of a perverted social ethos, which elevates personal freedom to an absolute... They are products of a culture which gives them so much unconditionally that they are let off learning how to become human beings.'

Here, perceived social capital deficiency is not employed to justify more social investment in young people, but to write some of them off as irresponsible non-citizens who are less than human. All citizens are held equally responsible for developing social capital regardless of what resources they begin with, and are deemed deficient if they fail to do so.

If social capital is theorised, not as a 'general social good' as in Putnam's theorisation, but in the Bourdieusian sense of reproducing positional (dis)advantage (Holt, 2010 p.26), then it might instead prompt critical reflection on its socio-spatial distribution

and how this affects the opportunities available to young people. Critiques of the idea that youth is characterised by an extended transition to adulthood (Arnett, 2000, Valentine, 2003, Worth, 2009b) illustrate how some young people disproportionately benefit from a grace period of social capital development relatively free from responsibility and financial burdens, for example through increasing uptake of gap years and higher education (Brown et al., 2003, Desforges, 1998, Heath, 2007). This results in social mobility for some, contributing to a widening participation gap between rich and poor youth, or a 'polarisation between fast and slow track transitions' (Helve and Bynner, 2007 p.8).

Empirical studies often focus on local contexts such as neighbourhoods and schools, but another potential application of this critique is to emergent forms of 'global' citizenship. Lorimer (2010 p.315) protests that global citizenship practices are naively celebrated with:

> '...little attention to the material assemblages – of objects, bodies, practices and standards – which perform the geographies and histories of (dis)connection at the heart of contemporary citizenship.'

Massey's (1994 p.151) provocative question about 'whether our relative mobility and power over mobility and communication entrenches the spatial imprisonment of other groups' is especially pertinent to this field of enquiry. One way that youth geographers have engaged with such a critique is by studying the relationship between global citizenship programmes, social mobility and neoliberal professionalization (Baillie Smith and Laurie, 2011, Jones, 2009a).

Social capital theory has been criticised for espousing an uncritical perspective in regard to neoliberal capitalist development (Kisby, 2009, Landrum, 2002). Just as social democracy can be conceptualised as a limited institutionalised reworking towards redistributive justice, policy projects premised on social capital theory can be interpreted as attempts to build resilience by retooling and re-skilling communities at risk. This is a remedial response to the atomistic tendencies of neoliberalism, that paradoxically helps to sustain it by making inequality more palatable (Jessop, 2002). The dovetailing of republican-communitarian notions of self-reliance with those of neoliberal policy makers (Changfoot, 2007) is a key convergence underpinning citizenship as resilience. This convergence plays a role in encouraging young people to

engage in 'entrepreneurial' kinds of participation (Baillie Smith and Laurie, 2011, Swyngedouw, 2005) and model aspirations around 'neoliberal forms of self-regulatory citizenship' which 'give primacy to the ability of the individual to compete in social and employment market places' (Simpson, 2005 p.448).

Landrum (2002 p.227) contends that social capital is:

> '...an expression that captures the cultural preconditions of wealth production, especially the cognitive and social dispositions that enable individuals to acquire the skills needed for employment.'

Unreliable and under-employment are persistent and deepening concerns for young people (Porcaro, 2010, Wearden, 2011), putting pressure on social capital development as a means of bolstering their chance of economic security. Bourdieusian research by Brown et al. (2003), Brooks (2009) and Bynner (2006) illustrates how social capital underpins status struggles not only within formal education, but increasingly young people's choice of voluntary activities as 'something for the CV' (Brooks 2009) that can offer distinction over peers and expand social networks. Such a narrow approach risks making citizenship the preserve of the privileged as neither young people nor their communities have equal resources to draw upon (Lake and Newman, 2002, Thomson et al., 2002), nor equal development opportunities (Brooks, 2009, Bynner, 2005, Wyness, 2009). It also disregards alternative kinds of contribution that young people might make (Arnot and Reay, 2007, Dunne and Gazeley, 2008), subordinating political and social citizenship practices to economic activity. As the next two sections illustrate, young people's lived experiences of citizenship cannot be construed in quite so narrow terms.

2.7 Youth citizenship and alter-activism

This chapter has so far outlined the broad thrust of citizenship theories that influence social policy, but it is just as important to explore young people's actual experiences of citizenship. There is a substantial body of research that critically responds to deficit-based accounts of youth participation to challenge the assumption that young people are not politically competent. This literature explores evidence of social action and agency from within young people's everyday lives (Biesta et al., 2009, Kallio and Häkli, 2013). Fostered by conceptual and methodological developments in the new social

studies of childhood and the sub-discipline of children's geographies (Holloway and Valentine, 2000, Vanderbeck, 2008), this research emanates from the assumption that children and youth are capable social actors (James, 2007); not deficient citizens or citizens in the making (Checkoway et al., 2003). It builds on feminist critique of the spaces of citizenship to emphasise how public, private and 'liminal' citizenship practices are interconnected (Skelton, 2010, Wood, 2012), disrupting geopolitical constructions of local/global and micro/macro politics with a more relational interpretation (Ansell, 2009, Hörschelmann and Schäfer, 2005, Skelton, 2013). This is a realization-focussed approach because it emphasises that:

> 'The practices of citizenship – the daily repetitions that are part and parcel of the relationships that construct and disrupt citizenship – are important to the lives of people and to the potential of citizens to act.' (Staeheli, 2010 p.399)

This research encompasses diverse understandings of citizenship, from young people's participation in family life (Biesta et al., 2009), to staking claims on recreational public space (Weller, 2003), to reworking national identity through local practices of identity formation (Hörschelmann and Schäfer, 2005, Jones Marshall, 2013).

Despite attempts to establish a 'research orthodoxy' in the construction of young people as competent citizens (James, 2007), underlying friction remains within political research which regards children in particular as ideologically vulnerable and excluded from public life (Cohen, 2005, Philo and Smith, 2003, Skelton, 2010, Stasiulis, 2002). Consequently, a sizeable subset of research about young people's political practices focuses on young adulthood and post-16 associational activities. This research is influenced by social movement studies which explore 'new spaces of citizenship' (Rasmussen and Brown, 2002 p.176) and conceptualise citizenship as 'the struggle to define the terrain of the political' (p.187). From this perspective, young people's lived experiences of citizenship become a focus for research because they might offer evidence of emerging cultures of participation that portend wider social change. Juris and Pleyers (2009 p.58) argue that youth 'alter-activism' represents:

> '...a specific type of (sub-) cultural practice and an emerging form of citizenship among young people that prefigures wider social changes

related to political commitment, cultural expression and collaborative practice.'

Research in this tradition builds on the idea that some historical youth movements were at the forefront of change (Esler, 1972) to speculate on the future by studying how young people are remaking citizenship. It includes ethnographies of global summits, rallies, direct actions, occupations and other 'alternative spaces' of citizenship, accounts of community-based cooperative action, and significant attention to the role of communication technologies and social media in offering possibilities for collective action beneath and beyond the state (Al-Momani, 2011, Cecez-Kecmanovic et al., 2010, Checkoway et al., 2003, Coleman and Rowe, 2005, Feixa et al., 2009, Gerodimos, 2010, Gordon, 2010, Ismail, 2011, Juris and Pleyers, 2009, Quijada, 2008, Rheingans and Hollands, 2013, Solomon and Palmieri, 2011, Theocharis, 2012, Vromen, 2008, Weller, 2003).

Alter-activism researchers are less concerned about evidence of youth disengagement from traditional political institutions, such as declining party membership and voter turnout, providing political action is occurring elsewhere. This literature emphasises young people's identification with 'causes', lifestyles and social movements (Feixa et al., 2009, Rossi, 2009). It also recognises young people's broader engagement with voluntary activities, consumer identities and technologies as potentially political, in reaction against 'adult-centric' definitions of politics. Farthing (2010 p.185) argues that 'young people are creating and reshaping new *forms* of politics that have simply not been recognized yet', citing online spaces of citizenship and ethical consumerism as key examples. Such a critique overlaps somewhat with Beck's and Gidden's focus on 'life politics', though with a greater degree of optimism about where this might lead, suggesting a culture shift towards radical possibilities from young people's affiliations and citizenship practices. Even the 2011 riots – hardly an exemplar of positive youth engagement – excited interest in the organising technologies used by young people. *The Economist* commented in an editorial on the 'BlackBerry riots':

> 'The digital revolution allows people to organise against the authorities –
> not just in the Middle East, but also in Britain.' (The Economist, 2011)

This commentary implied a connection between the riots and concurrent popular uprisings such as the Occupy movement, the Indignados and revolutionary struggles in

the Middle East, at least insofar as their young participants shared some emergent organising tactics. This analogy could be criticised for obscuring important geopolitical differences, yet similar comparisons have been made in some academic commentary on youth protest and the events of 2011 (Feixa, 2013).

Alter-activism research offers a fuller account of citizenship as a practice, but its central assertion that almost any action by young people could be construed politically is unhelpful. It does not offer a means to differentiate apathy from anger, riots from organised resistance, or consumption from community involvement. Rheingans and Hollands (2013) warn that focussing on lifestyle or sub-politics in this manner reinforces Beck's individualisation hypothesis, while Philo and Smith (2003) suggest that attention to young people's lived experiences of citizenship is insufficient without concurrent analysis of the political economies 'made' for them by adults. Though alter-activism research derives from attempts to better integrate 'theoretical underpinnings' and 'empirical practices' of citizenship (Rasmussen and Brown, 2002 p.176), the latter is perhaps overemphasised. Furlong and Cartmel (2007) argue that such optimistic accounts of the possibilities of youth citizenship disregard opportunity structures. For example, consider positive associations between higher education and political participation (Bynner and Ashford, 1994), the purchasing power required to be an ethical consumer, or the passport privilege attached to global citizenship. Juris and Pleyers (2009 p.71) acknowledge that the alter-activists they study are affluent urban youth, mostly from the global North, whose cultures of participation are 'uniquely compatible' with extended transitions to adulthood. The critique of social capital and mobility discussed in the previous section demonstrates that presenting such practices as representative of young people's lived citizenship experiences is not only misleading, but risks further depreciation of the practices of less advantaged youth.

Another way to interpret alter-activism research is by understanding the impetus in left wing political theory to challenge the hegemonic assertion that 'There is no alternative' to the institutional frameworks of neoliberalism (Gibson-Graham, 2008, Massey, 2013, Rheingans and Hollands, 2013). Citizenship researchers may be driven by a desire to demonstrate that people practice other kinds of politics in addition and in relation to those inscribed by institutions (Bondi and Laurie, 2005, Rasmussen and Brown, 2002, Staeheli et al., 2013). Katz (2004) describes how her research similarly

stemmed from a desire to look for what Gramsci called 'independent initiative' (p.242) within young people's everyday lives. Her subsequent concern about this approach led her to develop the concepts of resilience, reworking and resistance. She suggests that these 'autonomous acts' ought to be differentiated so as not to overstate their political significance:

> 'When almost anything can be constructed as an "oppositional practice", I find myself bored and unconvinced. In what ways do such practices respond effectively to the massive disruptions in productions of space, nature, and social life that pierce people's everyday lives in the course of capitalist development?'

This critique is a useful one for addressing the problems of alter-activism research. Katz makes fairly cautious claims about the role of resilience, reworking and occasional resistance in social transformation. Her framework enables discussion of young people's agency and adaptation strategies in a way that foregrounds lived citizenship experience, yet also demands critical attention to the ways in which this interacts with structural factors that influence the opportunities available. It illustrates how a relational 'practice' approach (Lawy and Biesta, 2006) can support redefinition of the spaces of citizenship without discounting the importance of political economy. Such an approach might enable alter-activism researchers to engage more critically with ideas about political agency and social change.

2.8 Youth citizenship and consciousness raising

Katz is critical of the ways in which political researchers have perhaps been too eager to claim evidence of 'oppositional practice' in mundane acts of lived citizenship, but she nonetheless retains an interest in how such acts might support 'consciousness raising' (p.256) and 'autonomous agency' (p.242). This section explores the idea of a critical consciousness as a categorical feature of realization-focussed conceptualisations of citizenship. Sen's (2010) work on 'capabilities' offers a helpful foundation for this discussion. Sen differentiates between freedom as an opportunity and a process, suggesting that both aspects are important for wellbeing but that the latter especially has intrinsic value to human rights. He argues that people need opportunities to make a living, but also freedom to make choices about what kind of life they lead. Whiteside

and Mar (2012 p.931) adopt Sen's reasoning to suggest that 'human rights as capabilities' are realised through 'an ability to deliberate and participate in collective action', and that this supports 'empowerment'. Although the term consciousness is not used explicitly in capability approaches to human rights, it is implied through the valorisation of reflexivity and choice-making.

Consciousness is a more prominent phrase in education research, as a means of conceptualising education for social change. Freire's work (1970, 2001, 2005[1974]) in particular has popularised the idea of empowerment, including among voluntary sector youth workers (Shier, 2001). Freire differentiates between a 'banking' approach to education and 'education for critical consciousness'. The first approach is future-orientated: people are expected to learn skills in preparation for the labour market, work to a given standard and be assessed on their performance. The second approach is alternatively premised on collective learning in environments where a 'culture of questioning' (Giroux, 2003 p.9) is encouraged as people work from their lived experiences to develop dialogue with others. The purpose of education for critical consciousness is to encourage social critique and ultimately support people's participation in social change. Whiteside and Mar (2012 p.931) similarly suggest that:

> '...education is not merely a means to insert capital value into a human frame but more importantly to acquaint the student with the myriad conventions of collective action, as well as the public reasoning and values that underpin them.'

Freire sees consciousness raising as underpinned by 'praxis', a term he adopts to refer to cyclical processes of action, reflection and transformative action supported by experiential learning. Empowerment is understood as developing 'the conviction that change is possible' (2001 p.72) through direct experiences of solidarity work and intervention. The idea that people and their societies are 'unfinished' is also prominent in Freire's work, as a means of developing a counter narrative to 'fatalistic indifference' and especially the neoliberal assertion that there is no alternative.

An alternative conceptualisation of the importance of choice-making is presented by Thomson et al. (2002), who develop Giddens (1991) work on fateful moments to research 'critical moments' in young people's lives. They suggest that a critical moment derives from people possessing a sense of life narrative. It may be stimulated by an

objective event, which becomes critical if young people interpret it as a turning point for better or worse and act accordingly. Thomson et al.'s research explores how young people negotiate critical moments during their transition to adulthood with disparate social and cultural resources to hand. They describe 'fatalistic' and 'fateful' responses to crisis, characterised by young people's perceptions of the absence or presence of personal agency. They suggest that variability in young people's responses reflects underlying inequality and past experiences of control (or lack thereof) over their circumstances. This too was a prominent theme in commentary on the riots that blamed environments which left young people feeling that there were few options open to them. The Guardian's analysis of conviction data (Singleton, in Taylor et al., 2011) suggested that:

> '…if events such as this are to be mitigated in the future, the prevailing conditions and constraints affecting people living in areas must form part of the discussion.'

Despite the divergent thrust of these accounts of 'critical' intervention – Freire's very much focussed on social change, and Thomson et al.'s on individual biographies of change (Worth, 2009b) – fatalism is similarly employed as an analytical device. Fatalism is conceptualised as constraining young people's social and political agency and, in reference to Katz's framework, the likelihood that they engage in acts of resilience, reworking and resistance.

The ideas advanced in critical moments and critical education research suggest that certain conditions might support 'fateful' action by young people, raising consciousness in such a way that activism overcomes apathy. Despite Katz's (2004 p.256) assertion that only a few acts of resistance constitute autonomous 'oppositional practice', she is adamant that the consciousness raising work that underpins this

> '…is likely to emerge in everyday acts of "resilience" and the processes of "reworking" as much as in the course of more targeted and conscious acts of "resistance."'

In other words, various collective practices are deemed to offer a means of building young people's critical capacity as citizens, by offering opportunities for action, reflection and re-tooling.

Consciousness-raising offers a particular way of conceptualising a relationship between citizenship and collective experiences of deliberative or 'deep' democracy (Brookfield, 2000, Dewey, 1996 [1916], Harber, 1998, McCormack, 2008, Rasmussen and Brown, 2002). Several researchers have suggested that making space for these kinds of practices can have a profound impact on young people (Cahill, 2007a, Diprose, 2012, Gervais, 2010, Juris and Pleyers, 2009, Rheingans and Hollands, 2013). Some explore how reflexive activism with peers and mentors supports young people's political learning and development (Kirshner, 2007, Larson and Hansen, 2005). Others describe how experiences of co-operation, voluntary association, place-making and solidarity influence young people's ideological frames as social and political actors (Rheingans and Hollands, 2012). Although, following Beck, it has been proposed that in politics '…young people today lack a developed awareness of the significance of collective experiences' (Furlong and Cartmel, 2007 p.121), these youth researchers are more hopeful that 'claims for citizenship are still invested in collective participation' (Quijada, 2008 p.76).

Both Katz's and Freire's understanding of consciousness raising is geared towards activism, but the case could also be made that this kind of citizen empowerment intersects with the idealised 'self-regulatory' active citizenship of neoliberalism (Changfoot, 2007, Simpson, 2005). Some parallels may also be drawn with republican theories of citizenship in the extent to which the development of critical faculties for self-government is privileged. However, consciousness raising may be distinguished from social capital approaches to citizenship with the understanding that it involves social critique and awareness of actionable alternatives, not just developing a skills base. Sen's differentiation of 'opportunity' and 'process' freedom helps to clarify this distinction. This theory can be used to contend that social capital has 'instrumental' value to citizenship, whereas consciousness raising has 'intrinsic' political value (2010 p.326). Another way to interpret this difference in respect of Katz's framework is to suggest that social capital offers young people resources for resilience, but that consciousness raising also offers the means of resistance. Such an analysis suggests that despite qualitative differences in the kinds of political agency invoked, young people's citizenship practices may involve a certain ambiguity in the performance of 'active' and 'activist' citizenship (Staeheli et al., 2013 p.95).

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that contrasting conceptualisations of citizenship influence the ways in which young people's participation in society is interpreted and supported. The discussion has illustrated that young people are variously portrayed as citizens in the making, apathetic harbingers of social deficit, vacuous consumers, disenfranchised victims and the vanguard of social and cultural change. None of these interpretations alone is satisfactory, in part because each ignores the coexistence of diverse citizenship practices by young people and discord in the concept of citizenship itself.

Using Sen's work on justice as a starting point, I have illustrated some key ideological points of tension and convergence relevant to the study of youth citizenship. I have demonstrated how citizenship encompasses transcendental institutional and realization-focussed philosophical approaches, including (but not limited to) liberal, communitarian and republican theories and specific moral pronouncements relating to social democratic, neoliberal and radical democratic ideals. This discussion has highlighted some critical convergences, such as: how 'revanchist' or 'rollback' neoliberalism is able to repeal social citizenship in part because contemporary republican-communitarian approaches also valorise self-government and community resourcefulness; and how 'active' and 'activist' citizenship overlap in their construction of skilled, self-empowered citizens and communities.

Recent contributions in this field have suggested that young people's political practices are 'co-constructed by young people and the political forces and factors they face' (Skelton, 2013 p.129), and that

> 'the politics of engagement can be thought of as a performance that can be interpreted – and perhaps variously interpreted – as compliance with or dissent from the dominant social norms' (Staeheli et al., 2013 p.94).

Along with the ideas discussed in this chapter, these contributions highlight the need for nuanced theoretical and methodological approaches to researching youth citizenship. I have proffered Katz's concepts of resilience, reworking and resistance (alongside reinforcement) as a means of engaging with ambiguous political agency and practices in young people's lived experiences of citizenship. The next chapter further develops this discussion with a critical look at the role of the voluntary sector in co-

constructing citizenship, in particular considering how it 'works the spaces' of neoliberalism (Bondi and Laurie, 2005) and what impact this has on the kind of citizenship that is being produced.

Chapter 3 NGOs as Civic Intermediaries

3.1 Introduction

This chapter argues that non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are important 'civic intermediaries' (LeRoux, 2007 p.410) that can influence and support young people's participation in public life, offering considerable benefits. NGOs' perform a double-edged role, on the one hand associated with the advancement of social justice and minority rights, and on the other as professional bureaucracies complicit in neoliberal welfare reforms that produce uneven citizenship. I am interested in the policy context for voluntary sector growth and professionalisation, and the sector's experience of co-option, compromise and performance-as-resistance (Changfoot, 2007, Smith, 2005).

3.2 Why NGOs?

There are several compelling reasons to focus on NGOS in the context of youth citizenship research. NGOs make space for associational activity neither wholly connected to traditional institutional politics, nor necessarily the preserve of alter-activism. If a key task for youth geographers is to 'spot the bridges' between micro and macro P/politics (Skelton, 2013, Philo and Smith, 2003) then NGOs offer a fruitful avenue for research. NGO research may be simultaneously focussed on institutional networks, associational experiences and youth sub-cultural practices. Moreover, scholarship on emergent forms of political action highlights the role of transnational civil society networks as an increasingly 'pivotal terrain' of social change and citizenship innovation (Florini and Simmons, 2000, Mitchell, 2001, Salamon, 1994, Smith, 2004a, Swyngedouw, 2005, Tarrow, 2005). Suurpää and Valentin (2009 p.2) state that:

> '…any contemporary analysis of the themes around active citizenship should be placed within the social and political context of increasing globalization and transnationalism.'

NGOs have played and continue to play an important role as intermediaries in this context.

The previous chapter discussed how a limited focus on formal politics and labour markets might confirm a 'generational deficit' hypothesis by ignoring alternative spaces of citizenship where young people are actively participating (Farthing, 2010, Hackett,

1997). Likewise, preoccupation with socialisation through schooling means other forms of youth work are less researched (Vanderbeck, 2009). Gimpel and Lay (2006 p.11) suggest that:

> 'Perhaps the connection between citizenship and formal education has been overemphasized – to the point where we fail to consider other avenues for achieving political literacy.'

Research on alternative spaces of youth citizenship suggests that political affiliations in late modernity may differ from those of previous generations. There may be additional scales and forms of participation more relevant to contemporary young people's sub-cultural practices and everyday lives (Beck, 2001, Feixa et al., 2009, Rossi, 2009).

However, studies of youth alter-activism can be guilty of valorising the political practices of a minority of urban middle-class youth, who benefit from global mobility, social media literacy and extended transitions to adulthood (Juris and Pleyers, 2009). This does not necessarily describe the citizenship experiences of the majority. Historical and structural asymmetries of access are often overlooked in aspirational 'global citizenship' rhetoric (Lorimer, 2010, Massey, 1994). Building on Beck's work on risk society and individualisation (Beck, 1992[1986], Beck and Beck-Gernscheim, 2003), this body of scholarship can exaggerate the extent to which young people's citizenship depends on lifestyle choices, as opposed to practical opportunities for association, social critique and collective experiences of belonging (Rheingans and Hollands, 2012).

In alter-activism research, NGOs are cast as belonging to a 'hierarchal, bureaucratic, and distant' family of formal political organisations (Juris and Pleyers, 2009 p.61) that are irrelevant to contemporary youth sub-cultural practices. Putnam (1996 p.35) likewise dismisses NGOs as inauthentic civil society representatives, arguing that:

> '…most prominent nonprofits… are bureaucracies, not secondary associations, so the growth of the 'third sector' is not tantamount to the growth of social connectedness.'

Yet the voluntary sector encompasses multifarious associational forms (Clarke, 2005, Fisher, 1997, Kendall and Knapp, 1995, Phillimore et al., 2009, Salamon, 1998) that should not be so lightly typecast. To do so seems counter-intuitive to demonstrable growth in NGO public visibility, NGOs' role in public service delivery and especially in

emergent forms of transnational civil society organising (Florini, 2000b, Mitchell, 2001, Rosenau, 2002, Smith, 2004b, Smith and Yanacopulos, 2004, Tarrow, 2005). A key aim of this research project is to understand more about the role that NGOs' might play as 'civic intermediaries' that support and shape participation in public life (Clarke, 2005, Gervais, 2010, Hackett, 1997, LeRoux, 2007), and their relevance in young people's lives.

3.3 Civic intermediaries

In social and political theory, civil society is often seen as a vital space for enabling human freedom and flourishing, contributing to civic health in aggregate by offering opportunities for increasing participation, social capital and skills for social change (de Tocqueville, 1969 [1840], Milligan and Fyfe, 2005, Putnam, 1995). It has a role in both the 'emancipatory politics' of modernity (Giddens, 1991) as a champion of minority rights (LeRoux, 2007), and within neo-communitarian visions of the good society that position communities and social networks as key agents of responsible citizenship (Giddens, 1998). Voluntary associations are especially associated with efforts to engage marginalised groups, operating in niche spaces beneath and beyond statutory provision to deliver services, connect communities, build capacity and advocate for rights and representation on behalf of their members (Clarke, 2005, LeRoux, 2007). Arguments for the devolution of some responsibility for citizen integration to civil society suppose that its organisational forms are 'uniquely placed' to meaningfully engage constituents (Smith, 2010a) and offer a 'panacea' for state and market failures (Clarke, 2005, Fyfe, 2005, Fyfe and Milligan, 2003a, Trudeau, 2008). As a result, support for civil society *in certain forms* assumes strategic significance within government policy. The UK policy context in particular is discussed later in this chapter in section 3.5.

For some scholars, civil society represents alternative spaces and institutional forms to those arising from the state and the market (Clarke, 2005, Gramsci, 1971). LeRoux (2007) points to NGOs' capacity to cater to specific and minority group interests, orientation towards value-based participatory practices, and ingenuity in responding to social problems, to suggest that they are 'uniquely equipped to function as civic intermediaries' (p.412), bridging the gap between their members and larger political structures. However, NGO research has been criticised for typecasting the sector's work as fundamentally 'good', limiting critical engagement with the diverse experiences

of the sector, its potential and limitations (Clarke, 2005, Fisher, 1997, Murdock, 2003, Salamon, 1994). Swyngedouw (2005 p.1996) observes that civil society operates in a 'fuzzy terrain… somewhere in between, but articulating with, state and market'. It is by no means a space apart, but he argues nonetheless that it is:

> '…the pivotal terrain from which social transformative and innovative action emerges and where social power relations are contested and struggled over.'

To research citizenship, it is useful to understand what kinds of practices and values materialise here.

Voluntary sector activity is difficult to account for, due to the diverse range of organisational forms it encompasses and the 'below radar' reach of many local associations. Quantification of the UK's voluntary sector has been attempted in several working papers, though estimates range from: 75,000 NGOs, including only charitable organisations with an income greater than £5000 (Mohan, 2011); to 200,000 organisations known to the sector's regulatory bodies, including charities, community interest companies, cooperatives and societies (Phillimore et al., 2009); to as many as 900,000 unregistered micro-organisations (Clarke et al., 2012 , MacGillivray et al., 2001). The sector comprises approximately 2.6% of the UK workforce (Labour Force Survey data, quoted by Skills - Third Sector, 2013) and numerous unpaid volunteers. According to Cabinet Office figures (2013), 71% of adults reported that they had done some form of volunteering in the previous 12 months and just under half (49%) said they volunteer at least once a month. These figures also show that the proportion of 16-25 year olds volunteering corresponds with the national average; though is notably lower for other forms of civic engagement such as participation in democratic processes, local decision-making and consultations about local services. These accounts give some indication of a sizeable voluntary sector in the UK. They could be conservative estimates, given that survey respondents may not identify some aspects of civic association under the rubric of 'volunteering'[1].

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[1] There is considerable debate among voluntary sector researchers about the bifurcation of professional and grassroots groups and the various ways that

Participation in the voluntary sector may bring several benefits for young people. Hackett (1997 p.83) suggests that

'[t]he multiplicity of community and voluntary groups organising around their own issues offer routes for young people's participation through the politics of identity and diversity… [offering] real possibilities for participation and representation of young people's interests.'

For those who are excluded from age-segregated and work-based institutions (Farthing, 2010), the alternative citizenship activities of the voluntary sector (Wolch, 1999) may be especially significant. Writing on women's citizenship, Clarke (2005 p.141) offers an account of the benefits of NGO participation for minority groups which elaborates on the role envisioned by Hackett:

'To many advocates, non-profit organization's special strength is in providing this democratic political opportunity structure, encouraging indigenous leadership capabilities, shifting to an asset rather than a deficit-based understanding of communities, and providing a forum for citizenship.'

NGO projects could be said to offer young people opportunities for skills development and perhaps something more; to become both 'active' and 'activist' citizens capable of expressing social and political agency (Staeheli et al., 2013).

Some researchers see potential in NGO projects that offer opportunities for critical reflection, solidarity action and consciousness-raising through social justice pedagogy (Diprose, 2012, Gervais, 2010, McCormack, 2008). In the United States, a significant subset of 'service learning' literature similarly deals with links between voluntary action, critical education and citizenship (Battistoni, 1997, Crabtree, 1998, Lounsbury and Pollack, 2001). Behavioural scientists have identified particular features of the voluntary sector as a learning environment that supports 'sociopolitical development' (Watts et al., 2003), such as: opportunities to apply strategic thinking through experiences of 'actionable knowledge' alongside 'theoretical understanding' (Larson

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volunteering may be construed within them (Fyfe and Milligan 2003a; Milligan and Fyfe 2005); and also about the ways in which different social groups may draw distinctions between volunteering and activism (Blackstone 2004).

and Hansen, 2005 p.335); to practice leadership; and to develop high quality youth-adult mentoring relationships (Larson et al., 2005). Kirshner (2007 p.367) identifies four distinctive qualities of youth activist learning environments that can support citizenship: 'collective problem-solving, youth-adult interaction, exploration of alternative frames for identity, and bridges to academic and civic institutions.'

There are however a diverse range of voluntary sector opportunities available to young people and such experiences are not necessarily the norm. Some environments may be more conductive to supporting citizenship than others. Quintelier's (2008) quantitative analysis in the Belgian context found that while NGOs can be 'powerful political socialization agents engaging young people in politics' (p.365), participation in certain kinds of organisation especially correlated with increased political activity. Namely, deliberative groups, cultural groups and service providers were seen to be more successful in supporting political participation than religious-ethnic, entertainment based and generic youth groups. Opportunities for youth leadership and association with multiple voluntary projects also seemed to increase participation. This methodology is beset by the problem of what constitutes a valid measure of 'more' or 'less' political engagement, as well as that of contestable causality. Yet Quintelier's key assertion – that the *context* of young people's voluntary associations matters – is important. A local sports club, for example, may acquaint young people with different skills from a campaign group.

Clarke's (1991) earlier research in the U.S. found that the NGOs most likely to engage in explicitly political mobilisation or empowerment work were those with a measure of financial independence. Qualitative evidence from the UK and the U.S. has similarly suggested that small grassroots NGOs have greater flexibility to provide participatory opportunities than large 'corporatist' organisations, especially when the latter become more involved in service provision (Brown, 1997, Fyfe and Milligan, 2003b, Milligan and Fyfe, 2005). Nonetheless, young people's citizenship experiences are certainly influenced by a 'veritable industrial sector' of professional NGOs that disseminate 'best practice' for actively engaging them (Staeheli et al., 2013 p.89), arguably with a greater reach than their grassroots counterparts. This includes, for example, the role of NGOs in developing curricular citizenship resources for schools and running formal volunteering schemes. It is not necessarily the case that more or less civic intermediary

work is happening in either context, but that 'different types of voluntary organizations provide settings which can foster very different forms of citizenship' (Fyfe and Milligan, 2003a p.407).

The previous chapter explored how distinct political ideologies can overlap in their beliefs about youth integration. This can be read in various arguments in support of youth participation in the voluntary sector, ranging from those premised on empowerment and critical intervention (Gervais, 2010, Kirshner, 2007), to the sectors' emphasis of transferable skills development (Baillie Smith and Laurie, 2011, Generation Change, 2013), to those who argue that the sector supports social investment in young people (Rocyn Jones, 2013, Smith, 2005). The positioning of NGOs as civic intermediaries is not only concerned with their potential to nurture citizenship for its own sake, but whether they help young people to access 'opportunities, resources and capabilities' (March and Olson, 1995 p.91), including those associated with social capital, political engagement and employment. How NGOs make space for and support youth participation must be interpreted within the context of the 'fuzzy terrain' they operate in – as agents, complementary alternatives and occasional opponents of the neoliberal state and market economy.

At the international level NGOs have special significance as connective non-state actors, as 'public faces of development' that mediate relations between the global North and South (Baillie Smith and Laurie, 2011, Diprose, 2012, Lorimer, 2010, Smith, 2004b, Smith and Yanacopulos, 2004), as agents of Western development (Basok and Ilcan, 2006, Ilcan and Lacey, 2006, Staeheli and Nagel, 2013) and as 'representative' organisations that negotiate insider/outsider influence within institutional networks and social movements (Tarrow, 2005). Rapid expansion of transnational NGO activity in the latter half of the 20th century attracted particular attention to their changing status, impact, membership and innovative forms of civic intervention (Fisher, 1997, Florini and Simmons, 2000, Mitchell, 2001, Smith, 2004a). Salamon (1994) goes as far as to suggest that this constitutes a global 'associational revolution', while Tarrow (2005) observes that globalisation processes open up new spaces and scales of governance, which 'invite transnational activism and facilitate the formation of networks of nonstate, state and international actors' (p.8). This entails a reconstitution of citizenship opportunities and identities for (some) young people.

Researching NGOs' frontline efforts to engage young people in transnational solidarity action offers an alternative perspective to typologies of young global justice activists (Juris and Pleyers, 2009) or standalone accounts of ephemeral international events (della Porta et al., 2006, Feixa et al., 2009). If citizenship is inexorably rooted in place, then entry points such as local chapters of transnational campaign groups, faith networks and development agencies may offer researchers a means of exploring the role of 'civic intermediaries' writ large (Diprose, 2012, Hopkins et al., 2010).

3.4 Differential citizenship

Positioning NGOs as civic intermediaries presupposes that even though voluntary group membership tends to be restricted – either because of geography (e.g. a neighbourhood association) or identity (e.g. a faith group) – the voluntary sector nonetheless supports social citizenship in aggregate by promoting integration, rights and civic virtues (LeRoux, 2007). Salamon (2003) claims that voluntary sector organisations are a 'special class of entities dedicated to mobilising *private initiative for the common good*' (p.2, original italics). This includes the assumption that they may be a vehicle for redistributive justice by 'modifying the existing distribution of capabilities in society to enhance the citizenship and participation of more marginalised groups' (Clarke, 2005 p.133), in other words by offering additional support to the people who need it most.

However, other researchers have cautioned against championing NGOs as panaceas for government and market failures and emancipators of the excluded. Their main issue with the sector is that of particular versus universal interests, with NGOs necessarily associated with partiality, restricted membership and limited reach, as well as increasingly with projects of privatisation under neoliberalism (Smith and Lipsky, 1993). Although organisations may be internally accountable to members, it is argued that civil society is inherently undemocratic by nature, as a sphere of particular interests with no mandate to represent or serve broad-base publics (Florini, 2000b, Jessop, 2002, Mitchell, 2001). Referring to the role of NGOs in relation to the state and market, Smith (1995 p.191) contends that the idea that 'there are three equally viable ways in which the wealth, resources and opportunities associated with citizenship entitlements may be dispensed' is unhelpful, because the voluntary sector 'cannot be used to guarantee anyone a given level [of service]'. Whether as civic

intermediaries NGOs are 'protectors of pluralism or privilege' (Clarke, 2005 p.130) is thus a divisive issue.

The main criticism is not that NGOs cannot offer integrative citizenship support, but that they only do this for some people, in some places, some of the time. This is substantiated by research which illustrates the uneven social and spatial distribution of voluntary sector activity, including negative correlations between local need and NGO service provision (Fyfe, 2005, Fyfe and Milligan, 2003b, Lacey and Iclan, 2006, Lake and Newman, 2002, Wolch, 1999). In an attempt to map UK voluntary sector activity, Mohan (2011) observed that:

> '…for England there is a very sharp contrast in the ratio of organisations to population between a prosperous rural South and a disadvantaged post-industrial north.' (p.6)

His national survey of neighbourhood organisations additionally found that:

> '…there are over 2.5 times as many organisations who say they work at the neighbourhood scale in the most prosperous neighbourhoods in the country compared to those in the most disadvantaged areas.' (p.7)

It is of course possible that many informal voluntary support networks would not get picked up in a mapping exercise like Mohan's, but because such networks are unlikely to be well funded and resourced, this kind of research offers a useful indication of the direction of investment.

Lake and Newman (2002) use the phrase 'differential citizenship' to describe 'selective disenfranchisement' resulting from unequal access to voluntary sector services and opportunities (p.109). They identify two key distinctions: between people with access to and power within traditional state institutions and people who address their citizenship claims to the voluntary sector; and between people who are well-served by the voluntary sector and people who are left out. They argue that differential citizenship is caused by historical trends in voluntary sector activity, community access to resources and funding, and client selectivity i.e. the propensity of policy makers and grant-making bodies to enlist NGOs to address perceived social 'problems' among narrow target populations.

Lake and Newman's theorisation of differential citizenship is, like Mohan's mapping exercise, especially concerned with the uneven distribution of voluntary sector provision. They emphasise in particular the second distinction, between people whose citizenship is and is not supported by the sector, as an important focus of research. This thesis adopts a wider understanding than their original concept, as the language of differential citizenship is a helpful way of describing not only inequality of access to voluntary sector services, but also differences in the kinds of citizenship that NGOs promote among their target constituencies that affect the opportunities available to them. On the one hand young people may be considered to have a distinct advantage, as typical recipients of charitable and policy-driven intervention programmes. Smith (2005 p.81) observes:

> 'As social policies are restructured away from universality and social citizenship and towards more targeted intervention, local state agencies in both North American and Europe are funding [NGOs] that, by 'investing' in youth, are producing the healthy citizens and responsible consumers of tomorrow.'

On the other hand young people who are not considered to be safe investments may find themselves at a disadvantage, or projects may be funded to focus on personal development in ways that are at odds with the needs and wishes of the group that is being supported. NGO youth citizenship initiatives should thus be contextualised within a wider policy context where youth services are delivered conditionally as part of the 'social investment state', so long as beneficiaries are perceived to offer a good return as compliant, productive and responsible citizens (Lister, 2006, Smith, 2005, Trudeau, 2008).

The spatiality of differential citizenship is an especially potent concept if extended to consider NGOs' role within the 'power geometry' (Massey, 1994) of international relations, because young people's experiences of global integration are profoundly uneven (Katz, 2004). Chapter 2's discussion of polarised fast- and slow-track transitions to adulthood (pp.41-42) can be advanced to critique how some young people are fixed in space while others enjoy hypermobility in an age of global travel. Emerging transnational citizenship practices of NGOs do not 'float free in a global ether' (Florini, 2000a p.217), but are linked to local and national opportunity structures

and historical geographies of (dis)connection (Lorimer, 2010, Staeheli, 2010). For example, research on international volunteering shows how young people and project providers construct global citizenship identities that obscure the colonial legacy of relative privilege and emphasise cultural capital for successful middle class transitions, whilst broadly conforming with the policy priorities of national governments (Baillie Smith and Laurie, 2011, Diprose, 2012, Desforges, 1998, Simpson, 2005).

Another way that the concept of differential citizenship might be extended is in relation to the quality of citizenship offered to young people through voluntary sector participation. Section 3.5.4 later in this chapter outlines the propensity of the UK voluntary sector to promote 'active citizenship' in accordance with government policy preferences, and argues that this concept emphasises citizens' responsibilities rather than their rights. Bearing this in mind, there is a case for considering differential citizenship to encompass a disproportionate balance between responsibilities and rights, as well as demographic variance.

3.4.1 The economy of experience

The previous chapter briefly discussed how voluntary activities such as youth councils and campaign groups are valued as 'something for the CV' by young people (Brooks, 2009), and sometimes also by parents and teachers. In the context of voluntary sector youth work, perhaps the most significant aspect of differential citizenship suggested by the literature is the potential impact of competitiveness, underpinned by the relationship between voluntary activities and transitions to higher education and work. In particular, how some kinds of voluntary action may be construed as character building, helping young people to enhance their employability and mobilise public initiative for private good in the 'economy of experience' (Brown et al., 2003).

It seems important to understand more about the impact of the CV factor on the funding available for voluntary sector youth work, and the expectations that young people have of voluntary sector action. The economy of experience could play a role in reproducing and even strengthening existing inequalities in voluntary sector participation, such as divisions of labour by gender and class in which some kinds of volunteering are more valued than others. For example, how might unpaid care work, an elite internship, international volunteering, involvement in a direct action group, or

fundraising, appear to a potential employer? Do such considerations influence young people's choices about the kinds of voluntary action they partake in? Do they affect how NGOs market and design programmes for young people, and who they design them for? Where NGOs attempt to excite young people's interest through the 'aspirational' rhetoric of global and active citizenship (Lorimer, 2010), these questions are especially pertinent.

Changfoot (2007) suggests that such issues should prompt those who are interested in the potential of the voluntary sector to discuss how it might work differently to support citizenship, rather than dismiss its capacity to do so altogether. Below I explore some of the challenges and possibilities presented by the 'fuzzy terrain' of NGO civic intermediary work, focussing on the UK policy context to set the scene for my research.

3.5 From shadow state to Big Society: the UK policy context

During the late 20th century, the growth and professionalisation of the voluntary sector heralded substantial changes to the way in which NGOs work. The next two sections outline the UK policy context and some key critiques, tracing the emergence of the 'shadow state' (Wolch, 1990), Third Way welfare reform (Giddens, 1998, Rose, 2000), the Big Society (Alcock, 2010) and active citizenship (Davies, 2012). This literature illustrates the influence of neoliberal governance over NGOs' terms of engagement, encompassing continuity and difference in recent government approaches. This analysis further supports a critique of NGOs as civic intermediaries complicit in differential citizenship, by describing ways in which their work may be wedded to policy agendas that sustain inequality of access and inequality of experience.

3.5.1 The shadow state

Many commentators have noted the growing significance of the voluntary sector in the context of neoliberal state restructuring and welfare reform, particularly the ways in which NGOs have assumed increasing responsibility for formerly publicly funded services (Diamond, 2010, Fyfe, 2005, Fyfe and Milligan, 2003a, Jessop, 2002, Lacey and Iclan, 2006, Lake and Newman, 2002, Mitchell, 2001, Perkins, 2009, Smith, 2010b, Swyngedouw, 2005, Trudeau, 2008, Wolch, 1990, Wolch, 1999) The previous chapter employed Peck and Tickell's (2002) terms 'rollback' and 'rollout' neoliberalism to

describe both the repealing of social democratic interventions and the embedding of market governance in everyday life. This analysis is well suited to describe how national and local governments have contracted out welfare responsibility to specialist service providers in the voluntary sector, whilst managing to retain much of their influence indirectly by setting the terms of competition and performance.

In a prominent research project that charted the incorporation of NGOs into neoliberal governance structures in U.S. and UK cities during the 1980s, Wolch (1990 xvi) warned of the emergence of a shadow state apparatus:

> '...comprised of multiple voluntary sector organizations, administered outside of traditional democratic politics and charged with major collective responsibilities previously shouldered by the public sector, yet within the purview of state control.'

The ensuing change from government to governance (Perkins, 2009, Swyngedouw, 2005) shifts state policy emphasis to managerial regulatory frameworks and service delivery partnership approaches spanning 'an ever-widening range of activities' (Bondi and Laurie, 2005 p.396), from health care and education to scientific research. Shadow state theory explains the late 20th century NGO boom and its accompanying 'mainstreaming' and professionalisation processes (Fyfe and Milligan, 2003a, Jones, 2009b, Salamon, 2003). The result of this development is a relational 'mixed economy' pact between the state, civil society and the private sector (Trudeau, 2008); in which Wolch (1999) contends that NGOs play the role of 'junior partner' and lose their ability to challenge.

3.5.2 The Third Way

Wolch's shadow state theory suggests that NGOs may find their influence diminished by partnership arrangements with public and private bodies, yet in the UK the voluntary sector assumed a prominent role in New Labour's Third Way welfare reforms (Fyfe, 2005, Morison, 2000, Smith, 2010a). Tony Blair's Labour Government in particular looked to voluntary sector capacity building to deliver its neo-communitarian vision of a decentred 'social investment state' (Giddens, 1998), with localism and responsible citizenship as key pillars. Rose (2000 p.1398) argues that in this model, people are no longer provided for as citizens of nation states, but

'neighbourhoods, associations, regions, networks, subcultures, age groups, ethnicities, and lifestyle sectors – in short, communities.' A large proportion of responsibility for service delivery was thus contracted out to charities and social enterprises, accompanied by substantial investment in NGOs. By the end of New Labour's three terms in government, the voluntary sector had grown by over 25% and was receiving up to £13 billion a year in public subsidies (Alcock, 2010, Clark et al., 2010).

The UK is certainly not the only country to have experienced a considerable rollout of shadow state governance (Brown, 1997, Lacey and Iclan, 2006, Mitchell, 2001, Smith, 2005, Wolch, 1990), in which a professionalised voluntary sector has emerged as a major force in supporting citizens as service-users. This has, however, become a particularly notable feature of the UK's ideological landscape in the context of a neoliberal-centrist consensus among the major parties of government (Davies, 2012, Landrum, 2002). Although the thrust of social policy is broadly in one direction, the public subsidy that supported a larger, more professional voluntary sector under New Labour suggests a degree of instability in the political and economic climate of 2011 when my research took place.

3.5.3 The Big Society and the economic context

The latest iteration of a shadow state approach in UK government policy is the Coalition Government's Big Society vision. Although this idea has failed to capture public imagination, it has had a substantial impact on the voluntary sector in terms of how its activities are funded and framed (Alcock, 2010, Evans, 2011, Pattie and Johnston, 2011, Smith, 2010b). The Big Society is a pet project of the Prime Minister, who has used several prominent speeches (Cameron 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2011a, 2011b) to reaffirm his 'great passion' for 'rebalancing' economy and society by promoting collective action outside of the public realm. He defines Big Society (Cameron, 2010b) as:

> '...social responsibility, not state control... breaking state monopolies, allowing charities, social enterprises and companies to provide public services, devolving power down to neighbourhoods, making government more accountable.'

The language here is similar to that of New Labour, albeit with a stronger critique of the role of 'Big Government'.

There was initial scepticism and critique about what the Big Society means in policy terms and whether it differs from previous welfare reforms (Alcock, 2010, Evans, 2011, Kisby, 2010, Pattie and Johnston, 2011, Scott, 2011, Smith, 2010b). Most commentators concluded that it is more of a political narrative than a coherent policy package. Evans (2011) proposes that it can nonetheless be summarised under three identifiable agendas: public service reform, active citizenship and accountability. The biggest departure from the previous administration is perhaps by degrees rather than focus. The combined impact of a recession and public sector spending cuts has been severe. The Big Society is expected to prosper in a more austere climate that previously, whilst compensating for rapid retrenchment of the public services associated with social citizenship (Pattie and Johnston, 2011, Scott, 2010).

Early estimates suggested charities stood to lose between £3.2 and £5.1 billion a year in public subsidies after the financial crisis (Joy, 2010). More recent assessments confirm that the pre-recession year of 2007/08 represented 'peak funding' for the voluntary sector (Clarke et al., 2012) and cuts of up to 12% are projected by 2017/18 (NCVO, 2013). Voluntary and public sector cuts are not evenly distributed and youth services have been hit particularly hard. Figures released by the Department for Education (2013) show that local government funding for youth services decreased by 26% from 2011 to 2012. The type of funding available is also changing. A recent report which compiled feedback from 350 UK youth organisations (Rocyn Jones, 2013 p.21) concluded:

> 'The youth sector is undergoing a major shift, from being reliant on multiyear programme grant funding to a world where funding is less plentiful, more volatile and where performance is scrutinised more closely.'

This new economic and policy climate raises several important questions.

Most significantly, it invites scepticism as to whether social action can flourish as the state and market recede (Scott, 2011). Current NGO youth projects take place in the context of increasing social inequality, high youth unemployment, intensified competition for workforce entry, declining higher education participation, overhaul of the education system, and cuts to youth services and funding for voluntary youth

organisations (Rocyn Jones, 2013). The Coalition Government employs a particularly brazen brand of neoliberal state restructuring that makes for an interesting test case as to the capabilities and limitations of the shadow state.

Critiques of the Big Society so far suggest it is a vehicle for differential citizenship. Alcock (2010) argues that the infrastructure to support local charities and enterprise in times of austerity ought to require more government support and investment, not less. Existing patterns of voluntarism suggest that Big Society initiatives are more likely to succeed in communities already abundant in social capital, i.e. where people have greater access to a disposable income, education, leisure time, and so on (Pattie and Johnston, 2011). Some researchers have raised fears that this approach will lead to a 'postcode lottery' in the availability of local support services, particularly affecting areas that are markedly more dependent on public services and public investment in the voluntary sector (Evans, 2011, Smith, 2010b). While some commentators object to the degree of cuts, for others the shadow state itself is the problem. Massey (2013) argues that localism perpetuates inequality by fixing resources – and the relative dis/advantages they confer – in space. Other key concerns include the kinds of youth citizenship activities deemed desirable by those controlling limited funding; and how 'below radar' small NGOs are faring.

A tangible Big Society policy initiative with bearing on this research project is the introduction of National Citizen Service (NCS) for 16-19 year olds in England. This was piloted in summer 2011 with 11,000 places made available through twelve youth volunteering NGOs, including well-established organisations such as The Princes Trust and vInspired (Mason, 2010). By 2013 the Government reported that 50,000 places were available and 90,000 projected for 2014 (Cabinet Office and Treasury, 2013). This scheme is vulnerable to the same criticism as Big Society provision more generally. It has a piecemeal and sorely limited reach, given that there are more than three quarters of a million eligible young people. Public investment in a 3 week summer holiday programme at the same time as deep cuts to year-round youth services attracted particular criticism (Evans, 2011). Over 250 NGOs applied to run NCS pilot projects, suggesting that there are many eager to provide the scheme as it is rolled out nationally.

3.5.4 Active citizenship

The vocabulary of active citizenship links the Coalition's approach to voluntary sector action with that of the New Labour governments, and arguably Thatcher's and Major's previous Conservative governments as well (Davies, 2012, Fyfe and Milligan, 2003a). Active citizenship can be understood as the relocation of responsibility for social citizenship to individuals and voluntary associations, promoting self-reliance, altruism and community service over collective provisioning at state level. This approach blends elements of civic republicans' enthusiasm for participative democracy (Crick, 2003) and neo-communitarians' concern with the revitalisation of 'community' as a space in which people practice social responsibility (Kisby, 2009). Davies (2012) argues that it is also a mark of 'comprehensive and active cross-societal assent' to the socioeconomic goals of neoliberalism (p.4), concerned with 'the mobilization of citizen dispositions and practices deemed essential for economic competitiveness' (p.5). As well as having had a direct impact on citizenship education in schools through the promotion of skills development and community service (Brooks, 2009), active citizenship provides further context as to why recent UK governments have promoted voluntarism and voluntary sector service provision.

Active citizenship has been criticised as a euphemism for 'individual and collective self-provisioning' (Smith, 1995 p.191), exchanging more responsibilities for fewer social citizenship rights. In the context of Glasgow's voluntary welfare sector, Milligan and Fyfe (2005 p.419) suggest that this promotes an 'asymmetrical' form of citizenship:

> '…while fund-raising for the NHS or membership of a neighbourhood watch group may foster a sense of responsibility, citizens do not enjoy any rights or entitlements in relation to control over police resources and have only limited influence over hospital boards.'

Such a relationship with voluntary action might not necessarily enhance young people's participation, but instead 'instil social norms and expectations within which youth limit their behaviours and political visions accordingly' (Staeheli et al., 2013 p.93).

As the latest expression of this, the Big Society may have implications for how NGOs frame their activities to conform to a particular vision of good neoliberal citizenship, something that has already been observed in competition for funding more generally

across the sector (Evans, 2011, Smith, 2005). For example, the language of active citizenship and community empowerment may be deployed to spin retrenchment of social citizenship rights as positive and desirable. Such phrases are attractive because of their association with personal freedom, community spirit and resourcefulness in the face of crisis, alternatively reinterpreted to invoke personal responsibility, self-reliance and failure to adapt (Aldred, 2011, Ilcan and Lacey, 2006, Israel et al., 1998, Pattie and Johnston, 2011, Rose, 1999). Changfoot (2007 p.131) observes how a 'discourse of self-sufficiency and self-empowerment' is shared, up to a point, between activists practicing social solidarity and policy-makers fostering neoliberal citizenship. The next section discusses this relationship in greater detail, and to what extent NGOs may be considered to be co-opted as shadow state agents.

3.6 Working neoliberalism? NGO resilience and resistance

A major concern of proponents of shadow state theory is the extent to which the professionalisation of NGOs may be said to have curbed or depoliticised the activities of civil society. Is there space for alternative associations that can articulate with – and yet challenge – neoliberal hegemony? Wolch (1999) is of the view that NGOs have become instruments of state restructuring and compromised their independence for little real influence. Two decades since publication, her original work still inspires case studies chronicling NGO co-option through rollback and rollout shadow state governance (Perkins, 2009, Smith, 2010a). Neoliberal interventions have notably altered the fabric of civil society, especially with regard to professionalisation, reconstitution of worker/client relationships, changes in mission focus from solidarity to service delivery, and rupture between large organisations and grassroots activism (Alvarez, 1999, Bondi and Laurie, 2005, Brown, 1997, Jones, 2009b). Reliance on state and private sector funding can moderate NGOs' political activities (Clarke, 1991), suggesting 'profound complexities of contemporary political advocacy in relation to neoliberal politics' (Smith, 2005 p.76). Some researchers imply that even independent NGOs are somewhat complicit in state restructuring under neoliberalism, because they colonise spaces neglected by state intervention to alleviate the worst excesses of inequality, rather than challenge the system itself (Lacey and Iclan, 2006).

Yet many NGOs believe they have a critical role to play as champions of social justice who hold states and markets accountable. Other researchers focus on the nuance,

complexity and contradictions of this relationship. Fyfe and Milligan (2003a p.410) describe 'rapidly and radically changing economic and political landscapes' of voluntary sector operation, while Trudeau (2008) p.673 calls for a more 'relational' view of the shadow state that recognises a 'continuum of possible relationships' between civil society, the state and the private sector. In the U.S., Salamon (2003) praises NGOs achievements' such as sector growth, innovation, identity and infrastructural support. He suggests this characterises a 'resilient sector' which has become an influential partner of government agencies and multinational corporations, despite significant challenges to its survival. However, he concedes that while government-NGO partnership has led to significant gains for the sector since the 1960s, since the 1980s the terms of compromise have come under 'considerable assault' including commercialisation and competition from for-profit providers. This, he argues, exposes NGOs to significant risk (p.4). For Salamon, what is at stake now is how NGOs balance the 'distinctiveness imperative' of the voluntary sector's founding values such as compassion, informality, flexibility and responsiveness, with the 'survival imperative' of weathering neoliberalism (pp.80-85).

Elsewhere, research details complex experiences of capture and resistance as NGOs learn to work with and against neoliberalism. Smith's (2005) case study of LGBT organising at the federal level in Canada illustrates how 'identity' and 'recognition' work with young people has become 'politically tamed' through the language of social investment, mentoring and service provision. Yet, she acknowledges that:

> '…establishing an institutional infrastructure through which the community could function, and providing for communication with the community, were inseparable from the provision of what might be called social services.' (p.83)

In this case, NGO expansion into service delivery was underpinned by '…an LGBT politics based on asserting and building collective solidarities, solidarities that are inimical to the values of neoliberalism' (p.89). Here NGO work is understood as 'resisting and reinforcing' neoliberalism, with many possible outcomes depending on whether people engage as members, volunteers, participants or clients.

Changfoot's (2007) study of cultural workers and antipoverty activists in Peterborough suggests that civil society groups 'perform good neoliberal citizenship' (p.130) to claim

resources for resistance. She notes two alternative strategies here: (i) appropriating the goals of economic growth to make the case for arts practice; and (ii) appropriating the idealised self-sufficient citizen to advance poor people's claims as a self-empowering community. Despite challenges and compromise for those engaging in this work, Changfoot claims that these performances are citizenship practices premised on resistance because they are:

> '…making incursions into public space in an effort to expand and secure space, even if only temporarily; transforming space into theatre that involves citizen participation and engagement; empowering the people represented, and making demands of local government.' (p.131)

In light of Katz's (2004) framework discussed in the previous chapter, such activities might be more clearly cast as 'reworking' neoliberalism through attempts to redirect resources and retool communities. Nonetheless there may be some element of resistance here, as Katz acknowledges the potential for oppositional consciousness-raising to emerge in the course of everyday acts of reworking (p.256). Changfoot's conceptualisation of neoliberal citizenship as a 'performance' also illustrates the critical 'mimetic possibilities' (Katz p.249) of reworking practices emerging from the voluntary sector and elsewhere. Staeheli et al. (2013 p.95) suggest that through such practices, 'agency and performance are combined and contested to produce different forms of citizenship'

In a collection entitled 'Working the Spaces of Neoliberalism', Bondi and Laurie (2005) argue that neoliberalism should not be represented as universal or inevitable (see also Gibson-Graham, 2008). Instead, they draw attention to people's sense of 'representation, negotiation and embodiment' (p.395) as activism is scaled up to interact with policy making. Especially, they highlight:

> '…the agency of a diverse array of politically engaged and reflexive actors, who are to varying degrees alert to the power and the pitfalls of professionalisation in their various contexts… and resist representations of their actions and their selves as if they are merely naïve victims of neoliberalism and/or ingénues in their political encounters.' (pp.399-400)

Their edited collection illustrates various voluntary sector strategies for working with and against neoliberalism, 'through incorporation, internalisation, co-optation,

resistance and subversion' (Power, 2005 p.606). However, the one contribution that focuses specifically on young people – Simpson's (2005) account of the professionalization of youth travel – portrays young adults as more duped than most. It would be hard to claim that Simpson's international volunteers expressed any sense of compromise or conscious engagement with the ideological tensions of the global citizenship they performed on the research evidence presented.

A more optimistic account of young people's performance of citizenship through voluntary action emerges from recent research contributions by Staeheli et al. (2013) and Staeheli and Nagel (2013). This research highlights 'indeterminacy' when young people engage with Western development NGOs and active citizenship programmes on university campuses. Despite an instrumentalist focus on skills development, voluntarism and Western values within such work, they observe that:

> 'It was evident – and undoubtedly foreseen – that youth used the skills they learned and the networks they built through the programmes to act on political ideas and political claims that might not have been intended or appreciated by the funding agencies or programmes of engagement.' (Staeheli and Nagel 2013, p.118)

Some young people put the skills gained through such programmes to alternative uses such as organising campus occupations and political demonstrations, suggesting that efforts to promote depoliticised active citizenship are not wholly successful. This research illustrates that attempts to work the spaces of neoliberalism do not only emerge strategically at an organisational high level, but may be performed by frontline NGO workers and young programme participants. The inference of a link between the skills base of active citizenship, and autonomous or activist citizenship (Staeheli et al., 2013), is especially relevant to exploring NGO youth citizenship programmes with Katz's resilience, reworking and resistance analytical framework.

3.7 Conclusion

A central question of my research is how NGOs act as civic intermediaries to support young people's participation in formal and alternative spaces of citizenship. This chapter has outlined considerable diversity within the UK voluntary sector and the influence of various agendas and aspirations within NGO youth work. Although several

studies have suggested how NGOs might support young people's citizenship by promoting rights and representation, NGO activities have also been shown to be particular and partial, influenced by the market and sometimes associated with policy projects that sustain inequality. NGOs thus embody a shift from social citizenship to differentiated citizenship and identity politics (Smith, 2005).

Taking a relational view of the shadow state (Trudeau, 2008) is a useful way of exploring the synthesis of conflicting ideologies in practice. This allows the voluntary sector, its workers and young participants some leeway as competent citizens whose practices may include resilience, reworking and resistance in relation to prevailing governmental agendas. As Clarke (2005 p.135) observes:

> 'Nonprofit organizations cannot be expected to generate social and political capital independent of the context in which they operate. They are highly context-sensitive sites for reconstructing citizenship; their abilities to encourage development of civic skills, creation of social capital, and formation of distinctive relations between citizen and state will be contingent on other local factors and their own internal capacities.'

This analysis need not apply only to local voluntary sector activity. Context effects similarly influence NGOs that make transnational claims and promote aspirational forms of global citizenship. These organisations and their participants too 'draw on the resources, networks and opportunities of the societies they live in' (Tarrow, 2005 p.2). Exploring transnational shadow state innovations – and the differential citizenship that they produce – offers an alternative perspective to representing young global citizens as unanchored from national and transnational institutional networks, or disregarding the ideological work involved in creating 'global' citizenships (Staeheli, 2010).

'Working neoliberalism' offers an entry point into youth citizenship research that affords young people and voluntary sector workers agency, whilst recognising the influence of the social and political context in which they are embedded. On the one hand, shadow state and other voluntary sector research suggests that processes of professionalisation encourage young people to form associational aspirations around specific entrepreneurial forms of participation (Bondi and Laurie, 2005, Simpson, 2005, Staeheli et al., 2013, Swyngedouw, 2005). As Power (2005 p.611) argues:

'…the invocation of neoliberal understandings of education and citizenship are seen to have led to an increasingly corporate focus and the goal of producing (and commodifying) a professional, self-governing careerist persona for volunteers.'

This is related to the performance social capital through non-educational and workplace activity, with the suggestion that citizenship activities may be construed as a form of distinction during competitive transitional phases of the lifecourse (Arnot and Reay, 2007, Brooks, 2009, Desforges, 1998, Heath, 2007, Wyness, 2009). In spite of this, the discussion in this chapter illustrates that NGO participation can also support other values and outcomes with a more oppositional political focus (Staeheli et al., 2013). Exploring how young people experience this 'fuzzy terrain' of citizenship (Swyngedouw, 2005) and its contested meanings is a core aim of this research project.

Most shadow state studies have focussed on NGOs' role in service provision as opposed to political mobilisation (Perkins, 2009), or explored tensions between these purposes (Brown, 1997, Smith, 2005). Yet the analytical frameworks that have been used to critically examine the voluntary welfare sector might also inform youth citizenship research, for example exploring links between NGO volunteering and political activism. Staeheli et al. (2013 p.103) state:

'In efforts to mould citizenship, whether in universities or through international NGOs, the qualities of the citizenship that is produced are rarely addressed.'

A relational understanding of NGO work and its connection with other sectors might offer a better appreciation of what kinds of citizenship are being fostered, and what (intended or unintended) outcomes NGOs are supporting for young people. The next chapter applies the idea of taking a relational view of the voluntary sector to research methodology, discussing the merits of an in-depth critical ethnographic approach for developing a nuanced understanding of the sector's citizenship practices, its political potential and limitations.

Chapter 4 Methodology & Case Studies

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of my research design and data collection, from initial choices made to challenges encountered and critical reflections on practice. In doing so, it makes a strong case for critical ethnography as the most appropriate means of qualitative data collection when working with the voluntary sector. Although this method is time-intensive and can be somewhat unwieldy for a novice researcher, its advantages in going deep and offering practical recompense to participants far outweigh its challenges.

4.2 The research design: considerations and choices

This section discusses the ethical and epistemological choices that underpinned my decision to conduct critical ethnography with two NGO youth citizenship programmes over the course of 16 months. It makes a case for embedded ethnographic methods over one-off data capture, as well as some advantages of the method over more action-orientated participatory approaches in this instance. The discussion addresses several questions which explore practical and analytical fit between the research topic and methodology:

- Who and what should be the focus to best address the research aims?
- What assumptions am I making about how knowledge is produced?
- What relationship do I envisage with research participants and potential users?
- Are there any research challenges particular to working with NGOs?
- Are there any research challenges particular to working with young people?
- How are these considerations best addressed in a research design?

4.2.1 Research assumptions

My research aims to explore: (i) how NGOs make space for and support youth citizenship; (ii) young people's experiences of participation in this context; (iii) the forces that constrain and enable this work; and (iv) how citizenship is practiced and performed by NGOs and their young members. This necessitated a research design that focussed on the experiences of young people and NGO workers, yet at the same

time considered broader trends that might shape their citizenship practices. These aims assume links between social theory and practice and favour in-depth, contextually situated knowledge. They recognise that such knowledge might come from multiple and even contradictory subject standpoints, incorporating the perspectives of young people, volunteers, frontline workers and management. These subjects are viewed as interconnected, attached to a wider organisational field of practice. These assumptions were expressed in my focus in the preceding chapters on how young people and NGOs might 'work the spaces' of neoliberalism through differentiated practices of reinforcement, resilience, reworking and resistance.

4.2.2 Epistemology

Values, ethics and methodology are inseparable and contribute to the framing of academic inquiry at every stage of the research process. Researchers' judgements and assumptions to a large extent determine:

> '…the choice of the problem, choice of paradigm to guide the problem, choice of theoretical framework, choice of major data-gathering and data-analytic methods, choice of context, treatment of values already resident within the context, and choice of format(s) for presenting findings.' (Guba and Lincoln, 2005 p.200)

My own assumptions are grounded in a post-positivist epistemology that attempts to see the social world from the perspective of people engaged in it, through research projects that in themselves constitute a form of engagement. I practice critical theory but I am also interested in other people's interpretations of their experience, and I believe that institutional meanings - for example policy constructs like 'active citizenship' - are contestable at the level of practice. I also believe that theoretical and practical knowledge should coexist, with research activities supporting critical reflection and action.

Three post-positivist approaches that have influenced my research preferences are social constructivism (Guba and Lincoln ibid.), standpoint theory (Harding, 1998, Hartsock, 1999, Smith, 1988) and participatory action research (PAR) (Kindon et al., 2007b), the latter particularly through my membership of the RGS-IBG Participatory Geographies Research Group. Although they differ in their approach to action, each of

these research paradigms values socially situated knowledge and recognises that social relations are made up of multiple possibilities. The insights I have drawn from each are broadly mutually reinforcing (Foley and Valenzuela, 2005), though in section 4.5.4 I acknowledge that, at the level of practice, some differences are difficult to reconcile.

Standpoint theorists would advocate starting from young people's everyday experiences of NGO participation, because perceptions and tacit knowledge of how organisations work are informative entry points for researching social systems (Kleinmann, 1996, Nichols, 2008, Smith, 1988). Social constructivist approaches are concerned with the learning that is produced through the relationships and shared cultural practices in particular settings. PAR proponents take the idea of socially constructed realities even further by focussing on knowledge co-production, usually with a view to co-ownership and evidence-based reform from within a community of interest (Cahill, 2007b, Foley and Valenzuela, 2005, Kindon et al., 2007a). Of the three, PAR is the hardest to reconcile with doing a PhD as this requires a sole authored, original and theoretically-driven contribution to academic knowledge (McCormack, 2004, Moore, 2004). The timeframe of a doctoral degree, however, affords an opportunity to develop 'meaningful' collaborative research if desired (Klocker, 2012).

4.2.3 Role of the researcher

Standpoint theorists, social constructivists and PAR practitioners share an interest in contesting power through making visible social relations that confer it (Benson and Nagar, 2006, Fine and Weis, 2005); however each suggests a slightly different role for the researcher in this process. With standpoint theory, the researcher uses academic expertise to 'reveal' or 'uncover' the meaning of social worlds from particular subject standpoints (Harding, 1998, Smith, 1988). Knowledge 'from the margins' (hooks, 1991) – i.e. the vantage point of those who find it harder to access power – is privileged as especially illuminating, with a view to suggesting how disadvantageous social relations might be resisted and transformed. Standpoint theorists are interested in 'how people's local embodied knowings and activities link up to discourse, practice, and knowledge coordinated extra-locally' (Nichols, 2008 p.686), and they tend to work with communities with whom they identify or empathise. This approach requires researchers to respect their subjects as fully conscious human beings, yet it is also

susceptible to suggesting that people would 'struggle in the dark' if not for academic intervention (Smith, 2005 p.32).

Social constructivist approaches can similarly cast the researcher as a 'transformative intellectual' who uses social theory to uncover the meanings of other people's practices. However, some researchers such as Guba and Lincoln (2005 p.196) propose that their interest in the learning that takes place through relationships and shared practices can lead some researchers to adopt a more facilitative approach as a 'passionate participant' in the settings in which they produce their research knowledge. For example, Murdock (2003 p.511) describes her ethnographic work as a 'practice' approach that affords greater recognition of the actions and meaning-making of people other than the researcher, with the understanding that:

> '…these are not 'actors' whose consciousness and strategies of 'resistance'
> may be easily gleaned without close attention to the contexts within which
> they experience and craft their lives and political projects.'

Participatory action researchers include passionate participants and activist-academics who are 'deeply involved in progressive social movements and community based reforms' (Foley and Valenzuela, 2005 p.220). PAR practitioners seek to do research that not only supports transformative action with the knowledge it produces, but that uses the process of knowledge production itself – i.e. doing research – as a transformative encounter (Cahill, 2007b, Kindon et al., 2007a). In one way or another, all three approaches can be considered as experiments in consciousness-raising (Freire, 1970); but there is some disparity as to whether this is achieved primarily through the process or the products of research.

My funding bid to the Economics and Social Research Council (ESRC) open competition (now defunct) was framed as a participatory project, emphasising my experience as an NGO volunteer and youth worker. I wanted to do research to inform practice and afford time to reflect on problems encountered doing work that I cared about. Part of the ESRC's criteria for funding research is its potential to make an impact beyond the academy (ESRC, 2013 p.19), so this aspiration must have sounded reasonably convincing. In my subsequent reading and research design, I retained the desire to do something helpful and involved in practice, with at the very least an ethical commitment to give something back. I became less sure about how do to participatory

research as the sole author of an intellectual project and began to envisage limitations as to what would be possible in the field. Yet I hoped to develop mutually beneficial relationships with practitioners and volunteers within the NGO community, as the most likely informants and users of this research. Alongside the broad epistemological considerations outlined above, I also thought about the challenges of voluntary sector and youth work to develop an appropriate research strategy.

4.2.4 NGO research

As a starting point, there were two major ethical issues to address in thinking through how best to go about researching voluntary sector activity. These were:

(i)   my assumptions about NGOs; and

(ii)   the extent to which involvement in academic research is desired or prioritised by NGO staff and volunteers.

My original research proposal was essentially asking 'How can 'good' projects do better?' and this is a common pitfall of NGO research, which often stems from researchers' identification with a particular cause or organisation (Markowitz, 2001). As a result NGOs are either charged with miracles, or derided for falling short of unacknowledged criteria and expectations; answering the 'doing good' question becomes a burden on fair and balanced research (Fisher, 1997, Murdock, 2003).

I am interested in contentious themes such as the voluntary sector's relationship with the state and private sector, so checking my own assumptions about what NGOs ought to be doing was an important step towards developing a stronger analysis. This led to two key research design choices. Firstly, I decided not to work with NGOs with whom I had a history of active involvement, taking a deliberate step back from personal crusades and activist-academic insider research. Secondly, my wider reading around the voluntary sector led to more of a critical-theoretical approach with a focus on 'working the spaces' of neoliberalism. This shift was an attempt to 'avoid reductionist views of NGOs as fixed and generalizable entities with essential characteristics and contextualize them within evolving processes of associating' (Fisher, 1997 p.442). In other words, although I stepped away from insider research, I still wanted to theorise from a contextually rich and involved organisational study.

The second ethical consideration was the extent to which, when approaching NGOs 'from cold' i.e. as an outsider with a research agenda, I could avoid being a burden to them and ideally be useful. I was interested in rich data, but from my own experience in the sector and wider reading I understood that NGOs are often under-resourced and might view time-intensive, extractive research as more of an imposition than a help (Markowitz, 2001). To address my research aims I needed considerable access to young people and volunteers, which relied on relationships of trust with NGO gatekeepers.

Initially I thought that the 'methodological openness' of PAR (Kindon et al., 2007b) might offer a means for dialogue with NGOs about what research activities would be most useful. I envisaged establishing peer research teams comprised of self-selecting young people and volunteers to guide the research process. I found however that both NGOs and young people were wary of such activities as a stretch on capacity, potentially distracting from or adversarial to their core work. Other researchers have encountered similar issues (Cameron, 2007, Markowitz, 2001) and Maxey (1999 p.206) observes that the drive to involve 'the researched' in the research process can mask 'the extent to which this is actually an inappropriate imposition on people who really do not have the time or interest.' Kindon et al. (2007b p.16) likewise caution:

> '…choices about modes and degrees of participation are not just made by the researcher but negotiated with co-researchers and participants. The latter may not desire full participation and care needs to be taken to work with people on their own terms.'

Ultimately I would come to feel uncomfortable about asking young people and NGO staff to volunteer for a side project that would become my PhD, especially as I had few concrete ideas about what I might offer in return at the start of the project.

This led me to think about other ways that I could develop reciprocal relationships and dialogue through a research process, adopting participatory ethics if not participatory methods. Ironically after stepping back, these reflections led me full circle to thinking about how research can give back by embedding the researcher as 'part of the action' (Fuller, 1999), trading practical help and accountability to a community of interest for in-depth research access.

4.2.5 Youth research

There were also some issues to consider around conducting research with young people, although much written on this subject applies to childhood and early teens, and I worked with young people over the age of 16. In the UK, conducting research with anyone under the age of 18 means following safeguarding procedures such as a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, and usually not working with young people on their own. Particular institutional settings such as schools and NGOs also have their own safeguarding policies which may go over and above what's required by law. When such organisations are research gatekeepers, this means respecting their policies even when they place limitations on research activity. Safeguarding and its implications had to be considered extensively in my submission to the University of Leeds' Ethics Review Committee prior to conducting fieldwork (Ethics reference: AREA 10-137).

Bearing in mind that I would likely access young people through NGO gatekeepers, I became cautious about promising them immediate research impact. Youth participation initiatives are especially vulnerable to co-option, manipulation and tokenism (Hart, 1992, Matthews and Limb, 2003) and I did not want to unwittingly find myself fronting a hollow consultation exercise. Listening to 'the voice of young people' is often used to distract from reform and youth participation research has been criticised for focussing too much on 'voice', not enough on situating young voices within a broader political economy (Arnot and Reay, 2007, Skelton, 2013). The idea that subject standpoint research is automatically 'empowering' for participants has also been criticised as a 'mythology' (Arnot and Reay, 2007) that suffers from 'theoretical tiredness' (Kesby et al., 2007). My research aimed to explore NGO youth citizenship work from the perspective of young people, volunteers, frontline workers and management. This could give rise to diverse interpretations and expectations of the research, not necessarily conducive to young people's views and wishes being addressed in any subsequent response at the institutional level (Cameron, 2007, Pain and Francis, 2003). This was another reason that I eventually concluded that PAR was not the most appropriate research strategy in this instance. I was reluctant to ask too much of young people for little guaranteed return.

Despite this, there were several ways in which participatory ethics influenced my research design in respect to young people. My research interests in the first place stemmed from college and undergraduate disciplinary training in what was then termed 'the new social studies of childhood' (Holloway and Valentine, 2000). My teachers advocated researching from children and young people's lives, valorising their 'legitimate perspective from a position of otherness' (Burke, 2007 p.360). This could be characterised as a branch of standpoint epistemology, especially concerned with developing accessible and appropriate research methodologies. I was encouraged to consider children and young people's marginalisation from mainstream politics and political theory (Cohen, 2005, Philo and Smith, 2003, Rodgers, 2005, Stasiulis, 2002) and to find ways to speak to significant sociological debates whilst respecting their preferred ways of being researched. These concerns underpinned my research design, although I was cautious of falling into the trap of valorising standpoint above all else.

Researchers who practice PAR with young people have emphasised the importance of working with peer groups and from the insights peer discussion can offer into organisational cultures and subcultures (Cahill, 2007a, Higgins et al., 2007). It has also been suggested that conducting research with young people in peer groups alleviates (to some extent) the power imbalance of researcher and researched (Hill, 2006) and offers opportunities for consciousness-raising through dialogue (Cahill, 2007a, Gervais, 2010). Swartz (2011) identifies two ways that researchers can exceed minimum ethical requirements to work reciprocally with young people: 'going deep' through attention to multiple perspectives in analysis and presentation of findings; and 'giving back' research benefits through group activities, co-ownership of research knowledge and where appropriate, participation in reform. I was able to take modest steps in practice in respect of these considerations.

4.2.6 Critical ethnography

I was drawn to critical ethnography as a method that has been used extensively and well in youth standpoint research (James and Prout, 1990, Katz, 2004, Willis, 1977) as well as within studies of the voluntary sector (Kleinmann, 1996, Murdock, 2003). Ethnography is employed to craft deeply involved research projects that are respectful of participants and their immediate social worlds at the micro-political scale, yet also

able to 'study-up' to theorise, speak to and contest macro-political phenomena (Fine and Weis, 2005, Nader, 1969, Philo and Parr, 2000).

Ethnographic research about NGO practices falls into the broad category of workplace ethnography (Markowitz, 2001), or what is elsewhere termed institutional geography (Philo and Parr, 2000) or organizational studies (McAdam and Scott, 2005). Despite originating in different disciplines, these approaches share a focus on contextualising organisations, situating thick description of people's lives at work within the wider organisational field and politics of production and social reproduction. For some scholars this is about 'the reanimation of images of work' (Brannan et al., 2007 p.395) through a focus on everyday tacit knowledge (Gherardi, 2000); others seek to overcome the 'petrification' (Barley and Kunda, 2001) of bounded organisational case studies by studying up. For NGO researchers, workplace ethnography enables a nuanced account of voluntary sector trends from a practice perspective. Processes of professionalisation can be theorised through attention to the detail of incorporation and resistance with a 'greater sense of interpretation, negotiation, dialogue, and conscious engagement' (Murdock, 2003 p.511). Such an analysis resists oversimplification of the research problem as a case of praising or vilifying 'good' and 'bad' NGOs.

This kind of ethnography aligns with Fine and Weis' (2005 p.65) notion of 'compositional studies', which they describe as:

> '...a serious elaboration as to how we oscillate from the local to the structural, how we analyze in ways that reveal what photographers call the 'varied depths of field''.

For example, Markowitz (2001) describes her ethnographic fieldwork strategy as one of 'following the project', tracing the local activity of a small Peruvian agricultural NGO through various key staff members, stakeholders and donor institutions, to better understand how project trajectories develop, and how national and international policies shape local provision. More recently, NGO ethnographers and youth citizenship researchers have perceived a need for 'radical transnational methodologies' (Benson and Nagar, 2006 p.582, YouCitizen, 2013) in a way that invokes Massey's (2007) conceptualisation of 'the politics of place beyond place'. These developments in ethnographic methodology are exciting, innovative and vital for keeping pace with

globalisation. At a practical level, implementation issues relating to funding, timeframes and feasibility can be envisaged. It should however always be possible to some extent to contextualise events at a particular research site through connections such as donors, partnerships and policy preferences.

In practice I took critical ethnography to mean volunteering time within a community (in this instance an organisation) in exchange for immersive research access. I took my cue from previous voluntary sector studies where this has proved an effective means of understanding relationships, actions and meaning making from the standpoint of research subjects (Benson and Nagar, 2006, Markowitz, 2001, Murdock, 2003). This method has previously been used to look at young people's experiences of engaging with voluntary sector organisations, with a focus on social welfare aspects of citizenship (Nichols, 2008, Vanderbeck, 2009). Broader issues around youth politics and identity are explored in ethnographies of global justice movements (Feixa et al., 2009, Juris and Pleyers, 2009), but the ephemeral event-driven nature of these activities makes them a slippery subject for compositional analysis. Although my methodology would come to bear some similarity to these insider accounts by situating me as part of the action, my role is better characterised as a volunteer/ethnographer than an activist/academic. I judged that a critical ethnographic approach was best suited to the topic, as well as my ethical and epistemological preferences, for a number of reasons:

- Exchanging volunteer time for research access can not only be thought of as a practical way of giving something back, but opens up possibilities for dialogue and reciprocity with NGOs that have neither the time nor resources to participate in other forms of research (Markowitz, 2001).

- Through methodical thick description and sustained engagement in a research setting, ethnography can challenge researchers to look beyond their assumptions, sometimes eliciting unanticipated findings. For example, Kleinmann's (1996) ethnographic study of organisational identity in an alternative health non-profit became an account of institutionalised gender inequality based on her observations.

- Participant observation supplements what can be learned through methods such as interview and survey data. As Kleinmann's study illustrates,

ethnography considers both what people say they do and what actually happens, enabling pertinent questions to be asked through first-hand knowledge of the research context.

- A 'practice' approach allows subjects 'a greater sense of interpretation, negotiation, dialogue, and conscious engagement' (Murdock, 2003 p.511) than one-off data capture. It acknowledges participants' accounts of their experience, whilst recognising that on-going observation can support a fuller understanding than, for example, simply asking young people for their views about an NGO. This nuance was especially relevant given my research interest in practices of reinforcement, resilience, reworking and resistance.

- The notion of 'compositional studies' (Fine and Weis, 2005) or 'studying up' from NGOs (Markowitz, 2001, Nader, 1969) appealed as a means to explore macro-political citizenship trends, without negating young people's or frontline workers' and volunteers' agency.

- In youth political participation research, it is now orthodoxy to consider young people's identities as unfixed, constituted of multiple associations and critical moments (Beck, 2001, Giddens, 1991, Rheingans and Hollands, 2013, Staeheli, 2010). This arguably something of an elusive quality to my research subject that required a flexible and at least semi-longitudinal research response to capture.

- Although disappointed to give up on PAR, I was satisfied that I could alternatively adopt strategies to 'open up the process of producing ethnographies' such as dialogic interviewing, community review, discussing data interpretation and producing outputs in ordinary language (Foley and Valenzuela, 2005 p.224). I felt that such methods might help to avoid intimating that my participants 'struggle in the dark' (Smith, 2005 p.32) by offering them opportunities to answer back and use aspects of the research for their own purposes.

With these considerations in mind, the core method of my research became critical ethnography as a volunteer/researcher. In practice this meant volunteering within the NGO sector for 16 months with field note taking as my foremost means of data collection, supplemented by additional data from interviews, focus groups and other means where appropriate. The specific organisational case studies and my relationship with them are outlined in the section below. This is followed by a summary of the core

methods of research and the data they generated, and then a discussion of some of the difficulties I encountered in putting this methodology into practice.

4.3 Case studies

This section outlines the selection of two NGO youth citizenship projects, Global Youth Advocacy and Youth in Communities, as the focus of ethnographic fieldwork. These organisations and their members are referred to with pseudonyms throughout and the reasons underpinning their anonymity are discussed in section 4.5.3. I first explain why I chose to work with two cases and why these NGOs in particular were selected, and then provide an overview of the history, core activities and organisational structure of each. Key similarities and differences between the two organisations are summarised in a table for ease of reference. I also discuss research access points and situate my participant observation within the wider organisational context. The implications of this relationship with the case study NGOs and my experience of approaching them as a researcher are discussed in section 4.5, following a summary of the core data generated.

4.3.1 Why two cases?

Due to the intensive nature of data collection, ethnographic research is usually confined to one in-depth community or organisational case study (e.g. Kleinmann, 1996, Vanderbeck, 2009, Willis, 1977); or else comparative projects may be undertaken by a research team who contribute insights from different sites (e.g Feixa et al., 2009, YouCitizen, 2013). Katz's (2004) 'counter-topography' ethnographic study is an exception, documenting the effects of global economic restructuring on childhoods in rural Sudan and inner city New York, using juxtaposition as a central conceptual feature of research design. Katz's work is contextually rich, favouring depth over breadth whilst extrapolating beyond particulars – yet a common criticism of *Growing up Global* is the imbalance of the ethnographic data, with the Sudanese case study clearly the stronger of the two. This suggests that spreading oneself too thinly might have a negative impact on the comprehensiveness of case study research. It could also be argued that there is nothing inherently more advantageous about extending research activities across two sites, because the point of case study research is to develop intimate, context-dependent knowledge (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

Researchers who concentrate on a single site can likewise pay attention to 'the politics of place beyond place' (Massey, 2007) and oscillate between situated knowledge, social policy and theory (Donmoyer, 2000, Fine and Weis, 2005, Stake, 1995). This is not to claim that qualitative case study research necessarily aims to generalise; but to recognise that all human knowledge is formulated from our experience of particulars and engagement with theory in synergy (Flyvbjerg, 2006). My interpretation of case study research is that it illuminates social theory and practice from a vantage point (or points) determined by the aims of the research. The choice of a case study or studies is thus influenced by what the researcher wants to investigate. Katz's dual site counter-topography makes sense in a project that seeks to unsettle assumptions about mainstream and marginal spaces of the global economy; just as Nichols (2008) multisite localised ethnography makes sense in a project about young homeless people's experiences of accessing social welfare services.

My decision to work with two cases was founded on a desire to understand more about trends such as processes of professionalisation within the voluntary sector, including the different ways that such trends might find expression in practice. The decision was informed by literature review and a preliminary sketch of NGO youth citizenship activities, informal conversations with sector workers and desk-based research. This highlighted enormous diversity within the sector, even with selection criteria confined to organisations based in the UK. NGO youth programmes spanned ages 7 to 30 and other significant differences included issue focus, spaces of operation, staffing and resources allocated to youth work, and whether projects were youth-led or their focus pre-determined. Although case study research is not aiming for wholesale generalisation (Stake, 1995) I was concerned that a single case might in this instance be too easily dismissed as irrelevant to the broader experiences of the sector.

Flyvbjerg (2006, p.225) states that much of what can be inferred from case study research 'depends on the case one is speaking of and how it is chosen'; and he goes on to discuss various selection strategies from random selection to typical and extreme cases. It seemed impossible to find a typical case within such a 'loose and baggy monster' (Kendall and Knapp, 1995). I was also wary of getting too deeply drawn into a single site and losing sight of my research aims. Instead I felt that looking for shared experiences across distinct organisational contexts might best suit my purpose, and

that engaging in comparative analytical work might encourage critical reflection as I navigated insider research. I decided to focus empirical research on two NGOs alike in some respects but dissimilar in others, based on criteria emerging from my literature review and preliminary sketches of the sector.

4.3.2 Why these cases?

My ethnography focuses on the core activities of two UK based youth citizenship NGOs: Global Youth Advocacy (GYA) and Youth in Communities (YIC). This section explains the criteria that informed their selection and why I deemed these organisations to be fruitful research sites.

Qualitative researchers have put forward several plausible criteria for case selection, some more applicable than others within my research field. Case studies may be considered *intrinsically* or *instrumentally* interesting (Stake, 1995) i.e. sufficiently significant or special to merit study for their own sake, or useful towards understanding a wider theory or social phenomena. In social science few cases are justifiably worthy of attention on intrinsic merit alone (Gomm et al., 2000) and are therefore chosen for the insight they can offer to address research questions that transcend the case itself. When selecting cases, researchers should consider the potential for and limitations of knowledge generation from different vantage points (Brewer, 2000).

A common approach is to select a 'typical' case that has many features in common with others in its field (Ragin, 1997). Lincoln and Guba (2000) suggest that a single case is useful as a synecdoche, or slice of the social matrix used to characterise the whole. For this project this approach would be problematic, because no organisation could be fully typical of such a diverse sector (Schofield, 2000). It is also important to be wary of claiming typicality because ethnographic knowledge is a partial and incomplete account of the field: a case is never fully representative, and my view of the case as a researcher could not encompass every nuance (Gomm et al., 2000).

Others advise choosing cases to maximise opportunities for learning (Flyvbjerg, 2006, Schofield, 2000, Stake, 1995). This is the rationale behind sampling strategies such as looking at extreme cases, pilot projects, cases perceived to be at the forefront of change and scenarios where a research hypothesis might be most or least likely to

stand up. Pragmatism is also required. Burgess (1984 p.61) suggests that ideal case study sites offer ease and depth of access, facilitate links from simple situations to complex ones, and allow the researcher to be an active participant whilst maintaining a relatively low profile.

My ethnography might have focussed on the youth or schools work of major international NGOs such as Oxfam, Amnesty International, or Friends of the Earth. I could alternatively have looked at these NGOs' relationship with campus activism, or studied NGOs with a student membership base such as People & Planet and Student Action for Refugees. In practice, the former group's preference for working through school curricula and piecemeal provision of identifiable UK youth groups made in-depth ethnographic work unfeasible. I feared the latter's attachment to universities precluded many young people from participating, and besides much has already been written of the impact of neoliberal professionalisation and employability within this context (Holdsworth and Brewis, 2013, Staeheli et al., 2013).

I became interested in GYA and YIC as both were relatively new organisations with a specific focus on 'engaging' and 'empowering' young people. GYA works with young people predominantly online and deliberately outside of the spaces of formal education. YIC works through schools and further education colleges and actively promotes diversity in its recruitment and representation of participants. From an outsiders' perspective, as I was then, these seemed like 'least likely' cases for reproducing differential citizenship through exclusive membership criteria. Within the sector, both NGOs are perceived as if not the 'cutting edge of change' (Schofield, 2000), innovators of good practice in supporting youth citizenship. I was directed to GYA by several unconnected NGO staff whom I approached for advice; it had then recently formed and was generating considerable interest in its youth-led approach. YIC has won several awards for its work with young people and is cited in UK Government reports as an exemplar active citizenship initiative. I was also interested in both NGOs' claims to be youth-led and their explicit mission focus on empowering young people. I reasoned that if neoliberal professionalisation and employability were found to be influential in cases where young people are free to fashion their own citizenship projects, this would provide a more robust working hypothesis about the likelihood of such trends in more conservative cases (Flyvbjerg, 2006). As these NGOs

were purported to offer models of good practice, I also hoped to draw from them recommendations to support the development and evaluation of other voluntary sector youth citizenship initiatives.

In selecting my research case studies, I also considered practicalities and the potential of various sites to generate in-depth knowledge (Brewer, 2000). In preparation for fieldwork I made enquiries with several NGOs about their youth outreach work and had informal meetings with contacts in the sector. In many cases, the opportunities available for working with young people were simply too infrequent or ad-hoc. Some NGOs worked in schools only though volunteer speakers and sending curriculum resource packs to teachers. Others said young people were welcome at their local meetings but in practice none attended. Some were only sufficiently active in a few large cities (e.g. London and Manchester), which would have necessitated site visits as opposed to regular contact. Some never responded to emails and phone calls despite my persistence. By contrast, GYA and YIC offered regular and immersive opportunities to work with their young members, volunteers and staff. In each case, I could explore through one region or one project wider organisational trends, policies and relationships with other institutions. As discussed in section 4.5.3, it was sometimes difficult to maintain a low profile online in GYA, but in all other respects these cases facilitated deep ethnographic work of the kind I had determined necessary to address my research aims.

4.3.3 Histories

Global Youth Advocacy (GYA)

GYA was founded less than five years prior to the start of my research, by two university students who had previously volunteered for large professional campaigning NGOs. Its founders' past experience included Oxfam's Change programme, a four day residential course for young people 'who can demonstrate a commitment to making change happen', focussed on 'building networks of people, motivating others to get involved, and inspiring them to speak out about poverty and suffering' (Oxfam South West 2012). Their voluntary experience also included international work with peers from Europe and North America. They said that the inspiration for GYA came from

conversations with these peers about youth-led advocacy groups elsewhere and opportunities for co-ordinating campaigns internationally.

GYA was established with small foundation grants and in-kind support from other NGOs, bringing in founding members through friendship and volunteering networks. This informal approach formed the basis of GYA's organising model: run entirely by young volunteers, supported by sympathetic organisations including national and international NGOs, youth educational charities and grassroots groups. From the outset GYA focussed on youth participation in national and international policy-making, supporting youth lobbying of the UK and European Parliaments and the United Nations. GYA's membership and profile has fluctuated since it was founded, involving anywhere between around 20-60 active core members working on national and international projects at any one time.

Youth in Communities (YIC)

YIC was also established by a group of young friends, this time graduates, a little over a decade ago. YIC's founders had some experience of international volunteering and wanted to set up a project to inspire other young people to get involved in voluntary action. They also wanted to challenge negative youth stereotyping by the media. YIC was originally set up as a schools project in one London borough and run locally on a semi-voluntary basis by its founders, who fundraised to cover core costs. This project had grown in size year-on-year up until recently, to become a professionally staffed national NGO with four regional offices and around 35 full-time employees at the time of research. YIC expanded with financial support from a variety of sources including a large Big Lottery start-up grant, funding from various Government and voluntary sector grant-making bodies and corporate sponsorship. It also more recently became a delivery partner in National Citizen Service under the Coalition Government. YIC has consistently worked through schools and further education colleges throughout this period, first with a few dozen young people a year increasing to an estimated 4,000 annually at the time of research.

4.3.4 Core work

GYA

GYA works with UK youth on national and international projects relating to energy and climate change. Its main activities are campaigning, lobbying, outreach events and training and its international work is its most prominent project. Since founding, GYA has organised youth delegations to United Nations (UN) conferences on an annual basis. Its members are encouraged to work with others around the UK and internationally on shared projects, through Skype and online working groups as well as at international summits. GYA accredits young people with official UN Observer status, offering policy training with the expectation that its members share this with others. It has sister organisations in many countries, but has tended to focus on partnerships with African youth and more recently within the European Union.

At the national level, GYA has organised one large youth conference and run several campaigns making political demands of the UK Government. It tends to focus on one campaign at a time. Activities GYA has organised to support campaigns include direct actions, speaker events, social media rapid response, training weekends and lobbying meetings with MPs and Ministers. GYA helped to establish a youth advisory panel within a UK Government department and also signposts members to campaigning and youth consultation opportunities with other organisations.

GYA has a nominal head office but predominantly works online, with members dispersed throughout England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Social media is especially important for the organisation's national and international reach. Though its actions, training and events take place in towns and cities throughout the UK, they are co-ordinated and publicised virtually by online teams rather than local groups.

GYA membership is by application for a specific volunteer role within one of its teams. Usually these roles are open to young people age 16-29, though some projects are restricted to over 18s if they involve international travel. Young people can choose between national or international work, training and development, and operational strategy. Some GYA teams recruit volunteers on a rolling basis; others such as the UN and co-director roles are fixed-term. Every organiser is an unpaid volunteer and the support GYA offers young people is on a peer-to-peer basis.

YIC

YIC's core work is a schools and colleges active citizenship programme for 16-19 year olds. It worked with around 130 schools a year through four regional offices at the time of my fieldwork. YIC runs weekly lunchtime or after-school citizenship sessions with young people, typically from September through to March or April. Young people participate on a voluntary basis and are recruited through an assembly at the beginning of the school year. Usually this opportunity is only open to one year group (typically the lower 6th form), although the eligibility criteria varies across schools depending on how their academic and vocational courses are structured. Young people can join throughout the programme and existing participants often recruit new team members.

YIC's programme initially follows the same format in every school. It begins with five weeks of structured activities led by its staff, which explore young people's views about various social and environmental issues and give examples of ways to take action. Young people are then encouraged to choose an issue they feel passionate about, form teams, and develop their own project in subsequent meetings, coached by staff and volunteer mentors from the local community. Each regional office organises three city-wide events a year for their school teams. These events offer training and networking opportunities with local decision-makers, businesses and representatives of other NGOs. Ideally, all YIC members put their chosen projects into action before the end of the programme.

In addition to this core work, YIC offers active citizenship teacher training workshops and ad-hoc development opportunities for young people who have 'graduated' from its schools programme. As a partner in National Citizen Service (NCS) it also helps to deliver and signpost young people to short-term summer residential opportunities to support voluntary action. Like GYA, YIC often signposts young people to consultation and campaigning opportunities elsewhere, and is occasionally able to offer places to its members at national Government and media events.

4.3.5 Organisational structure

GYA

As a relatively young organisation GYA has undergone considerable restructuring, from its formation as a group of friends sharing key organising responsibilities to a

national network of over 60 formal volunteer roles. This risked becoming unmanageable and my fieldwork covered a transition period within the organisation, which eventually streamlined activities into four teams and introduced a trustee board. The four key teams cover UK, international, development and operational work. These are overseen by four co-directors, also volunteers, elected by peers. Previously there were only two co-directors and several more teams, as well as an additional level of hierarchy that included team co-ordinators. My fieldwork period covers both organisational models. The trustee board includes GYA alumni, at least one current member and advisors from other NGOs. This formally introduces adult 'expertise' within GYA's organisational structure, though young people retain leadership and decision-making powers.

YIC

YIC is more hierarchically organised than GYA, with four regional teams with a manager in each plus a central team, a senior management team and a CEO. YIC has a board of trustees and a separate youth advisory panel comprised of alumni. Each team includes a mix of waged full-time staff, interns, work placement students and volunteers, and sometimes part-time staff. Intern roles are aimed and paid at graduate training level, usually attracting applicants in their early twenties. Interns and volunteers deliver the majority of YIC's frontline work with young people in schools, though permanent staff also play a key role in this, especially at the beginning of each year's programme.

4.3.6 The self and the social in GYA and YIC

The next section summarises the core operational differences and similarities between the two case study NGOs. Alongside this broad overview, it is important to acknowledge an underpinning, more fundamental difference in how GYA and YIC incorporated the self and the social into their organisational structures. Their different orientations in this respect affected my experience of fieldwork and positionality in each case, as well as some of the key findings that emerged from the research.

GYA's membership was initially based on friendship between a small group of young people already known to each other, starting from a position of shared interest in and experience of campaigning. As the organisation expanded to advertise for more

volunteers and to bring other young people in to form teams, this starting point had a profound impact on the way in which members related to GYA and to each other. At the time of my fieldwork, the only way to participate in GYA was to apply as an individual for an organising role. Key organisers hosted training weekends in their homes, mixed socialising with volunteering for GYA and placed a strong emphasis on team-building and forming friendships with and between new recruits. The opportunity to join a network of like-minded young people was a prominent selling point of its volunteer roles, alongside skills development and regular travel. The volunteer commitment for a role with GYA was intensive: at least 16 hours a week, with some key organisers working practically full-time unpaid. Along with its beginnings by young people with aspirations for professional NGO careers, this led to a powerful alchemy of extraordinary enthusiasm for GYA projects and spending time together, young people having complete ownership of operations and decision-making, and high expectations about what they would achieve together. The returning presence of alumni now working for major international NGOs reinforced the idea that GYA was about building long-lasting personal/professional connections, and there was a palpable sense of loyalty and affection among members. The NGO's lack of physical infrastructure was also a factor in the social construction of GYA and its members as one and the same. Some activity was structured in the form of training weekends and weekly Skype meetings, but more depended on informal and ad-hoc interactions. GYA's organisational model of citizenship thus conflated the self and the social from the outset; bringing young people together to positively identify as part of a group that would become a significant social network for them and support their development as professional activists. My fieldwork with GYA was similarly intensive, becoming friendship-based with ongoing keep in touch as key participants graduated to paid work in the voluntary sector.

In YIC, young people were the target beneficiaries of a professional programme designed for them by adults doing a job from an office base. They formally participated once a week in school with their classmates, and YIC was one of a number of extracurricular activities on offer. Their affiliation to the NGO was therefore very different, much less intimately connected and more like that of a service or club-user. The minimum commitment level of an hour a week compared to GYA's 16 shows that young people did not need to be as invested in YIC's work for the organisation to

function; that was the job of paid staff. Young people had opportunities to give feedback and make suggestions about how YIC worked, but no responsibility for running the NGO. Young people could be self-directed in whatever social action they chose to do for YIC with their classmates and this was sometimes a space for youth leadership, self-organising, new friendships and connections. However, the context in which they experienced YIC as a fixed term school project meant that in practice there were not the same opportunities as in GYA to build social networks. Staff and team mentors were of course required to keep a professional distance from the young people they supported by managing all interactions through YIC's office and organisational social media accounts. YIC's organisational model of citizenship, rooted in education and a professional NGO with centralised decision-making, maintained clear boundaries between the self and YIC's social purpose. My experience of fieldwork in YIC, while still very positive, felt much more like a formal volunteering role. Young people's means of participation was likewise much less involved, though some would graduate to become team mentors or join its youth advisory board.

4.3.7 Comparison

Both NGOs' mission statements promised to 'engage' and 'empower' young people, but there were also substantive differences between the two. As discussed in section 4.3.1, I was interested in a degree of dissimilarity in key aspects of my case studies' work and operations, to see whether shared citizenship practices and trends might be observed despite organisational differences. A number of core distinctions were considered, including: professionally staffed/volunteer run; core funded/fundraising; adult/youth-led; process/issue focussed; local/national/international; and online/offline. These dimensions of difference were informed by initial conversations with sector workers and desk based research. They influenced case selection, not as mutually exclusive categories, but as indicative of divergent working contexts and preferences. Thinking through comparisons in each case illustrates that they are better conceptualised along a continuum than categorically:

- Both NGOs rely on volunteers, but only GYA in the absence of any staff;
- Income generation is a concern for both NGOs, but YIC sustains a larger core funded operation;

- Adult 'experts' offer young people guidance and mentoring, but in GYA only young people have decision-making power;
- Both focus on youth empowerment, but for GYA this is driven by specific political goals;
- Both are nominally national NGOs, but GYA predominantly supports international activity, while YIC encourages local community action;
- As a result, they privilege either online or offline group communication between young people as their main mode of organising.

My intention in considering these criteria in case selection and comparison was not to devise an all-encompassing typology of NGO youth work, but to ensure I had taken voluntary sector diversity into reasonable account as far as is practicable within an in-depth ethnographic study. Table 1 below summarises the core features of each case study NGO, providing a quick reference basis for comparison and contrast.

Table 1: Comparing Case Studies

	Global Youth Advocacy (GYA)	**Youth in Communities (YIC)**
Age of users	16-29 (18+ for international work)	16-19
Approach	Facilitating youth-led political projects	Facilitating youth-led community projects
Core focus	Climate change campaigning	Active citizenship
Decision-making	By young people; consensus process	Strategic: CEO and senior management; frontline projects: by young people
Funding	Small foundation grant applications; individual donors; in-kind support; member fundraising	Public sector delivery contracts; grant applications; corporate sponsorship; income generation through training
Government links	Direct lobbying link with a Government department, including youth advisory panel representation	Delivery partnership with the Cabinet Office; cited for best practice in youth work in a cross-governmental report

Membership	Application for a volunteer role	Through participating schools in four regions
Partnerships	30+ UK partners in including other NGOs, student organisations, youth charities and environmental groups; Global partnerships via membership of the UN youth constituency and international NGO umbrella bodies	Four key corporate partners that provide sponsorship and skills mentoring; Government delivery partnership; ad-hoc regional links with other public, private and voluntary sector groups that provide in-kind support for young people's projects
Scale	UK and international projects	England via regional delivery
Spaces of operation	Website, email, online conferencing, web groups and social media; ad-hoc UK events and training in various locations; UN working groups and conferences; London office	Local communities through schools and further education colleges, coordinated by regional offices in four English cities; London head office; website and social media
Staffing	Voluntary, by young people age 16-29	Waged permanent staff and interns supported by volunteer mentors
Support	Peer to peer	Mentoring and 'expert' advice
Youth-led	Throughout	Run for young people by professionals. Young people design their own projects, but have only a minor role in shaping overall organisational strategy via a youth advisory board

4.3.8 Access

Ethnographers cannot be everywhere at once, instead generating knowledge as best they can from a partial view within a case study site (Gomm et al., 2000). The vast majority of the data collected for this research project is drawn from participant observation within the 'flagship' programmes of each of my case studies; i.e. the core work they were founded to do and are best known for. From this starting point, I was

also able to access wider NGO activities, meetings, resources and conversations, including partner and strategy meetings, consistent with my intention to 'study up'.

I responded to GYA's annual recruitment call for volunteers on its international team, applying as any other applicant would, but stating my research aspirations from the outset. In addition to going through GYA's recruitment process, I had a separate meeting with key organisers to discuss mutual expectations as to how research would be conducted. Following this, I submitted a research proposal that was approved by its co-directors. Once offered a volunteering role, I went through a further process of obtaining informed consent to conduct ethnographic research from all GYA members that I would be in regular contact with. This followed usual ethical protocols such as the provision of an information sheet (Appendix A), an opt-out clause and opportunities to discuss concerns. This was revisited informally throughout my fieldwork, as GYA members were curious and would often ask about the research. With their permission I obtained access to weekly team meetings, all training weekends, internal communications and policy documents. By shadowing their activities I also participated in international NGO and youth working groups online, two UN summits, and several high level meetings with civil servants and Ministers. The difficulty of incorporating this second tier of potential yet peripheral research subjects is discussed in section 4.5.2.

I documented YIC's flagship schools programme through one of its regional offices, initially negotiating access via a regional manager and subsequently permission from senior management after submitting a short research proposal. I was interviewed informally by a volunteer coordinator and asked to sign a code of conduct, as was a standard requirement of all volunteers. I first attended volunteer and staff training sessions at the regional and national level, and then volunteered with the regional team two days a week to support office administration tasks, programme delivery in schools and event organising. I visited one school in particular, Oak Grammar, on a weekly basis to get an in-depth first hand overview of programme delivery from start to finish. I also made ad-hoc visits throughout the academic year to YIC groups in six other schools and colleges, covering staff and volunteer absences and supporting evaluation activities. I attended weekly staff meetings and had access to national promotional materials, policy documents and internal conversations via the staff intranet. I

introduced myself to all young people, staff and volunteers whom I worked with as a volunteer and researcher, and all who were interviewed or participated in focus groups were provided with an information sheet and asked to sign a consent form.

4.4 Methods of data collection

Table 2 overleaf (p.103) summarises my contact with each case study NGO over the 16-month fieldwork period and the methods of data collection in each case. This section discusses each of the core ethnographic methodologies employed as illustrated in the table. These were: field note taking, interviewing, focus groups, and initial key finding summaries that were shared for participant review, if desired.

4.4.1 Field notes

Field notes are the cornerstone of ethnographic writing, combining data collection with preliminary analysis as the researcher filters what is happening in the field to produce descriptive accounts of people and their activities, deciding – deliberately or otherwise – what is significant and what is excluded (Emerson et al. 1995). Regular field note-taking was accordingly my main method of data collection. In GYA, these field notes were written from weekly team meetings via Skype, monthly training weekends at various UK venues, and any other events I attended, which included ad hoc meetings and two 2-3 week periods of international fieldwork with the team at UN conferences. In YIC, field notes were written from regular visits to the regional office, where I typically stayed for the full working day doing administration tasks, and from school sessions which took place at least once a week.

All field notes were written in close proximity to the field, often contemporaneously as events unfolded. I used a two column field note template, with one column for a descriptive account and the other for 'in-process analytical writing' such as asides, commentaries and memos, following guidance in Emerson et al. (1995 pp.100-105). The template and a completed field note example are provided in Appendices B and C. In practice, descriptive notes and direct quotations were jotted in situ and analytical writing was typically added as I typed this up, which I tried to do as close to the event as possible. The analytical process later involved (i) preliminary open and (ii) thematic coding of the field notes, with theme codes derived from observation, in-process analytical writing and literature review.

Table 2: Summary of fieldwork and data collection

	2011	2012
GYA	Regular email contact and weekly team meetings via Skype	
	International Skype meetings	
	TW TW x2 TW + AGM TW TW	
	UN UN	
	IV	
		PF
YIC	Weekly office visits including team meetings	
	Weekly school visits Weekly school visits	
	RE RE RE	
	NST NST LVT NST LVT	
	FG FG FG	
	MIV MIV MIV	

Key

TW	Training weekend	RE	Regional event
AGM	Annual General Meeting	NST	National staff training
UN	Field work UN summits	LVT	Local volunteer training
IV	Interviews with young people	FG	Focus groups with young people
PF	Participant feedback on initial analysis	MIV	Interviews with project mentors

Core data summary

Field notes	73
Interview transcripts	20
Focus group transcripts	3 (21 YP)

Plus secondary data from emails, blogs, training, evaluation and monitoring and promotional materials

4.4.2 Interviews

Alongside field notes, I used individual interviews to revisit prominent themes that I had identified through observation in discussion with young people and mentors. Semi-structured interview guides were devised to allow participants their own reading of salient issues. These guides followed Madison's (2005 pp.27-28) advice on ethnographic interviewing and Patton's (1987) typology of interview questions, specifically including behaviour, opinion, feeling, knowledge, advice, quotation and descriptive questions. Examples of interview schedules from GYA exit interviews and YIC team mentor interviews are included in Appendices D and E. All of the interviews were recorded with permission, transcribed verbatim and subject to the same two stage coding process as my field notes.

In GYA I interviewed participants shortly after the project had come to an end, about a month after returning home from the second UN visit. These interviews were conducted by telephone and each lasted between 45-90 minutes, with an average length of about an hour. I conducted 12 of these interviews in total, with all but one of my key informants. Having previously used telephone interviewing for my Masters Dissertation, I was confident that this approach would not adversely affect the detail and depth of conversation, with the benefit of limiting the inconvenience to my research participants (Greenfield et al, 2000, Sturges and Hanrahan, 2004). In this case these were people with whom I had been working closely for almost a year. Our existing rapport enabled me to make quite effective use of this short time and to feel comfortable introducing challenging questions to our conversation.

In YIC I interviewed adults from the local community who volunteered as team mentors, because these were the people who worked most regularly with young people in schools, and with whom I had the least contact through my volunteering at YIC's office. These interviews were conducted in person, usually in city centre coffee shops, and took place at three points over the course of my fieldwork. I spoke to eight mentors in total: three in November after they had been mentoring young people for a couple of months, two in January about midway through YIC's programme, and three in May as young people completed their projects. Interviewing mentors as they came forward at different stages of the programme meant that these interviews differed

somewhat in focus, discussing initial expectations through to challenges and frustrations and finally reflecting on what young people had achieved. These interviews typically lasted between half an hour and 45 minutes and were not as in-depth as those I did with GYA volunteers, because there was not the same familiarity to embolden me in my follow-up questions and ability to challenge.

4.4.3 Focus groups

Given the setting in which I worked with YIC's members, the group work context and the rules governing YIC volunteers' conduct in schools, I judged that one-to-one interviews would not be an appropriate strategy for asking these young people to reflect on their experiences. Therefore, in YIC only, I also used focus groups as a means of reviewing prominent themes from my field notes with young people; and so that they could raise the benefits of or problems with participation in YIC that were important to them. I had previously used focus groups in schools successfully in my undergraduate Dissertation, following Hill's (2006) research into young people's preferred ways of having a voice. Hill found that school pupils favoured peer group discussion, especially if they could talk with friends, and said that research was helpful if it gave them the opportunity to share their views and ideas with other people.

Like the GYA exit interviews, focus groups took place at the end of young people's projects. I ran a pilot focus group in one school in 2011, specifically with young people who had registered with YIC and attended for several weeks/months before exiting the programme early. I had only recently started volunteering with YIC at this stage, so the group was supervised by both a teacher and a member of YIC's staff, and young people were quite guarded in their responses initially. The following year, I was able to run a similar focus group in another school, this time without staff from either the school or the NGO present and with a longer timeframe for discussion. In each case, a focus group schedule was devised using similar questioning principles to the individual interviews, but also keeping the questions open, short and simple following Stewart et al.'s (2007) advice on focus group discussions. Both of these focus groups were recorded with participants' permission and transcribed verbatim.

YIC's staff ran their own end of year evaluation sessions in each school with the young people who completed the programme. I attended four of these sessions to support

reflection activities and/or observe as appropriate, also recording and transcribing these with permission. With the help of two of YIC's 'graduate' members I also organised a feedback event at a city centre venue, which was open to young people from all participating schools and colleges in the case study region. I offered free food and drink as an incentive and the graduates talked about further opportunities with YIC for those who were interested. For this event, we adapted a suggested discussion guide from YIC. We decided that the graduates would lead the discussion and report back with notes, because over the course of my year's volunteering with the YIC office I noticed that many young people perceived me as a staff member, and I hoped they might talk more freely in a peer-led environment.

Examples of focus group schedules from discussions with early exiting pupils and from the city centre event are included in Appendices F and G. For ease of reference, data from each of the group discussions outlined above is referred to as a 'focus group' when quoting from it in the text of the empirical chapters.

4.4.4 Participant review

I was eager to 'open up' the ethnography to re-interpretation by young people, NGO staff and volunteers, so I asked how they would like data from the project fed back for comment. GYA members made no specific requests, but said on several occasions that they felt the organisation suffered from a lack of 'institutional memory'. At the end of my field work with GYA I wrote an 80 page internal report summarising member feedback on their flagship project's history, structure, strengths, weaknesses, challenges and achievements. I was inspired to do this after reading Rhodes' (2000) and Walby's (2007) descriptions of 'ghostwriting' interviews, whereby rather than simply producing and sharing an interview transcript, the researcher creates a narrative that tells the participant's story; then allows the participant to comment on the textual representation and even make changes until they are satisfied. I worked from transcribed interviews as well as notes and memory, so I did not fully embrace this technique, but I did ask my participants to feed back on how they and GYA had been portrayed. As already discussed, I would have liked to adopt a more participatory approach to analysis. In the absence of that, ghostwriting the story of their project was intended to serve as 'a sensitizing device to the authoritative role that researchers often play in the production of representations using interview materials' (Walby, ibid.,

p.1025). GYA members' email responses to this report were a useful data source in themselves, as some sought to clarify or provide further context to earlier comments, and one person challenged how I had represented her throughout the text.

YIC's staff were interested in where the research could address gaps in their evaluation activities, for example how feedback from interviews and focus groups could supplement their baseline and exit surveys of young people to showcase project outcomes to funders. I gave them an overview of the key themes arising from the interview and focus group data in short summaries of 1-2 pages. Getting any substantive reaction proved difficult, exacerbated by pressure on staff time and turnover within the regional team I was based in. I also shared transcripts with the people I had interviewed, but did not do so for the focus group participants. Ideally I would have produced a report for YIC as I had for GYA, but I did not. This was partly due to uncertainty about how to write one report for its various potential audiences (e.g. staff, young people, schools) and to a considerable extent due to lack of capacity – my fieldwork with YIC continued for several months after I had finished working with GYA, because of the timing of the school year. As a consequence, neither staff nor young people in YIC had the same opportunity to comment on the texts that I was producing about them.

GYA members and YIC staff said that they found the reports/summaries I produced at their request helpful. In particular, GYA members said that they were using the project report for personal reflection and called it an 'invaluable resource' for their organisation, sending feedback over email such as:

> 'I enjoyed reading it so much and thinking back to so many moments... I wish you were there to do this [every year]. It really offers so much motivation, provokes so much thought and also some closure.' (Jack)

> 'Reading how I felt is something I genuinely felt like I have needed recently, definitely adds more direction to my GYA current role. Thank you so much for this!' (Claire)

I felt reassured by their responses that the research had managed to 'give back' to GYA in some way beyond the practical help I offered as a volunteer, with a resource to stimulate critical reflection on practice. I do not know how the report was

subsequently used, however, and with feedback limited to short comments such as those above, it is difficult to make grand claims about the impact of this method.

4.5 Participation in practice: some critical reflections

Although an ethnographic approach was a good fit with the research topic and aims, this method was not without its drawbacks and challenges. This section provides an overview of the chief difficulties encountered during field work and analysis and some of the choices I was faced with once actively engaged in the research process. These difficulties are disclosed in the interests of transparency and a critical appraisal of the methodology. Below I reflect on my positionality as an ethnographer and NGO volunteer; on the ethics of ethnography in small organisations, including consent and the use of pseudonyms to protect participant anonymity; and give a fuller account of why my aspirations for a participatory action research (PAR) element to the field work in its early stages failed to get off the ground.

4.5.1 Becoming part of the action: the ethnographer as 'trickster'

The most obvious difficulty with participant observation is the extent to which a researcher becomes 'part of the action' (Fuller, 1999) and how this affects his or her profile, judgement, and relationships with and between others in the research site. Smith (2005, p.206) observes that: '...ethnographers cannot avoid being part, directly or indirectly, of what we are investigating.' I have little to add in reflection on this topic that has not been comprehensively explored by other researchers (Fuller, 1999, Taylor, 2011, van Meijl, 2005) but it is nonetheless pertinent to explicitly acknowledge my dual positionality as an NGO volunteer as well as a researcher.

Although I focussed my research on NGOs with whom I had no prior connection, in the course of over a year with each case study I became involved in their day-to-day work and made friends in fellow volunteers and staff whom I would come to feel accountable to. It was also hard not to bring previous experience in the sector to bear on interpretation, for example comparing my cases as 'better' or 'worse' than other NGOs I had worked with. To moderate personal responses I separated descriptive field notes from in-process analytical writing and reflection from the outset; yet subconscious 'filtering' based on my experience and emotional response must still have affected my descriptive accounts of the field (Emerson et al., 1995, Walby, 2007). I

found it useful to regularly remind myself that it was not my task to answer the 'doing good' question, which became more difficult as I became more invested as a volunteer, but to be able to step back to 'ask after the practices that tend to make NGOs more or less able to do certain things' (Murdock, 2003 p.524).

Non-participant observation might have offered a less ambiguous alternative, but would simply not have been possible nor afforded the same degree of access to NGO activities: my volunteering was effectively a trade for my participants' cooperation. There were times when I felt that this put me in the position of 'trickster', which van Meijl (2005) says is a common challenge for critical ethnographers as they oscillate from involvement to detached analysis. He argues:

> 'The anthropologist who engages in politics and scholarship is not a traitor, but rather a trickster, someone who embodies different roles in different contexts and combines both in the practice of what I would label critical ethnography.' (p.241)

In other words, it is possible to sympathise and work with the goals of research subjects, whilst also being able to critically reflect on these. My main concern, having played both roles, was that participants saw me foremost as a volunteer and not enough of the critical theoretical aspect of my work to hold me accountable as an academic. One occasion towards the end of my fieldwork stands out, when a key informant – whom had been a major research gatekeeper in the first place and had consented to be part of the project – confessed she had 'forgotten' I was a researcher until I asked her if she would like to do an exit interview. Another was surprised to see me at an event that was not part of my core volunteering, then jokingly remarked 'Ah, of course, you're spying!' My ubiquitous notebook, information sheets and consent forms were not a sufficient badge of identification, and because of this I sometimes – unintentionally – embodied the trickster role from participants' perspectives as well as my own.

As discussed above in section 4.4.4, the research outputs that I produced for participants informed, but were not fully representative of, my academic work. While I can claim that many of my participants had the opportunity to respond to transcripts or interview summaries, or to a larger project report in GYA's case, it is only through informal conversations that any of them are aware of how I interpret this data within

my PhD. This has led me to reflect on how the trickster role of the critical ethnographer can manifest itself in analysis and research reporting as well as in practice (van Meijl, 2005). I was guided by my participants as a volunteer, but have not always felt as accountable to them as I ought to as an academic. Respecting their desired level of involvement in research has meant settling for an uncomfortable schism between the two roles.

4.5.2 Consent

The example above of a key informant forgetting I was a researcher illustrates that the process of obtaining consent is not as straightforward as asking for permission to conduct research once and assuming that this will cover every eventually. I found that over time and across the spaces of research activity, the connection with the consent originally given became more tenuous. Doing exit interviews with GYA members and feeding back through an internal report was a useful way of reminding them that I was a researcher, as this prompted conversations about how I would be using the data. This was likewise the case, albeit to a lesser extent, when briefing people on the purpose of individual interviews and focus groups in YIC. Using these methods several months to over a year after I had initially negotiated research access helped me to feel more comfortable that consent was re-established over time.

A particular challenge of critical ethnography is the researcher's relationship with people, events and spaces on the fringes of their core research focus. Markowitz (2001) states that 'finding the field' can be difficult when 'studying up' to encompass NGO partners, donors and policy networks. In GYA in particular, finding the field was difficult because organisational boundaries were not always obvious and its networks were as amorphous as friendships. From training weekends hosted in participants' homes and the norms of group travel and shared accommodation, to the international working groups that its members joined, and the various meetings and discussions I was party to, my field work took me into many situations where my role as a researcher was not obvious. I was fearful of catching participants off-guard in their social time (van Meijl, 2005), yet recognised that this informality was too integral to their political practices to opt out of it (Taylor, 2011).

Through volunteering with GYA I came into contact with a lot of people who were not necessarily aware that I was a researcher and who did not give their consent to be researched. This included, for example, the civil servants and Ministers that GYA met with and the UN youth working groups that they frequently collaborated with. This diffuse contact has meant that when writing up field notes and interpreting events, I have had to carefully consider what can legitimately be included as data that I have permission to work with. Being an indefinite 'insider' has involved an element of self-censorship which is not always conducive to pursuing every relevant line of enquiry (Markowitz, 2001, Taylor, 2011).

4.5.3 Anonymity

Throughout this report, pseudonyms are used for both of the case study NGOs and their individual members. I was not originally convinced that anonymity would be the best strategy and neither were most of my key informants in GYA. From my perspective, this was chiefly because I was concerned that anonymity can be an artifice when working with such a small organisation. Van den Hoonaard (2003, p.142) states that 'ethnographers still have a tendency to select research participants located in the same community who are known to each other'. As a result, it is highly likely that participants will be able to identify one another in ethnographic accounts through their acquaintance with the researcher and shared knowledge of the activities/events that are the subject of research. Walford (2005, p.85) likewise observes that anonymity is a 'particular problem' in ethnographic work, and that the practice of giving pseudonyms to research sites and people often conceals so little that it might be more ethical to make no false promises and pursue an alternative strategy instead. I see a lot of merit in this argument, but could not envisage a feasible alternative strategy in this case.

Through conversation with GYA's members I came to understand that some of them were eager to be associated with the research in the hope that it would boost the profile of the organisation and highlight the good work that they were doing. I could make no guarantees that these would be my conclusions. By contrast, YIC's staff were happy to participate in the study anonymously, and to do otherwise in this case would have necessitated negotiating permission through individual schools, young people and parents. Walford (ibid., p.89) observes that because anonymity is habitually employed as the ethical norm, it is often used initially as a way of fostering research access, and

once promised it is difficult to revoke – this definitely reflects my experience. Faced with a situation in which there was no agreement between or within my case studies about whether people wished to be identified with the research, and in which I feared those who did wish to be identified had expectations that I could not fulfil, I took the more cautious and consistent approach of retaining the use of pseudonyms. In doing so, I also considered the various people on the periphery of my field notes who had not consented to being researched and who might be identified by association.

Using pseudonyms did not do away with the problem that my participants could identify one another, particularly in GYA where my field work focussed in the main on a group of just 14 young people. As I was writing the internal report for GYA, I discussed this with them and we all felt that it would be nonsensical to use pseudonyms in this document. I said I was happy not to do so, on the condition that: (i) this was the decision of everyone who featured in the report; (ii) that everyone who consented to being identified did so on the understanding that the report could be shared internally within the organisation; and (iii) that GYA would not publish the report or any extracts from it. Making this decision with the group meant that interviewees were aware that their comments would be read by fellow volunteers. Three interviewees specified that there were some things that they were happy to share with me for my research that they did not want to appear in the report; which also acts as red flag for me not to publish these comments anywhere else.

A key piece of learning that I will take away from this project is the importance of treating anonymity as a conversation to be had when negotiating research access rather than an automatic offer. In particular, I think it would have been more helpful if I had from the outset had a strategy for making participants aware of the merits and risks of using pseudonyms and alternative approaches. An example of where my approach to anonymity created problems that I did not anticipate was the complications that arose from working online, discussed below.

Anonymity online

Participant observation within an NGO with a prominent social media profile proved a significant risk to guaranteed participant anonymity (Jones, 2011), implicating me and my participants in shared online social networks, public images and blogs. My initial reluctance to be photographed, filmed or to contribute to web content caused friction

with fellow volunteers, who saw this as a role requirement. GYA contrasted starkly with YIC in this respect, where strict safeguarding rules governed and limited online interaction. A clear strategy for managing my online presence from the outset, or for negotiating an alternative set of ethical expectations in place of anonymity, would on retrospect have helped me to work less reactively to better deal with this problematic disjuncture of volunteer/researcher requirements. Virtual spaces of interaction and identity construction are increasingly critical to understanding young people's citizenship experiences (Coleman and Rowe, 2005) so although I am not satisfied with how I addressed this dilemma in my own research, the presence of live archived and auditable trails of online activity is worth raising for future consideration.

A better strategy for managing online data might have made additional sources available for inclusion in research publications. GYA's online blog is a good example of this, where blogging is underdeveloped as a research method (Hookway, 2008). I initially considered several mixed-methods approaches and diary-keeping particularly appealed as a method that has yielded rich data in previous studies of youth identity (Baillie Smith et al., 2013, Worth, 2009a), especially as it allows participants to identify, reflect on and revisit significant experiences in their own words. Concerns about the time-intensity of this method coupled with GYA's co-directors' request that I respected their volunteers' busy schedules meant that I ultimately did not pursue it. I noticed however that GYA members were using the organisation's blog in much the same way, to reflect on experiences, actions and the emotions they felt at various stages of the project. Their blog entries complemented my field notes by capturing participants' perspectives, often written in situ or directly after critical events. It seemed important that these reflections emerged organically, driven by their needs rather than research demands. I wanted to use these blogs as part of my dataset but was wary of quoting directly from them, for the anonymity constraints discussed above. I compromised by asking participants to comment on blog entries in exit interviews and by using the blogs and transcripts to inform thematic analysis. This medium has more potential as a tool for opening up ethnography than I was able to explore and exploit in this project.

4.5.4 Participatory (in)action research: lessons from failed methods

I had hoped initially that efforts to 'open up' aspects of my ethnographic work to reinterpretation by participants (Foley and Valenzuela, 2005), potentially incorporating some participatory data analysis (Cahill, 2007b), might be one way to reconcile the volunteer/insider and researcher/outsider duality, by at least bringing my academic interests into wider conversation. In practice however, I found that participants' desire for this was limited. As discussed in section 4.4.4, their requests for research knowledge concerned specific aspects of programme feedback, not the broader theoretical thrust of my work. As I had made a prior ethical commitment to respect my participant's desired level of research involvement (Kindon et al., 2007b, Maxey, 1999) this presented me with a challenge similar to Markowitz's (2001 p.44) research dilemma: 'I suspect that methods of participatory evaluation would be useful, yet I do not want to encumber my presence with the suggestion of yet another evaluation.'

Some early attempts at a more participatory approach fell flat. GYA's co-directors stipulated that I could conduct research 'as long as I respected volunteers' capacity' for additional commitments. I began a process of scoping practice-related issues that its members felt would benefit from research-informed action, following phase one of Kindon et al's (2007b p.15) recommended PAR process. To do this I worked with a group of eleven GYA members who opted in to a 'working group', facilitating conversations over group emails and Skype. However, efforts to move forwards once issues were identified, even just to meet with funding offered to cover travel expenses and lunch, were frustrated by volunteers' limited availability. Diminishing email responses and the exit of several key members who said they had taken on too many responsibilities led me to recognise quite quickly that involvement in action research was not a priority for GYA; at least not in any form that fell within my knowledge and skills set as a facilitator of action research at the time.

When the PAR working group was still a possibility, a discussion about at a GYA training weekend revealed that most of my participants – especially those doing science and social science undergraduate courses – did not think of this kind of activity as research. They were wary of my motivation and aims, asking questions about how group work would contribute to my PhD and how practical action could be taken without 'influencing the results' of research. This was an unexpected and

uncomfortable conversation at the time and I was not as clear as I should have been in response. PAR literature had led me to expect that there might be tension between this method and prevailing institutional understandings of how research should be conducted, but this debate is usually cast in the context of graduate students' conflict with their university department (Klocker, 2012, McCormack, 2004), not with their participants! A training weekend with a packed agenda was not the space to debate different disciplinary traditions of research and epistemological validity. My GYA participants were more comfortable with me cast as an individual researcher and my research as potentially informing – but not integral to or distracting from – their core work. As a novice I lacked the confidence to challenge this or explain PAR well enough to offer them reassurance, instead becoming reconciled to the merits of critical ethnography as a more suitable research strategy in this context.

YIC's management initially said they would welcome their members' involvement in research and gave me permission to work with a group of young people who had already been volunteering with them for a year. After granting this permission however, they stipulated that I was to coach this group to conduct research specifically relating to racial justice and the then-recent 2011 riots. Some interesting conversations and work with young people came out of this process, but it was directed by narrow parameters defined by management and funders, rather than young people's interests. Again, this was a swift lesson for a PAR novice in managing expectations. I found myself inadvertently fronting a project that had little to do with my research because to YIC staff, 'participatory' and 'peer research' meant involving young people in a process but not letting them define the agenda.

This experience also happened towards the beginning of my fieldwork and helped me to better appreciate concerns that my supervisors had raised about the epistemological inconsistency of conducting critical ethnography *and* PAR. It was a practical example of how trying to research from various subject standpoints from within an organisation was incompatible with elevating some of these subjects to peer researcher status. If I was trying to work in solidarity with research participants through PAR, then with whom was I in solidarity and how would this affect others in the field? In practice it was impossible to disregard YIC's established hierarchy and staff expectations, especially as research access relied on their good will. I realised that any 'participatory' process in this context would be with the young people that staff

selected, and focussed on issues that staff and funders defined. To claim fronting such a project as having done PAR, whilst being critical of these relationships in my field notes, felt disingenuous. On balance, I now conceptualise the work that I did with young people in the racial justice group and other teams to support critical reflection and action as falling within the rubric of the wider critical ethnography.

4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I given a frank and transparent account of my research process, from the thinking that informed the way I selected case studies and made decisions about appropriate data gathering techniques, through to what I learned in translating lofty ambitions into practice as a PhD student doing ethnography for the first time. I realise that the account I have given might leave me vulnerable to criticism, because I do not claim to have found satisfactory resolutions for all of the problems I encountered in putting critical ethnography and PAR into practice. I hope however that by raising these issues, I have reflected on my role as a researcher in such a way as to enable the reader to recognise the methodological strengths as well as limitations of this project.

I also raise these issues because they are relevant to research innovation. GYA was not unique for organising as it did, through social networks online and off. Other researchers working in this field are likely to come across similar challenges. Researching youth citizenship and NGO practices requires innovation of multisite ethnographic methods to keep pace with young people's multiple affiliations and spaces of belonging, including their participation in transnational networks (Markowitz, 2001, Staeheli, 2010). It is therefore essential to reflect on how researchers navigate a terrain that includes not only organisational gatekeepers but institutional connections, non-consenting 'others', formal and informal project spaces and online interactions.

My fieldwork was frequently frustrating, but on balance the merits of critical ethnography made it worthwhile putting in the extra effort and learning from mistakes. This method has potential as a practice that fortifies the field, offering the means of both 'going deep' and 'giving back' (Swartz, 2011) by embedding the researcher within a community of practice. The themes that I will discuss over the next three chapters are drawn from a wealth of ethnographic data, and illustrate the merits of the methodology in foregrounding detail and complexity. I have developed an in-depth

understanding of the citizenship practices of the young people and NGOs that I worked with thanks in no small part to being engaged in and challenged to critically re-read their everyday activities.

Chapter 5 Employable Citizens: Professionalisation and Performance

'If you want to gain skills, experience and knowledge within the fields of fundraising, finance or communications and social media you are welcome to join the GYA team. A volunteer opportunity that has aided others in gaining fantastic jobs across the UK and around the world.'
(GYA recruitment advertisement on social media)

'Joining YIC gives you the opportunity to make a real difference on issues that you are passionate about. But on top of that, there are loads of personal benefits… This is a chance to develop skills that will be useful in the future such as teamwork, communication, leadership and time management. Universities and employers do not just look for what sort of qualifications a person may have… [YIC can] help to improve CV's and UCAS applications and really set you apart from the crowd.'
(YIC recruitment presentation script)

5.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the evidence of employability as a major goal of Global Youth Advocacy (GYA)'s and Youth in Community (YIC)'s citizenship projects, and argues that this focus was sometimes to the detriment of their wider social and political aspirations. Employability was a prominent theme in funder expectations, NGO marketing, project activities, and young people's reasons for and expectations about taking part. The existing literature suggests that young people's social and political associations are increasingly influenced by pressure to perform employability by engaging in activities that provide 'something for the CV' (Brooks, 2009, see also Baillie Smith and Laurie, 2011, Heath, 2007, Simpson, 2005, Staeheli et al.,2013). My research findings extend this theme to contend that voluntary sector youth citizenship projects that promote employability also engender inequality of access and opportunity, or 'differential citizenship' (Lake and Newman 2002), through factors such as competitive entry criteria, implicitly or explicitly linking participation to further and higher education trajectories, and the mobilisation of private finance for career progression.

5.2 NGOs and employability

With an uncertain financial future ahead for UK youth work (Rocyn Jones, 2013), YIC's senior staff were eager to justify its 'experiential citizenship' programme in terms of market value. This meant framing unpredictable youth-led social action projects into a good return on investment for clients, i.e. present and potential funders and schools. Statistics on transferable skills development (for example teamwork, organisation and confidence) dominated YIC's evaluation and monitoring and 'employability' was one of its five key performance indicators (field notes). In a process-orientated citizenship programme where impact was incremental, employability was a relatively straightforward outcome to be able to evidence. It is not unusual for NGOs to focus on employability (via transferable skills) to justify their impact in neoliberal terms. For instance, the chief executive of The Challenge Network, a major National Citizen Service delivery partner, responded to criticisms of the programme by highlighting its employability credentials, such as a scheme to guarantee job interviews to exemplary young participants (Hillier, 2013).

Supporting young people's access to employment markets was becoming a more prominent feature of YIC's work as I joined them. YIC's corporate social responsibility concessions to sponsors typically centred on inviting some of their staff to teach young people market savvy. This included workshops on the themes of 'CV writing' and 'employability' led by private sector workers, which involved activities such as CV surgeries and mock interview questions that encouraged young people to frame experiences of social action with YIC as project management. YIC had also recently started running an annual Dragon's Den style competition for its school teams to bid for social enterprise funding in front of a corporate committee, in which young people pitched their ideas for social action projects as viable business investments.

YIC's regional manager openly critiqued these activities as 'funder focussed', particularly uneasy with their emphasis on competition as opposed to teamwork (field notes, conversation with Kirsty). She also expressed concern about the impact of employability on YIC's evaluation, complaining that 'we don't get the chance to sit down with young people and talk about what actually matters within the programme' (field notes, staff training). This casts employability as a necessary but irritating add-on performed for funders, peripheral to the substantive content and purpose of YIC's

citizenship work with young people. YIC's frontline volunteers too expressed a belief that 'what actually matters' about their work was something else: predominant ideas about the purpose of YIC's programme as an experience of empowerment are explored in-depth in Chapter 6. Kirsty's comments suggest an uneasy compromise between practitioners' beliefs about best practice and the expectations of funders and senior management, perhaps even an element of opposition between YIC's empowerment and employability work.

There are various ways in which YIC's efforts to evidence employability could be construed. In Changfoot's (2007) research, anti-poverty activists and arts practitioners are described as 'performing' neoliberal citizenship as resistance. This is an optimistic way to interpret YIC's efforts to secure funding for youth empowerment work and space in schools amidst financial crisis and narrowing political agendas, as an example of Salamon's (2003) 'resilient sector' in action. However, further evidence from the field suggests that explaining employability as a superficial performance is too simplistic. It is arguably impossible for NGOs to interact with the state and the market without compromise (Bondi and Laurie, 2005, Smith, 2005, Swyngedouw, 2005). The key issue in this instance is the extent to which the performance of employability pervaded young people's citizenship experiences. As Staeheli et al. (2013) have observed, encouraging young people to perform employability as an acceptable and 'safe' form of citizenship can have negative consequences for political agency. This relates to a broader question of how perceived economic imperatives constrain political imagination (Massey, 2013).

The opening quote to this chapter was taken from YIC's recruitment presentation script, devised by its head office staff as the basis for all recruitment assemblies in schools in each of the regions. This script illustrates that the NGO's emphasis of employability was not only funder focussed, but also directed at young people and their teachers. Pupils were recruited to its programme via assembly presentations at the beginning of the school year, often as part of a wider enrichment day where various extracurricular activity providers vied for attention. YIC's presentation began by seeking young people's views on negative stereotyping in the media and participation in politics and community life, but the tone soon changed to focus on 'Skills, UCAS and CV'.

In doing so, YIC reduced its citizenship programme to the maxim of competitive careers from the outset. Another example of this is a promotional flyer that featured a participant recommendation highlighting corporate mentoring opportunities, saying 'They saw us as individuals and like prospective employees in a way, and I think that will help us when we apply for jobs now.' Frontline staff feared this emphasis had a limiting effect on the kinds of citizenship activities young people engaged in, observing a propensity towards voluntarism and skills showcases over political projects (Baillie Smith and Laurie, 2011, Brooks, 2009). Social enterprise funding in particular directed teams towards narrow goals that exemplified 'self-regulatory', 'entrepreneurial' citizenship (Simpson, 2005, Swyngedouw, 2005). For example, teams wanting to do projects to tackle racism had to develop business plans to compete in their regional Dragons Den event. This activity encouraged young people to think about developing a product or service, resulting in final project outcomes such as a self-help website for victims of bullying and a range of slogan t-shirts.

In YIC's evaluation work with teams midway through and at the end of the programme, funder focussed activities – such as completing a 'YIC CV' of transferable skills – directed young people's reflection towards individual marketable outcomes, rather than their experiences of collaboration and experimentation with social action. Kirsty said this activity was 'meant to demonstrate value, skills and knowledge gained and employability to themselves and to their teachers' (field notes, staff training). The NGO's assessment forms asked 'Will you be putting YIC on your CV or UCAS form?' and 100% affirmative rates were reported at YIC's end of year awards ceremony (field notes,). Diane, a YIC volunteer mentor, explained how her perception of the programme changed over time (interview):

> 'My impression was that we were going into schools to help a group of
> people to deliver a project that they wanted to do to make a difference, so
> it was purely going in, helping them with ideas… but now at a deep level, I
> realise more what YIC is about and how good it is, and how these kids if
> they've got YIC on their CV it can really help them get into university.'

YIC's repeated reinforcement of employability benefits transcended superficial performance; and is more aptly interpreted as a practice that entrenched neoliberal citizenship.

GYA's membership included school pupils but also extended to university students and graduates. As a result, its marketing emphasised not only generic CV enhancement, but niche competencies and training associated with voluntary sector career progression. Relationships with established international NGOs were utilised to invite experienced campaign workers to share sector-specific advice and training, from in-depth policy analysis to communications strategies. GYA membership opportunities were for defined roles within the organisation. Each vacancy was listed on professional voluntary sector job sites with detailed role expectations, skills and expertise required. Like YIC, GYA's recruitment activities emphasised the benefit of its volunteer opportunities for successful workplace transitions. The social media advertisement that opened this chapter is a typical example.

Young people were instructed to apply to GYA by CV and either a covering letter or competency-based application form, depending on the role. This would be followed by an interview, or attendance at a selection day for the international team. This process mirrored the workplace, particularly elite graduate recruitment, with the effect of making GYA's volunteering roles appear competitive. Some vacancies were indeed hotly contested, with 180 applications for twelve vacancies on the international team the year preceding fieldwork (interview with Nina, GYA Coordinator). During a training weekend, two key organisers speculated as to whether GYA was 'the new People & Planet', referring to a prominent student campaigning NGO with a reputation for helping its former members get jobs in the campaigns sector (field notes, conversation with Eleanor and Tim). This shows that GYA strategically positioned itself as an NGO that offered youth citizenship opportunities and transitions to professional work, conflating empowerment and employability.

This kind of framing has previously been observed in policy-makers', teachers' and university administrators' endorsements of extracurricular citizenship activities (Baillie Smith and Laurie, 2011, Brooks, 2009, Staeheli et al., 2013). What is striking about the evidence from GYA and YIC is the extent to which NGOs are reinforcing similar objectives. The next section looks at how employability also featured in young people's accounts of their participation and in their expectations about what NGOs had to offer.

5.3 Young people and employability

It would be oversimplifying the case to suggest that emphasis of employability was purely a top-down process, dictated by the desires of Government, corporate funders, or head teachers through NGO management. Discourses on student voluntarism and employability gains are sufficiently pervasive to influence young people's perceptions of citizenship without much further encouragement (Baillie Smith and Laurie, 2011, Simpson, 2005, Staeheli et al., 2013). In a YIC introductory session with 60 young people, I asked each to write down what they hoped to achieve by taking part. UCAS points for university entry overwhelmingly topped the list (field notes, Oak Grammar). At another school, pupils explained how YIC participation counted directly towards their academic performance:

> 'It helped with UCAS and towards the IB [International Baccalaureate] as well, 'cause it involves all three, creative, action and service. That's why most people that did it were in IB.' (James, focus group, Beech Academy)

This is compelling evidence of the influence of 'the economy of experience' (Brown et al., 2003, Heath, 2007) as a default rationale for young people's participation, coupling anxieties about university entry and youth unemployment with the values of competitive meritocracy. Performing 'safe' citizenship through employability was seen as a means of enhancing educational qualifications and distinguishing oneself.

GYA was run by young volunteers, so its emphasis of employability in recruitment arguably reflected what young people valued from their voluntary experience and/or thought would attract their peers. When asked why they got involved in GYA, its members typically related this to workplace ambitions (interviews):

> 'I hadn't really addressed anything like that in my work, so that's why I applied.' (Jack)

> 'My original reason was, ok it's really mercenary, but to have something for my CV... in terms of my future employability.' (Sally)

> 'In a selfish way, it's a good experience to get people going. Especially at the moment with jobs and stuff, it helps. I knew it would help me develop as a person.' (Claire)

These interviewees were part of the core group of young people whose experiences in GYA's flagship international team was the principal focus of ethnography. They joined GYA at different ages and with varied work experience: Jack a voluntary sector professional with a Masters degree, Sally in her second year of university and Claire sitting her A-levels. Nevertheless they shared common anxieties and aspirations centred on personal responsibility for career development. As with YIC, where 'UCAS points' topped young people's participation wish list and 'grades suffering' was their biggest fear (field notes, Oak Grammar), young people saw that GYA demanded significant investment on their part and they expected a reliable return in the form of transferable skills. Those skills most frequently mentioned at the end of GYA and YIC projects included increased confidence, public speaking, facilitation, communication and workload management.

Although transitions to professional employment featured prominently in GYA, its members did not embrace the concept of employability uncritically. Its members' decision to run a campaign on green jobs was the result of internal discussions about how to diversify GYA's membership. These discussions raised a number of issues as potential grounds for shared experience among a broad cross-section of UK youth:

> 'Unemployment; disengaged from society; disillusioned about politics; media misrepresentation; apathy; financial dependency and debt; overqualified in things that can't get us jobs; no middle ground for young people any more – you either get on the high road for employment or the low road; increasingly individualised; underestimated.' (field notes, brainstorming activity, GYA training weekend)

GYA's members perceived that solidarity with other youth groups might be achieved by acknowledging and challenging shared experiences of precarity, envisaged as a particular generational vulnerability to unemployment and insecure work (Krestos, 2010), and more generally as a feeling of social and political instability under neoliberalism (Wyn, 2007). GYA's members did not explicitly use the term precarity as a rallying point, as is more often the case in labour market activism, but their critique nonetheless encapsulated 'both a condition and a point of mobilisation' (Waite, 2009 p.421) around the idea of socio-economic dislocation and marginalisation.

GYA's green jobs campaign included critique of and concessions to neoliberalism. On the one hand, its members made redistributive demands for targeted investment modelled on Keynesian economics. On the other, their campaign's key messages appealed primarily to young people's self-interest as posited beneficiaries of green growth. Members foresaw tensions between 'a politics of investment' wedded to UK growth and their international campaigning on climate justice, but deemed the former essential for developing cross-cutting support (field notes). This illustrates young people's conscious engagement with contrary citizenship claims and identities, positioning themselves variously as: victims of austerity; subjects of state investment; employable individuals; global citizens accountable to an international community; and a self-empowering group that aimed to 'claim the green jobs agenda for young people and put *quality* into it' (Harriet, field notes).

These findings can be compared with Smith's (2005) description of how LGBT activists simultaneously resist and reinforce neoliberalism in their material and identity politics. Smith is critical of the degree of individualism pervading political advocacy and the 'depoliticisation of social issues' (p.89) in youth work, insofar as political goals are often wedded to service provision. In this instance, this would include campaign demands such as more apprenticeships and training. GYA's green jobs campaign is a good example of the tensions inherent in reworking neoliberalism. Attempts by marginalised groups to redirect resources and retool to withstand change involve awareness that things could be otherwise, but also reformative efforts geared towards joining privileged spaces more fully – in this case a demonstrably unfair economy – rather than direct opposition to the systemic reproduction of inequality (Katz, 2004). In other words, employability work may provide young citizens with opportunities, but not without affecting their citizenship practices in ways that may not be so advantageous.

5.4 Employability: an opportunity or a threat?

If NGOs are viewed as agents of the neoliberal shadow state then their role as civic intermediaries is twofold: (i) to enhance the training of future citizen-workers by providing supplementary routes to statutory education through which competitive individuals can earn distinction; and (ii) to populate the void left by market failure to integrate young people into the economy with entry level opportunities (Brooks, 2009, Heath, 2007, Simpson, 2005). YIC and GYA arguably performed this role with some

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success. Of the eight key GYA informants no longer in full time education, four entered salaried work with campaigning NGOs, one entered a competitive Government internship programme and another got a highly paid job working for a political party. Causality is impossible to prove, but all of these young people felt that volunteering with GYA had helped them to get these jobs. For example Nina said on exit: 'I'm now working as an international development policy advisor. I'd say 90% of the reason I was employed was because of GYA' (interview). YIC provided comparatively modest but tangible opportunities for progression. This included a 'grads [graduate] scheme' in which young people who completed its citizenship programme were encouraged to stay involved as mentors, a paid internship scheme that invariably included past participants, and organisational efforts to signpost employment opportunities. The grads scheme is noteworthy for adopting the language of educational achievement and implying a trajectory through the organisation. The point here is not that these NGOs ought to be criticised for helping young people to access tangible employment opportunities, but to then consider what implications this has for youth citizenship.

The evidence from GYA and YIC suggests that career anxiety is a fundamental feature of young people's relationship with social and political action. Although blame for economic insecurity was laid squarely on neoliberal state and market failures, NGOs and young people themselves assumed responsibility for remedying it. They engaged in risk management by developing an extracurricular portfolio to demonstrate the qualities of flexible, proactive neoliberal citizens (Beck, 1992[1986], Brown et al., 2003, Collin, 2009), even (in GYA's case) when critiquing the risk inherent in the system itself and the shared and structural experiences of marginalisation that it produces. Whether this is interpreted as resourceful resilience work (Katz, 2004, Salamon, 2003) or a capitulation to neoliberalism depends on the degree of individualism underpinning young people's engagement (Smith, 2005), and to what extent this affects their aspirations and awareness of alternatives.

Among others, Massey (2013 p.5) has argued that neoliberalism constitutes a 'hegemonic common sense', and that concessions to the language and logic of the marketplace constrain political agency:

> 'By such means we are enrolled, such self-identification being just as strong as our material entanglement in debt, pensions, mortgages and the like. It is an internalisation of 'the system' that can potentially corrode our ability to imagine that things could be otherwise.'

Alternatively, Staeheli et al.'s (2013) research on campus activism more optimistically suggests that advancing citizenship as employability has unintended consequences, helping young people to develop a skills base that can as well be used to challenge the status quo as reinforce it. The research evidence on empowerment in Chapter 6 demands at least an ambiguous reading of project outcomes, suggesting transformative potential within NGO civic intermediary work that counters technocratic skills training. Take, for example, Sally's reflection on how her motivation as a volunteer changed from a self-serving ambition to improve her CV to identification with a political cause (interview):

> 'I don't have great reasons for getting involved to be honest. It's more like, once I was involved… my reasons completely changed. If I stay involved it will now actually be to do something about climate change, not 'cause I want to be employable… I can't put into words the feeling of doing something that I'm proud of. It's nice to do something that makes a difference, or that's at least trying to'

This illustrates that employability is neither the only nor the overriding influence within NGO youth citizenship projects, and that its effects are contingent on additional factors. There is however sufficient evidence that the performance of employability poses a threat to citizenship, by reinforcing narrow means and ends of participation. The next section looks at the extent to which the competitive impetus of employability and NGO professionalisation may intensify inequality between young people, to produce differential citizenship.

5.5 Differential citizenship

This section extends existing critiques of the voluntary sector as a vehicle for reproducing 'differential citizenship' (Lake and Newman, 2002), by considering how NGO participation offers the means of successful professional transitions to some young people and not others. Chapter 3 explored NGOs' role as civic intermediaries,

including critiques which suggest that NGOs exacerbate social inequality through the promotion of particular interests (Clarke, 2005). This debate suggests that the combined influence of shadow state governance on NGO activity (Wolch, 1990), and the economy of experience on young people's volunteering preferences (Brooks, 2009, Heath, 2007) might result in a competitive climate that only benefits certain groups. This positions youth participation in the voluntary sector as a pivotal terrain of struggles over social mobility.

Employability trends suggest two likely implications for NGO youth work: (i) 'intervention' projects aimed at integrating specific categories of 'at risk/risky' young people into the economy (Gillies, 2013); and (ii) 'internship' projects that offer niche training opportunities for professional workplace transitions (Baillie Smith and Laurie, 2011, Simpson, 2005). Although intervention and internship projects may target different beneficiaries, they overlap insofar as they are concerned with social capital development and projects of social mobility that invite class critique (Brown et al., 2003). Chapter 2 considered how social capital theory sustains neoliberalism, by offering a realisation-focussed justification for inequality whereby rights are earned through the performance of responsible citizenship. This performance includes participation in the market economy, which can lead to further inequality (Basok and Ilcan, 2006, Davies, 2012, Kisby, 2009).

Previous research has critiqued the uneven social and spatial distribution of voluntary sector activity, providing empirical evidence that supply negatively correlates with need (Clarke, 1991, Lake and Newman, 2002, Mohan, 2011). This thesis is not concerned with service provision, which makes 'demand' difficult to define, measure or contrast with actual NGO activity. Nonetheless, it is possible to consider which young people profited most from participation in GYA and YIC and which were excluded, including organisational awareness of recruitment barriers and limitations.

The evidence of differential citizenship in practice is mixed. NGO staff and volunteers expressed an ideological commitment to social citizenship premised on young people's inalienable right to equal voice and inclusion (Marshall, 1950), whilst in practice the social capital gains of a select group were sometimes privileged. Employability was a key driver of this, but inequalities were also the result of capacity constraints and erroneous external perceptions of eligibility for membership. The following sections

describe different facets of differential citizenship in practice, considering issues relating to access and the quality of opportunities available to young people.

5.5.1 Who participates? The problem with pigeonholing

Staff and volunteers in both NGOs had difficulty overcoming what they felt to be erroneous external perceptions about who could participate in their programmes. YIC's main issue in this respect was with school teachers as gatekeepers. In several instances, teachers recommended and/or advised against particular students as participants, assuming that YIC would want to work with 'good' students. Thus, the NGOs' constituency became more exclusive than intended. The regional manager explained:

> 'They'll already have profiled it before we get there. They'll have put us in a box, and they'll have put the students in a box. It makes it harder to get young people involved beyond the usual suspects. We ask schools not to say anything about us before we arrive, because we have situations where they'll just say "Anyone interested in volunteering go to this room at lunchtime" or they'll introduce our assembly with "Think about your UCAS forms".' (field notes, conversation with Kirsty)

To mitigate this YIC had it written into contracts with schools that its staff would give a recruitment assembly to all students in its target year group, but nonetheless they struggled to eliminate teachers' influence. During field work I witnessed two head teachers prefix YIC's recruitment talk with a variation of 'think about UCAS', appealing foremost to pupils aspiring to university. In another school, all students on vocational courses were absent from this assembly because they were on a different timetable and the school's staff had assumed they were not eligible for the programme. Another example was recalled in a team meeting by a visibly frustrated member of staff:

> Monique and Daphne said they had a good first session this morning… but only nine students showed up out of 24 who signed up. When they were disappointed in the turnout, the contact teacher reassured them that it's "quality not quantity" and referred to the young people present – all girls – as "her group of stars". Monique seems to cringe as she reports this. (field notes)

YIC's frontline workers felt that many school teachers saw citizenship activities as an optional extra for academic achievers. Brooks' (2009) research on sixth form citizenship activities highlights similar issues of conservatism and instrumentalism in the official discourse of active citizenship education, albeit with a focus on gender. She argues that emphasis of skills development for employability can serve to intensify social control, rather than disrupt existing patterns of educational inequality. Managing an inclusive citizenship programme in this context was a significant challenge for YIC.

With this in mind, I asked the obvious question: are schools the best place to work? Kirsty highlighted YIC's policy of only working in state schools, commitment to 'social mixing' and ambitious recruitment target – over 1000 young people completing the programme each year – in its defence: 'If you take it out of schools you immediately lose your numbers and you lose your reach.' (field notes, conversation with Kirsty). The extent to which schools facilitate social mixing is debatable given their association with localised patterns of inequality, especially in the inner cities where YIC predominantly worked (Butler and Hamnett, 2007, Reay, 2007). Nonetheless, I am hard-pressed to suggest an alternative forum through which YIC might have achieved a comparably diverse and large membership. Working through schools thus brought benefits for addressing the problem of differential citizenship along with challenges.

YIC's membership figures reflected its role as an active citizenship provider accountable to funders for promoting youth integration or 'social mix'. In 2010/11 the case study region recorded relatively high participation among young people claiming free school meals (19%), Education Maintenance Allowance (46%) and black and minority ethnic (BME) groups (37%), and all of the young people registered (n=175) lived in local authorities ranked in the most deprived third on multiple deprivation indices. Membership also included young carers, refugees and asylum seekers, young people in care, young people at risk of exclusion, lone parents and ex-offenders. Two groups were notably underrepresented: (i) low academic achievers i.e. those without 5 GCSEs at grades A-C (10%), a variable attributable to YIC's focus on sixth forms and further education colleges; and (ii) young men, who made up between 22-41% of YIC's registered members in each region. This latter figure was attributed by staff to gendered stereotypes of community and voluntary work (Brooks, 2009) and difficulties recruiting male mentors, who comprised typically around a third of frontline volunteers (field notes, YIC evaluation and monitoring).

GYA members said their main recruitment challenge was related to public perceptions of UK environmental NGOs as being populated by privileged people and indifferent to broader liberation and solidarity struggles (Haq and Paul, 2011). They referred to stereotypes of environmental activists with throwaway remarks such as 'Climate change is going to affect us all, not just white middle class people in the south of England' (Abi, field notes, training weekend), part tongue-in-cheek comment and part anxiety about the lack of diversity among their membership. GYA' membership was small, unmonitored and always in-flux, so it was difficult to infer much for certain about its core demographic. Aside from its 16-29 age limit, the only other obvious common characteristic of members was a high level of education, arguably symptomatic of GYA's specialisation in policy lobbying and transitions to professional work. Of the eight key informants no longer studying, seven had Masters Degrees or higher. All of the remaining younger members were attending or would later attend university. At least a third of the international team had attended private schools, which despite the small numbers (n=5/15) is a noteworthy overrepresentation considering only an estimated 5-7% of UK pupils are privately educated (Butler and Hamnett, 2007, Ryan and Sibieta, 2010). In strategy meetings, key organisers talked about how GYA's reach might be improved with the image makeover provided by the green jobs campaign, but in interviews frontline members identified three practical barriers to participation that had more to do with social capital than stereotypes of environmentalists: professionalisation, education and finance.

5.5.2 Professionalisation

The two-stage application and interview/selection day recruitment process for GYA was a substantial obstacle to welcoming new members. In practice, members' experiences of this process ranged from a friendly phone chat with a team leader to a self-financed trip to London for a national selection day. Though most said this was much less formal than anticipated, they recalled how it had influenced their initial perception of GYA as a closed network of young professionals (interviews):

> 'I really didn't think I'd get it because at that time I didn't know the organisation very well. I thought it would be harder to get in, you know, I didn't realise how inclusive it was.' (Carol)

'I didn't really have much experience. I think I was lucky that either there was not many people applying for the role, or Nina liked me in the interview, so I got the job.' (Sally)

'I knew they were people I wanted to be involved with, but for a long time I wasn't really sure how to be involved, which I think maybe is a long term problem. To be involved you essentially have to run GYA right?' (Lee)

'I was really worried I wasn't going to get it 'cause I sent in my application form a bit late and I missed the deadline. I thought it was going to be a very formal thing, you know, if you're one minute late that they won't accept you.... I remember getting ready for it; my friends were telling me "You've got to dress up really smart. It's going to be a serious event." So I wore a quite smart skirt and a little jacket. And then I got there, and I was like, oh my god, is this the right place?!' (Holly)

Those already in fulltime work described the application of learned interview strategies such as researching the NGO's past projects and memorising key words, likening their experience to getting a new job. Younger members in particular said that they found the process intimidating. Many believed that they would need professional skills and relevant higher education or workplace experience to participate in GYA's international work (interviews):

'No offence, but everyone was like you Kristina. Everyone had got a PhD or worked in an organisation or had been to Oxbridge. I was an 18 year old girl from Liverpool and I was just like there's no way. There's too much experience there; they'd never ever give me it. I didn't really have a clue. At that point I wasn't even knowledgeable really about international law and climate change. I knew the basics but there were a lot of people who knew a lot more.' (Claire)

'One of the challenges was basically nearly everyone had so much more experience and knowledge than me it was ridiculous, and at first I felt a little bit overwhelmed by that.' (Sally)

'The selection day was one of the hardest experiences and shaped the rest of the journey for me. I'd never really been in an environment where first

of all I was one of the youngest, and I felt so unconfident in the sense that not only were people older, they were a lot more experienced than me… I'd accepted, not even afterwards but halfway through the day, that I wasn't going to be part of the team, 'cause there were loads of people in the group who had skills that I couldn't even dream to have. There was a 30 year old in my group, so me being 18, someone who's 12 years older than me; that was really intimidating... I felt the pressure to carve out some sort of niche. People were really good at policy... The thing with working with a group of people that are in a way so similar to you is stuff like being good at certain things like public speaking is no longer something unique, 'cause everyone's good at it. I felt like I had to be good at this specific thing to be useful.' (Faiza)

Even older volunteers with significant workplace experience recalled similar anxieties:

'I thought no one's quite like me here, 'cause I'm not a medical student and I'm not from Cambridge or Oxford. And also some people seemed really outgoing and quite creative, so I didn't really think, not totally pessimistic, but I thought they would chose those people ahead of me just 'cause they seemed like the type of people that I had in my mind would be what GYA wanted. They were quite loud; sort of shouty.' (Jack)

'Everyone seemed to be doing Environmental related Masters, which worried me a bit, because I've never really studied the environment at all, and people were doing geography or environmental management. I was coming from quite a different background.... I found it hard to place myself within GYA. There are some very strong characters who know so much policy, and so you listen to them and think oh god, what can I add? And that was probably the tricky thing, trying to figure out what is my unique contribution that I'm going to bring? Because it's not going to be policy, and it's not going to be political debate, and it's not going to be being a very outspoken kind of person.' (Holly)

The GYA key organisers tasked with picking peers were adamant that professional experience was *not* what they were looking for and might have counted against some prospective volunteers:

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'We weren't looking for people with the biggest CVs… Picking out answers was very difficult, because some people are just professional application writers. They knew how to answer the questions, whereas some people haven't had that experience before.' (Dave)

'I was looking mainly for diversity and people who hadn't been as involved before, because I was already starting to feel like I was learning a lot from the experience. I thought a lot of the people who applied were pushing thirty and had done lots of things before, so I was more looking for latent potential.' (Sally)

The young people who outlined their anxieties about not being experienced enough or 'the right kind of person' during the recruitment stage were those I interviewed as GYA members, so were obviously selected despite their doubts. Unlike in YIC, it was not possible to ask young people who did not participate for an alternative perspective. The partial testimony from successful applicants and those making decisions suggests there was considerable competition for volunteer roles, much of it coming from graduates looking to expand their professional portfolio.

Though YIC employed a narrower definition of 'young people' in its focus on 16-19 year olds in schools, many of its frontline volunteers were university students and graduates seeking workplace experience, of a comparable age to GYA's core membership. These young adults were arguably equal beneficiaries of YIC's projects, training and support. When asked why they volunteered as mentors, many of them emphasised personal benefits (interviews):

'I did a lot of volunteer work. I've done a lot of charity fundraisers, I've worked a lot with young people and I found it really rewarding, erm, for my CV as well [laughs], which is embarrassing, but…I also think it, you know, develops skills for them which are going to be useful. They've been asking me questions about university.' (Annie)

'I've always wanted to go into the youth work sector, so I thought this would be a good way to get some experience while there isn't any jobs around at the moment, a good avenue I guess to go down.' (Sean)

'This having been my work placement as well has shown me that I definitely enjoy working with young people, 'cause in my degree I can do lots of different social science things and I've done placements, but it's shown me that I actually really enjoy this.' (Taika)

'I was unemployed for about six months and I really needed to do some volunteering in the environment sector… so I applied, went for the interview, by which time it became clear that it was more youth work based, but by then I think I'd decided that that was a good thing... I wanted to get my confidence up working with young people, because by that point I was thinking of going into teaching, so it sort of became a bit of a, if I can do this, if I can learn to engage with young people on these terms, it means I can teach.' (Danni)

YIC's mentors also had to go through an interview-based recruitment process where some applicants were turned away due to inexperience, despite volunteer shortages.

The evidence from GYA in particular illustrates that the impacts of neoliberal professionalisation on the voluntary sector discussed in Chapter 3 are not unique to large professionally staffed NGOs. This suggest worrying implications for the civic intermediary role of the voluntary sector if 'roll out neoliberalism' (Peck and Tickell, 2002) is so pervasive that young volunteers working in peer groups professionalise to a daunting degree of their own volition. Once they became GYA members, young people were encouraged to specialise both within particular skills sets (e.g. social media, facilitation, policy analysis) and areas of policy knowledge (e.g. climate change and: water, gender, finance). Even in YIC's school teams, a certain amount of specialisation was encouraged, as mentors suggested young people assign roles like 'press officer' and 'account manager' (field notes). These practices could be considered as symptomatic of neoliberal professionalisation because of young people's performance of employability through the development of niche competencies and expertise

This phenomenon can be thought through with the intersection of 'emergent adulthood' theory (Arnett, 2000) with the 'economy of experience' (Brown et al., 2003). These ideas relate to the emergence of an expanding cohort of European youth in their teens to early thirties struggling to find stable employment, especially work

that matches ambitions for financial security and rewarding professional careers (Krestos, 2010). Voluntary sector activities present some of these young people with opportunities that they might not find elsewhere, not just 'something for the CV' that might help them to carve a professional niche through training, but – in GYA's case – a space where desired professional identities can be performed in the absence of satisfactory paid work. This illustrates a dynamic interplay between practices of resilience and reworking: young people simultaneously steeling themselves against disappointed hopes by seeking work satisfaction elsewhere, and re-skilling so that they may secure more privileged employment in the long run. It is a good example of how such practices, though borne out of recognition that present arrangements are disadvantageous, reproduce inequality by sustaining the system through which young people were made to feel insecure in the first place (Katz, 2004 p.246). So long as young people are acquiescent competitors, many will suffer from the fallout of this competition.

Previous research has criticised the generalisation of emergent adulthood theories to 'youth' as a homogenous category (McIllwaine and Datta, 2004, Valentine, 2003, Worth, 2009b), so it is important to consider how young people may be differently affected by professionalisation. Bynner's (2005) UK class critique is particularly relevant here. He uses longitudinal quantitative data to demonstrate that key markers of emergent adulthood such as higher education, delayed parenthood, social and political participation are predominantly features of middle class and upwardly mobile young people's experiences. Processes of specialisation, re-skilling and intensified competition within NGO youth projects could be interpreted as both a symptom and contributory factor of the 'growing polarisation between the advantaged and the disadvantaged' (p.377), with the social capital of voluntary social and political action used as a safeguard by middle class youth against fear of falling. As GYA members themselves noted, it is evident that many young people are not on 'the high road for employment'. GYA's selection process and YIC's emphasis of skills to complement university education serve to mainstream and normalise professionalisation, to the extent that young people with alternative aspirations might not recognise nor relate to the kind of citizenship that they promote.

GYA's membership included school pupils, university students and graduates up to thirty as colleagues and competitors for volunteer roles. This demonstrates how youth

has been extended as a socio-economic category (Hopkins and Pain, 2007, Worth, 2009b), with different age cohorts vying for the same posts. Age mixing in YIC was facilitated by its volunteer mentoring scheme, which brought students and graduates into schools in an advisory role. Emerging adulthood is typically conceptualised in terms of markers of immaturity and dependency (Arnett, 2000). It might alternatively be helpful to think relationally (Hopkins and Pain, 2007) to consider counterweight trends when 'older' and 'younger' youth, for want of better terms, share spaces and ambitions. The evidence here tentatively suggests that contact between young people with more and less workplace experience within NGO youth citizenship projects accelerated career concerns and professionalisation processes among younger members. This happens as they become aware of the job insecurity, skills and experience of their older contemporaries and, as exemplified in the feedback from Claire, Sally and Faiza above (pp.131-132), feel the need to measure up.

5.5.3 Education

Formal education has already been mentioned as a marker of inequality, insofar as educational attainment affected teacher support for young people's participation in YIC, and the higher education trajectories of GYA's international team members was proffered as a marker of a predominantly middle class/upwardly mobile membership. In addition to functioning as a barrier to membership, feedback from young people revealed the extent to which formal education had an impact on their experiences within projects.

In GYA, members' educational backgrounds affected the language and pitch of training and group activities. These assumed an advanced degree of underpinning knowledge and fast paced assimilation of new information. A younger member of the group, who has dyslexia, described how she struggled with the expectation of quickly written blogs and email responses, as she had to budget in extra time for help with proofreading. Others criticised the 'overly intellectual' tone of training weekends. Alongside practical sessions such as campaign planning, these typically included critical education activities such as 'theories of change' and 'tools for white guys' (field notes). Young people said that although they enjoyed the challenge of these sessions, they were were also concerned that they overindulged the group's academic tendencies. In interview, key organiser Dave observed that 'The way people speak in groups can be intimidating and

over intellectual, when it doesn't need to be', while Holly gave specific examples of the shared language she felt to be a problem:

> 'My first training weekend… we were talking about things that I was talking about in my Masters… I was really surprised how everyone knows the jargon, like capacity-building and participation. I always thought they were very sector specific. They have their own language, but everyone was speaking really at ease in that terminology and I was quite surprised by that… I'm so happy that when we get together we can have those kinds of discussions, but we're all really well educated and I do think sometimes the language we use is - I think education is really a big thing. Like, we've got quite a few Oxbridge-type people and nothing against them but just the way of speaking, I think there's a very academic way of speaking amongst the group as a whole. We would be using very fancy language… Even my friends kind of look at me and be like "Why are you talking with this mumbo-jumbo, this is ridiculous". And I think we need to look at translating things into really clear English that people can understand, without making it condescending. Just in a friendly way. Like some of the blogs that we've written were really good because they were easy to access, whereas if you'd sat in on some of our training meetings, you'd have heard us talking about empowerment and disempowering and all this kind of stuff. No one uses that in their everyday language!'

Holly's account is reminiscent of critiques applied in educational research in the Bernsteinian tradition. Bernstein considered communication acts to not only express existing inequalities, but to reconstitute and reproduce them:

> '…the pedagogic discourse device is a grammar for producing specialised messages, realisations, a grammar which regulates what it processes; a grammar which orders and positions'. (Bernstein, 1990 p.190)

He was especially interested in the role of specialist language and discursive rules in regulating and legitimising particular forms of communication, developing the theory of 'restricted' and 'elaborate' codes as an explanatory factor in educational inequality (Bernstein, 1964). Restricted codes are those shared among a closed group, such as a family or peer group, that assume a degree of insider knowledge and can serve to

foster group belonging. Elaborate codes are those that are more explanatory, used when speakers do not make assumptions about the prior knowledge of their audience. The extensive use of restricted codes can serve, consciously or unconsciously, to create exclusive spaces that differentiate between people and preserve the privilege of a fluent few. Observing this trend in pupil consultation, where academic voices are preferred and held to represent 'young people's views' as a catchall group, Arnot and Reay (2007 p.316) explain: 'The voice of a category… is sustained by boundaries between categories. The stronger the insulation between categories, the more likely it is that there will be a specificity of voice'. In GYA a similar process is observable in an informal educational space, where young people were immediately accountable to no one but their peers. Where then does the impetus for expertise come from?

All peer groups inevitably have specialisms and shared understandings, in part necessitated by the context they work within. As policy-embedded NGOs - YIC in national active citizenship policy and GYA in UK and international climate change policy - both had to codify communication to appear relevant. At the start of field work I was amused when, independently of each other, both NGOs gave me a 'jargon buster' explaining common workplace acronyms. As an NGO run by young volunteers, GYA was particularly concerned with being taken seriously by policy-makers. Some members were also of course aspiring to professional NGO work in this context. This arguably drove their adoption of sector specific language, as suggested by members' reflections on the project's strengths (interviews):

> 'I think the youth climate movement has become effective at engaging with international climate change politics…. I think we've got very good at being loud and being incredibly visible and as knowledgeable as we need to be to have credibility.' (Tim)

> 'It was a bit more challenging than I thought it would be. I was pleased that there seemed to be a focus on the policy stuff 'cause I was concerned that it would be almost too youthy and not serious enough for my liking. I was reassured that we were actually going to become really knowledgeable and effective. Not just like, a couple of kids get together, you know?' (Carol)

Though concerned with credibility, they also recognised the risk of exclusion inherent in overspecialising and intellectualising the main mode of group communication, aware

that the educational backgrounds of their present company exacerbated the problem. This is another example of how *reworking* neoliberalism, by learning to speak in specialisms to be admitted to privileged decision-making space, can serve to *reinforce* social inequality.

YIC's members generally said that they found meetings and discussions accessible. However, problems arose when the lively debates of the first few weeks of the programme were cast aside for project planning, leaving young people feeling simultaneously bored and out of their depth. Those who dropped out of the programme often did so at this stage. The change of pitch was cited as a major cause of dissatisfaction (focus group, Cedar Comprehensive):

Dana: It just started to get boring after the initial meetings. Because then it was just more like, just go do your own stuff. It wasn't interactive as much as it was at the beginning....

Bea: I got the vibe from other people that they weren't enjoying it as much as they were at the beginning, because it was more like hard work to try and meet these people.

Alisha: One thing I really liked was them big discussions we used to have,

Dana: At the beginning.

Alisha: and we'd have like, yeah at the beginning…

This was also evident through my observations of the programme in Oak Grammar over its full cycle, and corroborated by YIC's recruitment and retention figures. In the case study school 100 students signed up, over 60 attended regularly during the 'engagement' phase, dropping to around 30 members once the focus shifted to project planning. This roughly tallied with the national figures for the previous year: approximately 5000 sign ups, 1800 registrations and 1100 programme 'graduates' (field notes, YIC evaluation and monitoring). Concessions to active citizenship's focus on transferable skills, competencies and contribution meant, for some young people, that more enjoyable and arguably more political aspects of the programme – such as public deliberation and critical thinking – were phased out. In this manner, it could be argued that the expectations of formal education as regards employability had a stifling effect

on youth people's aspirations for their citizenship projects (Brooks, 2009, Staeheli et al., 2013).

5.5.4 Finance and fundable citizenship

A fairly self-evident but significant issue that frustrated GYA's efforts to diversify its membership was the cost of its flagship international project. For the duration of my field work, this project did not receive any core funding despite several grant applications. Instead, members relied on ad-hoc grants, fundraising activities and often their own money to cover project expenses. The price of participation varied year-on-year but a conservative estimate for just one UN trip in 2011 is around £1000, with additional expenses throughout the year such as monthly travel to training weekends, a network meeting in mainland Europe and lobbying opportunities in London. Collective efforts were made to keep costs down and redistribute some expenses, so that those travelling farthest were not excessively at a loss. Nonetheless, GYA members identified personal financial risk as a key deterrent of taking part. Many seriously weighed up the costs and benefits, and some on limited incomes opted out of core activities (interviews):

> 'One of the biggest challenges is money and moving around. It makes things very awkward when some people can happily pay to get a train up to Edinburgh and not even think about it and for some people it's actually a real struggle and they don't necessarily want to say that in a room full of people.' (Dave)

> 'Finance did concern me a bit... It was more like, is it worth spending the money on this? Because I didn't really have time to fundraise, so a lot of it was my own money, savings and inheritance and things, and it kind of all adds up really, is it all worth it?' (Carol)

> 'Money's obviously a big obstacle and that automatically rules out a certain group of people from applying... Unless you've got a good network of friends and family who are able to sponsor you, that's going to just push out so many people from even considering it.' (Holly)

> 'You need quite a high disposable income to be able to pay for train fares across the country in advance. I've struggled with that. I paid for it out my

pocket money and I have had no disposable income for a good number of months this year. I've only really spent money on train fares to training weekends. And I think that can be a big barrier to this sort of thing.' (Trent)

GYA members based in London were perceived to be at an advantage due to the concentration of core activities around the capital, which mitigated their personal expense and inconvenience to some extent:

'One of the main challenges has been the amount of time and money which unfortunately I've had to be able to spend on travelling for it. Obviously we don't have to do but it often helps, to be able to go and travel to meet people and see them, and to go to the events that we get invited along to, which are very often in London, and I wasn't in London much at the time, so those are things which take up both time and money.' (Mark)

'I found it quite expensive travelling to London, especially from Aberdeen. I could have got a Megabus but it was sixteen hours, which would mean I'd have to take a day off work or even two days. So I'd take the train, which is still quite long and also quite expensive. I found that most definitely negative I think.' (Jack)

Key organisers were aware of these issues, but struggled to address them. High volunteer turnover, inexperience and lack of institutional memory were blamed for unsuccessful attempts to secure more reliable project funding that would relieve members of personal expense. Project coordinator Nina observed: 'Not having really strong structures to deal with things like the finance or how we were going to organise the logistical stuff was really tough', while the team's fundraising coordinator Sally described her frustration at 'wasting time' on fruitless grant applications with little training and no experience (interviews). The team decided to raise money to fund a bursary system for the following year, especially concerned with extending opportunities to young people who are unemployed or in low paid full time work. This was reluctantly abandoned when most members did not raise enough to cover even their own costs.

On one level, this is a typical account of the kinds of financial challenges that smaller NGOs face. The precarity of voluntary sector funding available for organisations of this

size has been well documented elsewhere and is considered to have negative impacts on their operations and effectiveness (Thompson, 2008). This suggests that the financial pressures that GYA's volunteers faced were to some extent outside of their control. However, critical reflections on their experience in regard to the idea of 'differential citizenship' underlines a clear link between private capital and opportunities to boost social capital (Lake and Newman, 2002) linked to employability, with some young people essentially buying the right to participate where others cannot. GYA's efforts towards a more egalitarian system do not change the present facts. If investment is needed for such a project to dissociate from commoditising citizenship, where might it come from? Some insight can be drawn from GYA members' and YIC staff's perceptions of fundable youth citizenship work, based on their experiences of fundraising and grant applications.

GYA members felt that their international work was compared unfavourably to a gap year project by many of the people and organisations whom they approached for financial support, with connotations of holidaying, personal benefit and privilege over public good (Ansell, 2008, Heath, 2007, King, 2010, Simpson, 2004). They undoubtedly *were* benefitting, but felt this to be an unfair appraisal of GYA's and their personal goals. They viewed the project as first and foremost a political one concerned with enabling youth representation in policy-making, and sought funding precisely so that participation need not only be for affluent youth (field notes). Their biggest challenge was making the case for the international element of their work at a time when national and local youth services that meet core economic and welfare needs were facing retrenchment, also on the lookout for sponsors. In short, the kind of citizenship that GYA members aspired to was perceived to be a luxury, not a necessity.

YIC experienced considerable competition for funding from similar quarters. This put staff under pressure to specialise towards working with young people identified as at-risk/risky by the neoliberal state, as exemplified by categories picked out for evaluation, monitoring and reporting to funders (pp.129-130). Its active citizenship branding is associated with governmental efforts 'to 'reponsibilize' citizens such that they may regulate their own behaviour and reduce the need for state intervention in communities' (Staeheli et al., 2013p. 93), which in practice often crudely translates to targeting 'communities characterised by bad citizenship'(Gimpel and Lay, 2006 p.10).

There were considerable financial incentives for YIC to perform youth citizenship work as an 'intervention' in this manner, but it does not follow that staff took the bait.

Though YIC relied in part on state funding, the impetus to regulate 'risky' young people was resisted. A senior manager contrasted charitable trusts that 'have specific targets for working with disadvantaged groups' with the preferred smaller grants that 'allow more organisational flexibility' (Jill, field notes, YIC national staff training). My initial misperception that YIC principally worked with marginalised youth was vehemently corrected on my first meeting with regional manager Kirsty, who replied: 'Young people aren't daft. They know when they're being targeted with 'underprivileged youth' initiatives.' She argued that YIC could not work exclusively with a target group, as it was set up to counter negative youth stereotypes. Intervention projects, she felt, served to strengthen the misconception that some young people are a problem to be fixed, adding: 'It's a bit rich to insist that underprivileged young people should be solving all society's problems!' (field notes). One incident especially brought to the fore frontline staff members' opposition to promoting citizenship as regulation of 'risky' youth, founded on respect for the young people they worked with. It is a long field note extract, but worth reproducing in full:

> Kirsty reads out some guidance on identifying individuals for media case studies. Senior management have sent a list of 'essential' and 'desirable' characteristics to provide guidance on who would make a good case study. Desirable includes things like BME, ex-offenders, excluded from school, low income background – basically, triumph over adversity stories. This is read like a checklist and there are gasps. I find it hard to disguise my reaction. Monique speaks first to say "But YIC is for all different kinds of people." Daphne then expresses concerns about how this data would be used in public communications. Could young people feel taken advantage of? Kirsty acknowledges that it's difficult but says there's no funding available for working with the middle ground and "no money for social mixing", which is what YIC tends to do best. Carrie speaks up to express real discomfort. She says she sees it as another example of young people being "pigeonholed" in a certain way: "The advantage of our programme is it works with people from all backgrounds and sees them as individuals, not a set of characteristics." Kirsty says she completely understands these

concerns and she will report it all back in the next managers' meeting, especially the potential to exploit and reveal young people's personal information just to tell a good story about YIC. (field notes, regional staff training)

In combination, financial difficulties and funding incentives present significant challenges for NGO youth citizenship initiatives that seek to promote equality for young people. The evidence tentatively suggests a polarisation of citizenship projects for 'problem' and 'privileged' youth. The former are supposed to be deficient in social capital, requiring targeted intervention to integrate them as responsible citizens; the latter have a superfluity of social capital and want only further internship opportunities to amuse and distinguish themselves. Neoliberalism thus *reinforces* differential citizenship, by governing NGO performance and necessitating reliance on one or the other niche market. Intervention-focussed citizenship projects appeal to public and philanthropic purse strings to regulate risky subjects, while internship-focussed citizenship projects rely chiefly on personal wealth to embellish future leaders. I am describing compulsions at either end of a spectrum, which in practice NGO staff and volunteers strove to resist. The point of illustration is to alert youth and voluntary sector researchers to the vulnerability and potential duplicity of projects to promote youth participation. 'Whose participation?' and 'Why them?' should be key questions that inform critical reflection on youth citizenship practices in and beyond the voluntary sector.

5.5.5 Scaling social mobility: Spaces of youth citizenship

Another aspect of differential citizenship highlighted in Chapter 3's review of research evidence was its spatiality, particularly the idea that it might relate to young people's social mobility across local, national and transnational networks. Youth geographers have identified the need for more research that addresses young people's political agency not only in localised, everyday contexts, but through their connection with various overlapping scales and spaces that constitute the global political economy (Ansell, 2009, Katz, 2004, Skelton, 2013). I have explored this theme to some extent in previous research, critiquing the asymmetrical geography of global citizenship networks with a case study of UK Government/NGO pilot international volunteering programme for 'disadvantaged youth' (Diprose, 2012). A substantial body of research on international volunteering and gap year travel brings into stark focus the privileged

performance of global cosmopolitan identities as an established marker of middle class transitions to adulthood (Ansell, 2008, Desforges, 1998, Simpson, 2004). These activities interact with the UK Government's vision of global citizenship, becoming projects of global neoliberal professionalisation which promote North-South voluntarism as a safe, politically subdued form of participation with the ultimate aim of skills development over solidarity (Baillie Smith and Laurie, 2011, Jones, 2009a, Simpson, 2005). Given this prior research focus, I was interested in where else other than the development industry similar transnational assemblages of governmental agendas, NGOs and youth mobilities might be working to reproduce differential citizenship.

GYA appealed as a case study because it sought to engage young people in international politics as opposed to volunteering. Its members were concerned with promoting solidarity, not charity, in their collaborations with organisations in the global South. Their shared membership of the UN's international youth constituency arguably positioned them as colleagues. Nonetheless, parallels can be drawn with international volunteering in the extent to which travel and cross-cultural work was perceived as a platform for an elite form of citizenship practice that invested participants with a particular niche skills set and an authoritative cosmopolitan outlook, enhancing employability and, in some cases, transitions to global professional work.

GYA's international work was part of a wider suite of activities that included national and local campaigning. Unlike its sister projects it never wanted for volunteers: vacancies on the international team were hotly contested (p.121, pp.130-133). The international project commanded the lion's share of organisational resources, which was often a point of contention: 'It is a bit like 'ooh, exciting, you get to go to the UN!' It does take quite a lot of energy away from other parts of GYA' (Nina). The UN link, with its associated opportunities for travel and transnational civil society networking, was the project's biggest draw, with members admitting 'A lot of the way you try to get numbers is by saying stuff like, you'll get to go to the UN' (Dave) and 'It can be a great hook, the fact that young people are in Durban or wherever' (Lee). All of the GYA members I interviewed gave international experience as one of their key reasons for applying to join the project, referring to goals such as 'scaling up' and 'taking my activism to the next level' (Trent) and 'getting some experience on the international

side of things as opposed to the domestic or even the local or regional stuff' (Lee). Faiza elaborated:

> 'There's no level that's too high for young people, and from day one I've always been involved in encouraging young people to take their voices to the powers that be, MPs, Ministers, so I don't see why the UN is untouchable.'

Three key insights can be drawn from these interview accounts: (i) citizenship is envisaged hierarchically as a progression from one sphere of influence to the next, with transnational participation occupying a privileged space; (ii) citizenship is associated with participation in governing institutions envisaged as centres of power; and (iii) accessing these spaces, or moving 'up the ladder', is challenging for young people and entails the mobilisation of significant financial and social capital. This contradicts the contention of alter-activist researchers that young people are disinvesting in institutional politics in favour of lifestyle politics and horizontal social movements (Feixa et al., 2009, Juris and Pleyers, 2009); this is demonstrably not the case in all quarters. GYA's members *did* organise online, go to rallies and summits and share practice with youth in other countries, but vis-à-vis the goal of influencing the UN. These findings corroborate evidence from elsewhere that global networks of institutions and organisations, including NGOs, are influential in shaping the way that young people imagine and practice emergent forms of global citizenship (Auvachez, 2009, Baillie Smith and Laurie, 2011, Basok and Ilcan, 2006, Staeheli et al., 2013).

A second comparison with international volunteering was the extent to which transnational experience at the UN was seen to lend greater legitimacy to young people's participation and views as global cosmopolitans, making them better – and more employable – citizens (interviews):

> 'I think it gives me some sort of, not authority in the sense that suddenly I'm an expert, but it gives me more of an ability to talk about climate change to people, or write about it, or maybe engage people with it, because I can now say that I've been there, I've seen how it works.' (Lee)

> "[I feel] really empowered, more knowledgeable, not just in the climate sense but in the whole cultural sense, from what I've seen from around the world learning about how people engage.' (Claire)

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GYA members expressed a strong sense of authentic and privileged knowledge about other cultures through first-hand experience on their return from the UN (Simpson, 2004). Unlike many international volunteers however, there was not the same sense of 'remoteness' about where and how this knowledge might be applied (Diprose, 2012), as on-going communication with international peers outlasted formal involvement with the project. For example, Trent said (interview):

> '…now I've got lots of links and people everywhere and I feel like I can just email any number of these people around the world and get a response within minutes, it's so exciting. I can say to my friends now, name a country, and I can usually tell them about someone I've met from that country that's an incredible young person working on climate change.'

These international networks were employed by young people to develop shared projects, to find out about job opportunities, to seek information and advice and even to go on holiday. They strengthened the social capital, mobility and self-assuredness of GYA members as 'global' citizens, arguably offering 'privileged volunteers' from 'wealthier areas of the world… an international perspective and a career boost' (Sherraden et al., 2008 p.414).

A final parallel that can be drawn with international volunteering was the institutional imbalance of youth participation through GYA, both in the make-up and small numbers of youth participating from the UK, and their representation at the UN in comparison with youth from the global South. This is a widely acknowledged problem with the UN's constituency model, as Auvachez (2009 p.59-60) notes:

> 'Reflecting a "governance model" of citizenship, participation via civil society organizations certainly raises several issues in terms of accountability or equality in access to institutions… The participation model is characterized by unequal access to institutions, depending on citizens' social, educational and geographical background.'

A 2004 report on civil society at the UN notes: 'Speakers are largely male, Northern and Anglo-Saxon. And the voices of vulnerable groups are underrepresented' (cited ibid.). In contrast to international volunteers however, the more politically attuned GYA members recognised and took steps to moderate their position of privilege. They bemoaned the dominance in UN civil society spaces of young people whom they

described as 'baby bureaucrats': those who sought to impose their political or cultural viewpoints on others, dressed in suits, and were often part of elite North American university programmes. In deliberate contrast, GYA members worked with anti-oppression training techniques such as 'tools for white guys' to think about how they might 'step back' in international group work and support others' ideas. They also fundraised to support the attendance of young people from a partner youth project in Kenya, and found it much easier to fundraise for Kenyan colleagues despite shared political goals and practices. This illustrates how wider public perceptions of charitable giving are still the predominant lens through which North-South citizen collaboration is viewed (Simpson, 2004).

I have illustrated how GYA's international team members could be construed as performing a particularly elite form of global citizenship through spaces and networks that do little to disrupt existing flows of social and spatial mobility, instead consolidating power and privilege in governing institutions where opportunities for youth participation are limited. GYA would defend its work as 'opening up' and making space for youth citizenship, however incrementally. This argument is not to be entirely disregarded and will be given due consideration in the next chapter. As regards the current themes of employability and professionalisation, however, it is interesting to contrast the elite performance of global mobility in GYA with the localism of YIC's citizenship activities.

In YIC, working through schools necessitated 'copious amounts of permission' for young people to take their social action projects into public space (conversation with Cathy, YIC Intern, field notes). Activities on school premises, such as special assemblies, workshops for younger students and events in the school hall, were much more common than activities elsewhere. Recent changes in funder expectations meant that young people were supposed to be encouraged to focus their social action within their 'community' (in a bounded, local sense), reflecting traditional Conservative notions of citizenship as 'good neighbourliness' (Davies, 2012). This new slant to the programme was unpopular with frontline staff and did not appear have had much immediate impact in my time at YIC (field notes, staff training); though over time it may become more ingrained. When I asked who typically stayed on in YIC's graduate network, noting a much higher proportion of BME youth in these membership figures than within the main programme, the regional manager indicated that (in the case

study region) it was mainly those who had not left home for university. She also explained that this region received some additional funding for working on racial justice projects in the local community with the young people I had identified (field notes, conversation with Kirsty).

What this raises as a theme for further research is the possibility that 'intervention' and 'internship' youth citizenship projects are implicated in the reproduction of differential citizenship through disparate practices of *spatial* as well as social mobility. In its active citizenship work, YIC was encouraged to target 'risky' youth and to foster a form of citizenship that was essentially inward-looking, turning young people's gaze on themselves and their immediate locality in an effort to 'responsibilze' marginalised communities. As I have acknowledged, there were many occasions where this compulsion was resisted by NGO workers and volunteers, but the compulsion nonetheless exists. In contrast, GYA's international project fostered outward-looking cosmopolitan citizenship enacted through travel and transnational networks, with young people – including those the same age as YIC's members – afforded a much greater degree of spatial autonomy. This transnational mobility was implicated with a subsequently even greater degree of social mobility and in some cases transitions to global professional work. Following Skeggs (1997 p.86) and Massey (1994), mobility can be understood as a significant factor in the social reproduction of class, entrenching existing patterns of youth (non)participation by 'securing, fixing, and holding some people in space so that others can move'.

One final and more general aspect of the spatiality of 'differential citizenship' to consider is the distributional pattern of NGO activity. Both NGOs self-identified as 'national' in scope, but capacity constraints were most obviously expressed in the localisation of frontline activity. Both had a limited geographical reach which cast young people in urban centres as the main beneficiaries. YIC's operations were confined to four large cities, three operating satellite projects from its primary base in London. Expansion plans were mooted and shelved (field notes), coinciding with substantial reduction and increased precarity of funding available for youth work (Rocyn Jones, 2013). Though GYA's online organising methods meant any young person in the UK *could* join, in practice members acknowledged a London and urban bias. This critique especially emerged when the international team reflected on communication with the

rest of the organisation. Those living in London reported significant advantages (interviews):

> 'I found [working online] quite isolating… and probably one of the reasons why I was more engaged with other GYA work was the fact that I was meeting people from other teams quite frequently, or being asked questions in person and asked to do things in person… Because the [international team] is the most geographically dispersed, the national campaigns work is very much run by the London lot, so yeah, in short, I did find it challenging and that was maybe one of the reasons why for a certain amount of time I was a little bit disengaged.' (Tim)

> 'I think living in London helps 'cause you actually get to meet people a bit more on a social basis who are involved in this stuff.' (Dave)

> 'I have a different view on it maybe 'cause I lived in London, and I understand that's like really subjective, where I get to see some people. For example with the festival [fundraising stall] I was able to get support… so I guess maybe that, if there was really a time when I needed to see someone I'd be able to find some people to speak to.' (Faiza)

During a power mapping exercise one training weekend, GYA's members identified 'urban/suburban', 'London', 'South East England' and 'universities' as 'mainstream' spaces, and 'rural', 'inner-city', 'estates' and 'the North' as marginalised spaces where young people 'might find it harder to access power'. Simplistic analysis aside, this exercise revealed a contrast between where GYA felt it ought to be more effective, and where it had managed to establish active support (field notes). These findings are consistent with the concern that the local distribution of voluntary sector activity, especially political work, may bear little relation to where it is most needed (Clarke, 1991, Lake and Newman, 2002, Mohan, 2011).

5.6 Performing policy priorities: active citizens and young leaders

Finally, it is important to consider the policy context underlying GYA's and YIC's efforts to enhance employability, in particular their relationship with national and international governments and associated policy projects to encourage particular forms of youth citizenship. Staeheli et al. (2013p. 89) observe:

'[C]onsiderable effort is devoted to cultivating citizens who will engage in behaviours seen as 'legitimate' or appropriate… various institutions and organisations attempt to mould youth as 'active' citizens, who are engaged in their communities and in civil society, but who will not fundamentally challenge the state or the normative social order.'

YIC ran an extracurricular 'active citizenship' programme that prospered under Blair's and Brown's New Labour Governments, with funding from state sponsored grant-making bodies. This NGO is cited in Cabinet Office reports as exemplifying good voluntary sector youth work and YIC's senior managers advised Labour Ministers on youth policy development. YIC can be explicitly linked to governmental efforts to promote a form of citizenship based on voluntarism, community cohesion, personal responsibility and skills development (Brooks, 2009, Davies, 2012, Fairclough, 2000, Kisby, 2009, Landrum, 2002). More recently, YIC has adopted the alternative language of 'youth leadership' in promotional material and become a delivery partner in the Coalition Government's Big Society flagship National Citizen Service scheme. It is unequivocally part of 'a veritable industrial sector of NGOs' that 'disseminates 'best practice' for encouraging responsible citizens who are actively engaged in society' (Staeheli et al., 2013 p.89).

YIC's staff said that differences in delivery of its core schools programme from one government to another were mostly cosmetic. This reflects both the overall consistency of New Labour and Conservative active citizenship policies (Basok and Ilcan, 2006, Davies, 2012) and the flexibility of YICs 'experiential' approach. The promotion of young people's employability as part and parcel of active citizenship is consistent with a neoliberal-centrist consensus among major UK policy-makers, whereby economic competitiveness is considered an essential characteristic of citizenship, moderated by the promotion of community engagement to avoid social fragmentation in excess (Davies, 2012). The semantic switch from 'active citizens' to 'young leaders' only signifies an intensification of the competitive meritocratic compulsion of this policy project.

YIC's position as a 'shadow state' agency (Wolch, 1990) in receipt of public sector delivery contracts, corporate sponsorship and charitable grants, makes it an interesting case study of the 'relational' possibilities that arise through NGOs working with states

and markets (Trudeau, 2008), particularly at a time of financial uncertainty and transition for the UK youth and voluntary sectors (Alcock, 2010, Department for Education, 2013, Rocyn Jones, 2013).

By contrast GYA's modest income was neither reliant on state nor corporate sponsorship, nor could this NGO be considered to perform a public youth service. A combination of relative financial independence and young voluntary leadership suggests greater freedom to pursue civic goals that challenge the status quo, supporting political mobilisation and youth activism (Clarke, 1991, Smith, 2005, Staeheli et al., 2013). Yet GYA too is policy-embedded and subject to incentives for young people to perform particular forms of citizenship. GYA relied on developing and maintaining relationships with government agencies as a 'credible' youth NGO. It had direct lobbying links with a UK Government department, with some of its members contributing to a youth advisory board. It also offered its international team members accreditation as United Nations civil society observers affiliated to a youth constituency. GYA did not directly curtail young people actions, but there were implied sanctions for all of its members if any of them engaged in political activities deemed inappropriate by UN Security and Ministers, such as direct action.

While YIC is an interesting case study for its youth citizenship work in the 'fuzzy terrain' (Swyngedouw, 2005) between the nation state and market, GYA occupies an alternative space of relational governmentality between local activism and participation in national and international policy-making. Basok and Ilan (2006 p.313) have demonstrated how international agencies such as the UN encourage the participation of civil society groups, but in doing so require people to behave as 'responsible citizens' who 'act in ways that are aligned with the principles and expectations imposed on them by advanced liberal governmental agendas'. NGO delivery of development programmes aligned with UN goals to 'empower' poor communities is an archetypal example of this kind of practice (Ilcan and Lacey, 2006). Despite the disparate geography, such programmes share a discourse of self-sufficiency and responsibility before rights with efforts to promote youth employability in the UK, and comparisons may not be so far-fetched. Certainly, UN agencies take steps to regulate the conduct of citizens as a condition of the right to participate (Auvachez, 2009) and NGO efforts to foster global citizenship are associated with the promotion of neoliberal professionalisation (Baillie Smith and Laurie, 2011, Jones, 2009a, Simpson, 2005).

Investment in international policy processes brought GYA members into close contact with an array of NGOs who have made an industry of professionalising participation. These relationships made GYA's international volunteering roles particularly competitive, associated with an elite performance of transnational identity and transitions to (global) professional work.

While it does not follow that policy projects and everyday experiences of citizenship are aligned, this chapter has demonstrated that the influence of employability was considerable in both case study NGOs.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated a range of ways through which employability is a firmly established rationale for engaging young people in voluntary sector citizenship activities, detailing how it is promoted by governmental agendas, institutional networks, volunteer recruitment, programme design, and by the demands of young people themselves. Other researchers too have raised this issue, recognising that it presents opportunities and threats for voluntary action (Baillie Smith and Laurie, 2011, Brooks, 2009, Heath, 2007, Staeheli et al., 2013). On the one hand, I have demonstrated how NGOs are delivering employability and transferable skills for young people. This helps them to remain viable in challenging financial and political times for the UK voluntary sector (Taylor, 2013). On the other hand, this has some negative consequences for citizenship projects – namely a competitive and skills-showcase impetus that is daunting for some young people, also limiting their ideas of appropriate action and sometimes subordinating critical debate.

I have also discussed instances of frontline practices through which NGO workers and young people acknowledged problems with promoting employability and resisted the dictates of market logic. Taking a 'relational' view of NGO civic intermediary work (Trudeau, 2008) has enabled me to explore practitioners' sense of 'tension between our underlying principles and what we need to do in the short term' (field notes, conversation with Kirsty). Although employability was undoubtedly reinforced in the case study NGO projects, there was also some evidence of it being 'performed' to support NGOs' and young people's strategies of reworking and resilience, for example

in green jobs campaigning that supported skills training but rejected the individualisation of economic risk and responsibility.

This chapter's original contribution to youth citizenship literature is its exploration of the relationship between employability and differential citizenship. I have adopted and extended Lake & Newman's (2002) original use of this term to describe the uneven socio-spatial distribution of NGO activity, to also look at the quality of citizenship that is being produced. I have conceptualised differential citizenship as an outcome of voluntary sector professionalisation and precarious funding. The impact of differential citizenship on young people is illustrated through trends such as competition for volunteer roles, the mobilisation of financial and social capital to perform global citizenship, and how NGOs offer youth citizenship programmes on the differentiated premises of intervention and internship depending on who they are funded (or not funded) to work with. This evidence suggests that NGOs purporting to promote youth citizenship must make careful work of volunteer recruitment, programme design and support for young people if they value pluralism over privilege (Clarke, 2005).

Voluntary sector efforts to enhance employability foster a neoliberal citizenship ethic of self-reliance and responsibility before rights, but this is codified in palatable language about 'engaging' and 'empowering' young people (Brooks, 2009, Davies, 2012, Ilcan and Lacey, 2006, Staeheli et al., 2013) – indeed, this was the promise of both case study NGOs' mission statements. The ambiguity of this language is important, as it affords some overlap with the more expansive vocabularies and goals of politicised activist citizenship (Changfoot, 2007), giving NGOs some flexibility in their approach to action. The next empirical chapter considers how, in spite of their performance of policy priorities, the case study NGOs and their young members also entertained other ideas about citizen empowerment and made space for alternative citizenship practices too.

Chapter 6 Empowered Citizens: Making Space for and Supporting Youth Participation

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter cast the two case study youth citizenship projects chiefly as 'something for the CV'; this chapter counterbalances that perspective by looking at the ways in which Global Youth Advocacy (GYA) and Youth in Communities (YIC) supported political socialisation. I argue that both NGOs were effective civic intermediaries for their members and that their work in *amplifying*, *bridging*, and *capacity building* across various spaces of citizenship developed young people's skills and confidence in present and future action. GYA focussed on political lobbying and YIC on school-based community projects, yet both NGOs shared the aim of 'engaging' and 'empowering' young people. Recognition of the marginal political status of young people was implicit in efforts to '...give young people the ways to engage with structures that they would otherwise be excluded from' (interview with Nina, GYA project co-ordinator) and 'challenge the stereotype of 'the youth' as apathetic and disengaged with the issues going on around them' (YIC website). Both NGOs worked with their members as 'actual current citizens, rather than futuristic ones' (Gervais, 2010 p.14), with the aim of 'getting young people to feel like an activist or an agent for change or active in their communities' (field notes, conversation with Kirsty, YIC regional manager).

6.2 Empowerment and the Ladder of Participation

Empowerment is an ambiguous political concept; and this ambiguity is something that I will critique in the final empirical chapter on resilience. Why, then, does this chapter employ such a loaded term? Time and again, the staff, volunteers and young people that I worked with described the best of their NGO experience as empowerment, reflecting its currency as a prominent guiding principle of NGO and youth work (Shier, 2001). I felt that this warranted analytical attention to my participants' understanding of empowerment and the practices, values and experiences they associate with it.

The aim of this chapter is to provide more clarity about what is considered to be good practice in youth empowerment work in the voluntary sector. There are already two well-known analytical frameworks that are used by youth workers – for example, in

YIC's staff induction – to inform critical reflection on putting empowerment into practice: Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation (1969) and Hart's (1992) revision of this specifically for initiatives involving children and young people (Figures 1 and 2 below). Shier (2001 p.108) claims that these models are 'uniquely influential' within organisations that work to enhance children and young people's participation. Arnstein and Hart identify key differences that describe the extent of citizen involvement in decision making, moving from non-participation through tokenism to citizen power. In doing so, they address some of the ambiguity of empowerment by enabling practitioners and researchers to evaluate the participatory mechanisms in place in the settings in which they work.

Figure 1: Ladder of citizen participation   **Figure 2: Ladder of Children's participation**
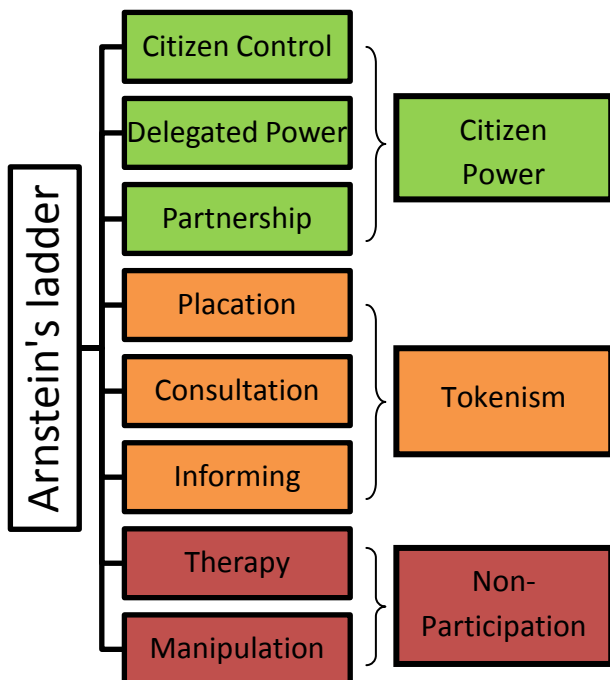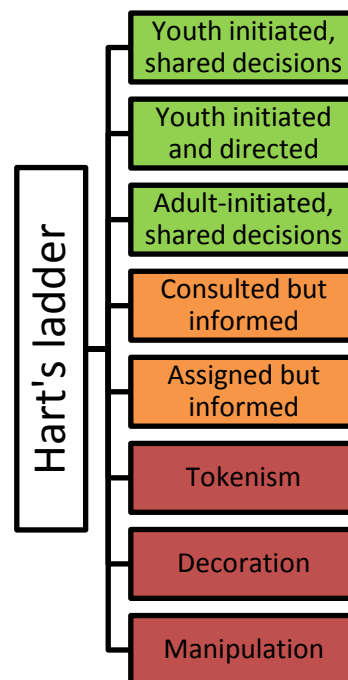
Although these models have contributed considerably to the disambiguation of empowerment, they are more focussed on *what* than *how*. They say little of how NGOs might help young people to exercise citizen power and challenge non-participatory practices. A core aim of this research project is to better understand the role of NGOs in making space for and supporting youth citizenship; to complement existing research by applying a similar analytical approach to the question of *how*.

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6.2 Amplifying

The first of the core empowerment activities that this chapter considers is the NGOs' focus on young people's voices. This included several coexisting strands of activity beginning with advocacy work on young people's behalf as a minimum. Alongside this, GYA and YIC also made concerted efforts to raise young people's voices by: providing a forum where they could practice speaking from solidarity; building confidence to support young people speaking for themselves; and raising the reputation of youth NGOs through the visibility of their young members.

The use of the term amplifying to describe this work is influenced by two GYA participants: Holly, who said that the NGO 'acts like a loudspeaker for us to get our views heard' (interview); and Dave, who said that an interim project report complemented GYA's approach because it 'amplifies voices wonderfully' (email). I interviewed Holly not long after we had participated in an Occupy-affiliated protest with GYA, in which the human microphone technique was used outside of UN negotiating halls to literally amplify a multitude of civil society speakers through 'unison repetition' of their speech. This has been highlighted by Occupy researchers as an exemplary technique of participatory democracy (Costanza-Chock, 2012, Kreiss and Tufekci, 2012, Radovac, 2013). Its metaphor of crowd-sourced amplification is a helpful one for describing a civic intermediary role for NGOs in bring young voices together and offering their members a peer support, confidence and impact boost writ large.

6.2.1 Advocacy +

GYA and YIC engaged in advocacy activities for young people that included speaking *for* and *with*, and their preferred language was 'giving young people a voice' (YIC field notes, conversation with Monique; GYA interview, Faiza). Examples of their approach to advocacy include:

- Both NGOs contributing to Government consultations to offer advice and expert views based on their engagement with young people. These contributions typically included coaching some of their young members to speak on behalf of their peers.
- In staff media training, YIC's Communications manager saying '…it's about [young people's] message too, not just what we have to say' (field notes, Emily).

- Both NGOs letting their young members lead on public communications such as blog entries, press releases, campaign actions and external workshops.

- GYA getting rid of the language of representation in public communications, to make clear that the views of its members were not the same as 'the voice of young people' as an undifferentiated category.

- A variety of opinions and priorities being expressed by young people through the projects that GYA and YIC supported; rather than adhering to a single NGO-defined goal or vision.

NGOs are often in a position to act as advocates for their members (Clarke, 2005). This can be construed somewhat patronisingly, if they are cast as champions of the underdog that provide:

> '…a public voice for their clientele, many of whom lack access to political institutions or do not have the requisite knowledge or skills to participate in politics on their own.' (LeRoux, 2007 p. 411).

NGOs that claim to represent marginalised voices can come under criticism for being 'filled with gatekeepers, who speak for but not with those whom they represent' (McEwan, 2005 p.976). Advocacy has connotations with a professional representative-and-client relationship, which is not the same as empowering people. Evaluating advocacy with Arnstein and Hart's citizen participation models would suggest it is suitably characterised as consultation or at best, power delegated to a select few. This is not exactly nonparticipation, but nor can it be considered fully participatory.

Other researchers and practitioners have also used the term amplifying to talk about citizen participation initiatives. Some use it to emphasise 'indigenous expression' and others use it interchangeably with advocacy (Advocates for Youth, 2013, McEwan, 2005, Orleans Public Education Network, 2011). It is therefore important to clarify the distinction drawn here. In both GYA and YIC, advocacy was attached to broader associational activities that support young people speaking for themselves. By using the term amplifying as the overarching context for any advocacy that these NGOs engaged in, my analysis insists on a connection between representative and deliberative voice work with young people. It envisages a civic intermediary role for NGOs as facilitators of multiple and diverse young voices, modelling deliberative democratic debate within

their projects as the basis from which public voice emerges (Dewey, 1996 [1916], Harber, 1998).

6.2.2 Speaking from Solidarity

GYA and YIC provided supportive meeting structures for young people to express ideas and listen to different points of view, yet also come to some common agreement about how they could work together towards shared goals. An example from one of YIC's members illustrates a shift from self-interest to camaraderie through this process.

When Jake joined YIC, he was angry about being a target of homophobic bullying in school and wanted to do a project to confront this. Over several weeks of discussion, he and his peers identified that many fellow pupils experienced discrimination – especially racism – and they expressed shared frustration that it was not better dealt with. In response, they successfully lobbied their school to establish an 'Equality and Diversity panel' comprised of students and staff, through which they hoped to hold teachers and management accountable. They ran workshops for their peers on how to recognise and challenge discrimination. Jake started acting as a mentor to younger pupils, particularly befriending those whom he perceived to be bullied. At the end of the programme, he described a recent example of this activity (focus group, Elm Comprehensive):

> 'When you look on the system for behaviour comments, it's always the year 9s that get it... But then I got to work with more of the year 9s, like working with someone called Neil, and even in lessons they discriminate against a lot of things. And I went into Neil's class; he's in a wheelchair, now they're actually starting to communicate with Neil. Instead of just ignoring him, they're actually having a discussion with him... But what I think needs to happen is for the kids to be taught how they communicate, because they're really impatient sometimes because it takes him a while to speak. So I'm going to speak to them to see what we can do about it.'

With a forum in which to speak about a personal experience of discrimination and relate this to the experiences of others, Jake was empowered to identify and resist shared and structural problems that allowed bullying to happen. This depended on the

expressed support of his peers and he in turn became supportive of others. His interest in pupils' rights may have stemmed from a self-help impetus, but it became a collective endeavour to assert respect for others. Such a synopsis sounds simple, but Jake's transition from bulling victim to rights advocate in this setting was supported by weeks of coaching and project planning with his YIC team and their mentor.

Another example of speaking from solidarity is GYA members' pledges following an anti-oppression training session, which they wrote down on post-it notes and later shared with their team in a group document as a record of their commitment to particular ways of collaborative working. The training that these pledges came out of had focussed on 'stepping back' and trying to support others (field notes):

Mark: I will not let oppressive comments go unchecked. I will speak up when I hear them even if I am the only one. (Maybe I will find I am not the only one thinking it).

Holly: I will work to ensure all voices are raised.

Tim: I recognise that sometimes the best thing to do is step back. I will act on this by sometimes being quiet and leaving space in meetings.

Ellen: I will recognise and work on ensuring I respect the fine line between speaking on behalf of someone and working to help them raise their own voice.

Ben: I will take time to listen and absorb more of what others are saying.

Nina: I will ensure I am working to create a space in my team in which everyone can participate, share their views and have their voices heard equally.

In subsequent training throughout the year, GYA members were reminded to apply these principles in physical meeting spaces and online discussions. What might they ask to spark debate? How could they find out more about the experiences, values and goals of others? If there were problems agreeing a shared course of action, could they explore, rather than ignore, underlying differences? At the end of the project,

coordinator Nina reflected on her team's capacity for cross cultural dialogue as a source of pride (interview):

> '…seeing the team be able to… build bridges with other people, or find ways of opening up the discussion so that it wasn't just one white male talking, so other people's voices were heard, trying to redistribute power when there'd be somebody who'd just be completely dominating… being so proud of the team for being able to do those kinds of things… for me it's not really about the big actions, it's about having young people who are able and unafraid to put their voice across in a positive way.'

Making space for multiple voices in meetings was also a significant aspect of YIC's work, modelling the expectation that the experience and views of everyone present would be valued. YIC member Bea noted (focus group, Cedar Comprehensive):

> 'It's so open to what anybody wants to do; it's not like… let's do this, or let's do that. Everyone decides what they want to do and what's important to them..'

YIC mentors described consistent use of facilitation strategies to 'bring everyone on the same page' and to ensure that all young people who attended meetings were involved in discussions and decisions.

It is essential that the conversational space established and maintained in citizenship projects provides 'safe opportunities for reflection' (Gervais, 2010 p.9). In both NGOs, trained facilitators suggested ground rules, connected interests and helped groups to integrate dominant and quieter members. Through such a process, Gervais (p.14) suggests that citizenship can be 'considered as a social position from which [people] build solidarities that promote civic participation'. Similarly emphasising group communication skills in citizenship education in Northern Ireland, McMurray and Niens (2012 p.215) suggest that it involves:

> '…an appreciation that group participation, where it is characterized by cooperation and shared goals, creates interdependence and, in turn, may promote a sense of respect and trust between members.'

Amplifying can be conceptualised as a reworking of citizenship through communication, coaching and 'retooling' young people as 'political subjects and social actors' (Katz,

2004 p.247) to feel able to communicate more confidently and carefully with peers. Speaking from solidarity illustrates how everyday acts of reworking – in this case simple communication acts – can evoke consciousness raising, by provoking awareness of unevenly distributed power and of alternative kinds of social relations. GYA and YIC practiced relatively small scale disruptions of the status quo, but they were disruptions nonetheless. This aspect of their work was closely related to creating space for 'durable dialogue' through their projects, and this is further discussed in section 6.4.2.

6.2.3 Coaching for Confidence

NGO participation in some cases had considerable impact on young people's confidence in expressing their views. When I asked mentors what they felt to be 'the most important value' within YIC's work, most said building the confidence of young people that they worked with. Sean said his main goal as a mentor was:

> 'Giving them the confidence to do things, just thinking, fuck it, yeah, let's do it! [laughs] ...I'm obviously not saying that to them, but I wish that they would think it sometimes.'

Diane described specific coaching strategies that she used to build her team's confidence, in particular the use of strategic questioning to highlight group achievements:

> '…last week it was talking about the project and really shifting them forwards, but in a way that I'm not taking control... I'm there to help them see what they've done so far, trying to make them see their own qualities... It's the questioning that I do really, saying things like "How far have you come in the project?", "What have you actually done so far?" and they can realise that they have done this, this and that.'

Mentors interviewed later in the school year said they had observed several of the young people they worked with grow in confidence in the course of their projects. For instance, Danni said of two of her team members:

> 'I'm seeing them becoming leaders. When they first arrived they were so quiet, and it was at least three or four sessions before we got even one sentence out of them, and now they're both so confident, and when we divide into teams they quite naturally take on the role of team leader or

team advisor. Their confidence has grown more than I could have imagined, it's really incredible.'

When I met Danni's team towards the end of their project, these same students said that their team's biggest achievement was doing a survey on bullying in the city centre and asking members of the public for responses. They had felt awkward approaching people but were proud to have started conversations. This was a significant milestone for two young men who took nearly a month to speak in meetings. Arijit similarly observed of his team's workshop leadership:

> 'I always believed that they had something to contribute, that all of them are very intelligent and were able to produce the goods, but it was the day when their [teen pregnancy] seminar happened and they were divided into different groups, and each of them had to talk to the other young girls. I think seeing the first round of each of them doing that – that really was the moment for me.' (Arijit)

From a mentors' perspective, there was little doubt that YIC was having a positive impact on young people's confidence, albeit incrementally.

YIC members gave a similar account of mentors' coaching work, recognising and appreciating their encouragement. For example, students at Beech Academy (focus group) said:

James: Daphne was right good; she was really energetic and put everyone in a good mood. I thought she was great at what she did. She was really good…

Esther: 'Cause she, there were people who didn't come out and speak and stuff like that, and she made them speak, just for people to get confidence and do something that they want to do and have their own say.

James: She was bubbly.

Dan: She got everyone to talk…

Laura: Yeah and she made people who were shy come out of their shells a bit.

At an end of year evaluation led by YIC graduate Karin, young people described their mentors as 'enthusiastic, persistent and supportive' (Karin's focus group notes).

Young people's increasing confidence improved communication with peers and potential audiences for their projects. Over the course of YIC's programme, many young people delivered presentations, led workshops or pitched an idea to a decision-maker for the first time:

> 'We learned about negotiating as well, between not only team members, but... negotiating with others out of the school.' (Emma, Larch Comprehensive)

> 'I've got a lot more confidence with approaching teachers... [B]efore I didn't want to like go to the teachers, but now I've got [a teacher] to go and try and fundraise. So I feel a lot more comfortable in talking to teachers.' (Jake, Elm Comprehensive)

YIC's internal evaluation reported on its members' perceptions of skills gained through participation from 171 exit surveys. Almost all young people agreed that YIC had helped them to develop confidence (99%), communication (98%), public speaking (97%) and presentation (93%) skills (field notes, from YIC database). This data should be cautiously interpreted as it was generated to showcase project outcomes to funders, but it does broadly correspond with young people's qualitative feedback.

GYA volunteers likewise talked about gaining confidence through group work and training (interviews):

> 'Getting up and doing things like public speaking and presentations and all that stuff is something I've only really become comfortable with in the last year and that's probably a lot to do with GYA... If a year ago you'd told me I was going to do a television interview I'd have been like, don't be so ridiculous! So to me that's a really big thing.' (Carol)

> 'Since I've come back I feel quite confident to speak to groups of people and I feel quite comfortable putting my viewpoint over to people now, which is definitely a skill I've gained from the UN stuff.' (Jack)

'I'm an incredibly different person than I was in 2010. Before, the idea of getting up and running a training session or speaking in front of people would have terrified me.' (Nina)

These young people claimed they were not natural leaders of the 'quite loud, sort of shouty' variety, as Jack described it. Yet they gradually came to assume more prominent communication roles such as workshop facilitator or media spokesperson.

Hackett (1997 p.85) describes confidence-building as the 'cornerstone' of voluntary sector action to support political participation by young people. She argues that, where young people are working together on political projects, 'the group must have confidence not just in *themselves* but also *the process they are engaged in*' [emphasis added]. This is why it was important that speaking from solidarity underpinned the communications coaching and training offered to young people in GYA and YIC. Feeling like they were part of a group where their contribution was valued and respected, as well as counting on the support of peers, enabled GYA and YIC's members to become more comfortable with putting their point of view across through a range of communication approaches.

6.2.4 Raising Reputation

Both NGOs engaged in some activities as representatives and advocates. This section considers the strategic importance of the relationship between their participatory and representative voice work. It suggests that foregrounding young voices in both cases enhanced organisational reputation, creating demand for GYA and YIC's advocacy work and attracting new members.

GYA and YIC sometimes assumed typical advocacy roles when offered limited participation in other organisational spaces. This included, for example, Cabinet Office consultations on youth service development, Ministerial meetings and roundtable discussions with UN negotiators. Both NGOs additionally sought to raise the media profile of their priority issues: climate change for GYA, challenging negative youth stereotypes for YIC. Those responsible for public communications – senior management at YIC and volunteer coordinators at GYA – felt that their platform in these spaces depended on their organisations' reputation as youth engagement

experts. In other words, they believed that amplifying young people's voices leant legitimacy to their advocacy efforts and helped them to reach a wider audience.

At a staff training session, YIC's communications manager Emily said it was YIC policy for its staff to extend consultation invitations to young people wherever possible and to always request additional places for them, making use of YIC's profile to invite those represented to speak for themselves. She also said that young people should be encouraged to write their own press releases because 'The best type of media activity is students themselves doing stuff in their city, their neighbourhoods.' She explained that press releases written by young people would be more likely to attract attention and local readership, whilst also reinforcing YIC's reputation as an NGO that enables young people to take the lead (field notes).

When asked what first attracted them to the organisation, most GYA volunteers cited previous members' blogs, YouTube videos, social media updates and word of mouth recommendations. They explained how GYA's youth-led communications caught their attention (interviews):

> 'They put up videos from Copenhagen and I remember comparing the videos, which were incredibly inspiring, versus the outcome of Copenhagen. I said to myself afterwards, next opportunity they have, I'm going to go for it.' (Dave)

> 'When I heard about GYA I thought it sounded really cool, a good way of getting more young people involved... I read quite a lot on the GYA website on what they did in Mexico and saw some Youtube videos... It seemed like a totally different world to me that young people were actually engaged in the UN process. I thought it was really exciting.' (Jack)

Both NGOs involved young people prominently in recruitment. YIC's recruitment assemblies ended on a recruitment video made by a graduate of the programme, and also featured a short presentation and Q&A with students who had taken part the year before. YIC included panels of young people in all staff recruitment decisions and in training for new volunteers. GYA's recruitment and training days were run entirely by its young members. The visibility of young people from the outset gave would-be volunteers a particular impression of a young, informal organisational space, according to GYA members' recollections of their first meeting at a recruitment day (interviews):

'I remember cycling past the entrance and there was this group of fun looking people outside who looked like the people I'd want to hang out with. They didn't look like the kind of people who were going for an interview... Generally the atmosphere was really nice and I thought these are the kind of people I want to get involved with. I had a really good day… I was just so happy that I'd met them all, and I thought these are like-minded people and I think they're a really good group of friends to have.' (Holly)

'I remember arriving on the day and everyone was informal. I liked the way young people were dressed as young people. There was no forty year old there or whatever, dictating in a suit. It wasn't like interviewing style, it was obvious that everyone was equal and there was that kind of sense there…. There was no competitiveness, which I really liked... I got to know people; it was just good fun; it was very relaxed, it wasn't formal; everyone ate lunch together... It was in a way which suited you, which made young people feel at ease and feel accepted.' (Claire)

By contrast Sue, a YIC volunteer mentor with extensive professional experience as a charity manager, recalled her initial discomfort in adapting to YIC's approach (interview):

'I think they're a very young dynamic organisation, and as a bit of a long in the tooth older person, I initially was quite intimidated by that young dynamic and the vibrancy that came with it.... but I definitely think that the engagement with the young people is more effective from an organisation that is young and vibrant than an organisation perhaps like I worked for previously, which is a bit run by middle-aged people.'

YIC's frontline staff (those who worked most often in schools alongside volunteers) were all in their early twenties for the two programme years that my fieldwork spanned, employed on a ten month graduate internship programme. This staffing structure was in part responsible for Sue's impression of a 'young' workplace. For GYA and YIC, being perceived as youth-led was strategically important for carving out a specialist niche and attracting resources such as funding and volunteers; and ensuring young people's visibility in public communications and recruitment was instrumentally

worthwhile for maintaining their reputation as youth engagement experts. Senior staff and volunteers believed that this reputation helped their NGO to secure space for young voices in high-level decisions that affect young people, granting them intermediary status as specialists and chaperones.

6.2.5 Whose voice?

This section has claimed that NGOs perform an *amplifying* civic intermediary function that is positive for young people, but previous studies have found considerable fault with the idea of 'giving voice'. Arnot and Reay's (2007) study of pupil consultation found that voices of confident academic students are often privileged; yet as long as these young people participated, schools appeared satisfied that pupil involvement was effective. Matthews and Limb's (2003) research on school councils similarly questioned whether such systems provide democratic opportunities for young people, again noting overrepresentation of academic achievers. Brooks (2009) found female pupils to be underrepresented in school decision-making. Institutionalised inequality, inflexible cultures of participation and over-generalisation are endemic problems that thwart efforts to empower young people by amplifying voice, making 'Whose voice?' a key question for critical reflection (James, 2007). Researchers and practitioners have frequently made the mistake of 'presuming that youth members were representative of their communities' (Skelton, 2013 p.125), disregarding the diversity of young people's experiences and views.

Feedback from YIC's young members and mentors revealed that facilitation did not always achieve a level playing field for discussion, particularly in the schools where large numbers of students participated. There were certainly occasions when 'only the voices of the vocal few' (McEwan, 2005 p.973) were heard. Sue, a YIC mentor with me at Oak Grammar where over 60 students attended in the first term and between 30 and 40 in the second term, said:

> 'When I've spoken to the young people on an individual basis, like the
> week where we only had a couple turn up, I spoke to one girl and she was
> really animated about things, but as soon as she gets put into the big group,
> she virtually says nothing, so it's quite, the dynamics of, they're not even
> massive groups now but I still think there's room for intimidation… It's
> hard because in an hour there's not much room to give people the

platform they need to get across their own point of view. So I think sometimes they get lost a little bit.'

The transition to the project planning stage in particular seemed to be when some voices started to 'get lost', once directed discussion and debate activities gave way to a less structured format. Ironically, it was as young people were encouraged to take the lead that many withdrew. Bea, a YIC dropout who said she really enjoyed taking part at first, explained that meetings became 'boring' because:

> 'They'd just tell us, oh go and do that in your own groups... Within the group, we just sat there listening to a person talking talking, while another person's just writing something down, and you're sitting just looking at the time. You're just waiting for 4 o'clock to hit then you can go home. It wasn't anything that was like, OK, you do this, you do that, it wasn't as like interactive as I would say it was at the beginning.' (Cedar Comprehensive focus group)

YIC struggled to recruit sufficient volunteer mentors, especially ones who could commit for the entire programme, for two consecutive years in the case study region. This meant that mentors' attention was sometimes divided and less proactive in developing positive group dynamics as prescribed in idealised mentor-student ratios and YIC's facilitation framework. The evidence from YIC suggests that amplifying may carry staffing implications for NGOs, as persistent effort is required to promote and reinforce collaborative and inclusive group communication.

Communication issues sometimes meant that young people felt their voices were not heard as equal partners. This could cause a loss of confidence in projects, resulting in temporary or permanent withdrawal. For example, Claire was angry that she was not consulted by her GYA coordinator about appropriate follow-up action after an incident that occurred when she was travelling alone to a project meeting:

> 'I had that really rubbish experience on the train and it really knocked my confidence. I can remember going home and Nina had called my parents without asking me, and asked my parents "Is it ok if she goes to training events on her own again?" I was like wait a minute. One, I am over the age of eighteen, do you know what I mean? ... And second, to ask them is it ok if I travel by train on my own again, I found that really belittling, which I still

haven't really got over… I asked her about it and she was like "It's just GYA policy." I was like so you're telling me, honestly, that if it had happened to any older member… that their parents would have had a call… that kind of was a really bad time for me, 'cause it almost knocked my trust in the coordinator, in the whole thing, like we were one, but when she was – I don't know, I just didn't like it.'

Claire was one of GYA's youngest members – still at school when this happened – yet up to this point she had felt among equals. The abrupt discounting of her wishes, particularly the inconsistency of a decision being made *for* instead of *with* her, led her to question her involvement in the project. Her trust that her views carried the same weight as older peers was undermined. Nina's decision to override GYA's usual consensus-based approach to decision-making may be attributed to the liability she felt as both the group coordinator and oldest member of the group, demonstrating disparity between members' idealised accounts of non-hierarchical organising and the greater responsibility shouldered by some in practice.

Though GYA and YIC made concerted efforts to promote inclusive modes of group communication, there were instances such as this when inequalities came to the fore. The issue of who speaks and who is spoken for is especially pertinent when considered alongside the demographics of each group, as discussed in the previous chapter. For example: the underrepresentation of young men in YIC and the encouragement teachers offered to 'star' pupil to put themselves forward; and GYA's core middle class and highly educated membership. GYA's mission statement claim to 'represent UK youth' was rephrased because of members' concerns about what this language implied, recognising their limitations as an inherently unrepresentative special interest group (Clarke, 2005).

In their role as advocates, these NGOs might have been more cautious about making representational claims of which they would otherwise be critical. Despite GYA's acknowledgement of its un-representativeness, its members frequently used phrases like 'the voice of young people' in media, lobbying and promotional work. This, albeit unintentionally, could reinforce the view that the NGO's voice alone is a sufficient concession to youth participation. Representative work is not a substitute for citizen empowerment. However, such an approach can be useful towards raising the profile of young people and their concerns in public life, if underpinned by dialogue with those

represented and combined with activities to amplify a multitude of voices. For GYA, YIC and other NGOs working to empower their members, there is a careful balance to be struck between *speaking for* and *speaking with*.

While it is pragmatic to expect some limits to organisational effectiveness, the research evidence raises some important checks and balances for projects premised on empowerment through voice work. Firstly, that every effort should be made to support inclusive, interactive and participatory group communication, to mitigate dominant voices emerging. Secondly, that NGO practice can benefit from reflection on *who's not speaking* as well as who is, considering young people who are and are not present, why that might be, and how additional voices could be better incorporated into discussions and decisions. Thirdly, given the inevitable limitations of NGO constituencies, organisations like GYA are right to apply to caution so as not to overstate their 'representativeness'. What particular young people have to say can be insightful, valid and worthy of attention without this being lauded as the voice of a category. These are all practical means by which NGOs can 'engage with the power relations that create voices' (Arnot and Reay, 2007 p.312).

The greatest challenge for empowerment through voice work is what is done with young people's voices once they are amplified, and whether the opportunity to speak is sufficient (James, 2007). If efforts to empower young people are focussed on voice alone, this could promote shallow citizen participation most clearly aligned with tokenism or consultation. Arnot and Reay (2007 p.313) are particularly cynical about youth consultation trends, warning that:

> '...the egalitarian mythology of voice as a concept provides a valuable legitimating tool for any government keen to shift attention away from increasingly aggravated social inequalities.'

This is why, in GYA and YIC's practice, amplifying was complemented by additional activities that made a material difference to the citizenship spaces that young people inhabited and their opportunities for exercising power.

6.3 Bridging

This section considers GYA and YIC's efforts to bring about substantive citizenship opportunities for young people by offering them a choice of platforms and pathways

for participation. This work encompassed: sharing information about how and where decisions are made and actions taken; signposting opportunities; arranging access to consultations and lobbying activities; raising awareness of diverse approaches and sites of engagement; and helping young people to resist tokenistic practices by others. These themes are explored in three sections: 6.3.1 on platforms and pathways for participation, 6.3.2 on manoeuvring room for youth participation where it is not necessarily well established or embedded, and 6.3.3 on tackling tokenism.

This intermediary role is referred to as *bridging* to capture the feedback that young people gave about being supported to access various spaces of citizenship. I am aware of Putnam's (2001) alternative use of the term, where 'bridging capital' refers to relationships that promote cohesion between groups of people that might otherwise have divergent interests. Voluntary sector action of course plays an important role in this process too (McMurray and Niens, 2012) but within the current analysis, *bridging* is not necessarily limited to Putnam's definition of social networking. I am more specifically interested in the NGOs' role as facilitators that enable 'moving out of constrained places and isolated spaces, widening the scope for action and multiplying potential sites for engagement' (Cornwall, 2002 p.2). GYA and YIC worked across 'official' and 'alternative' spaces of citizenship (McEwan, 2005), including support for effective formalised participation by young people in politics and governance, as well as connecting them with other non-state actors and social movements. This approach recognises that citizenship 'draws in a range of sites, from the spaces of formal power, to spaces of interaction and public address, to the sites of ordinary lives' (Staeheli, 2010 p.395). My research evidence suggests that young people benefited from support to promote their participation within multiple sites, buoying efforts to rework and resist social problems and claim citizen power.

6.3.1 Platforms and pathways

Like the previous section's metaphor of *amplifying*, the term *bridging* has been adopted to reflect participants' language and perceptions of the support given by NGOs. GYA members said (interviews):

> 'The whole point of [GYA] for me is about trying to give young people the ways to engage with structures that they would otherwise be excluded from, so whether that's UK Government and getting them a seat at the

table there, or being able to input into the UN and giving them a feeling of power through that.' (Nina)

'[GYA] is like a platform or a springboard that brings young people together and connects them with decision-makers.' (Holly)

These quotes refer specifically to GYAs' role in facilitating effective participation by young people in 'spaces of invitation' (Lefebvre, 1991) within formal institutional politics. A broader remit for *bridging* should be emphasised, as neither NGO portrayed civic action as limited to such spaces, nor were young people bound to these alone in their activities.

Acting as intermediaries between members and various spaces of political, social and economic citizenship is a mainstay of voluntary sector action (Clarke, 2005, LeRoux, 2007) and so perhaps an obvious role for two NGOs premised on youth empowerment to assume. It is nonetheless useful to consider what such a role might entail when supporting young people's participation, especially for those who are moving into new citizenship spaces for the first time. Formal modes of engagement can be long established and hard to disrupt, part of a 'tangled' political economy made by adults (Philo and Smith, 2003). Within this terrain, GYA and YIC acted as guides for young people, explaining what, where and how and providing nonthreatening opportunities to take part with peers and organisational support.

Providing information was a starting point for GYA and YIC projects. This helped young people to make connections between their experiences and viewpoints, the wider political economy, and sites where they might hope to exercise power. A 'power mapping' activity used within both NGOs prompted young people to identify and reflect on the people and organisations with influence over issues that interested them, and to plan how they might work with allies and challenge opponents (350.org, 2013). Between meetings, young people were encouraged to do online research to address their knowledge gaps, with suggested starting sources such as campaigning and citizen media websites. Providing information about how and where to take part and explicating decision-making may as well be applied to social movements as private enterprise and government. Political institutions and alternative spaces of resistance alike are rarely inclusive, as they are bound up in complex processes of power and identity consolidation (McEwan, 2005). People's practices in these spaces include the

use of specialist or codified language and conduct, revealing something of the exclusionary paradox of citizenship (Painter and Philo, 1995). Part of the NGOs' bridging role was simply to explain for young people, as best they could, what is happening in these spaces.

A clear example of the importance of information is how GYA's more experienced members helped new volunteers to understand its lobbying activities in a niche policy field, in a relatively short space of time. GYA's policy officer Dave developed a training Prezi that mapped relevant international policy and its impact, explained policy jargon, the relative power of different states and negotiating blocks at the UN, the key lobby groups that influence decision-making, and the history of young people's involvement. This incorporated youth-made media such as YouTube videos, photographs and links to past members' blogs. The Prezi was developed with young people and divided into online modules that they could explore at their own pace. The first month of the international team's training focussed on this resource, using weekly team meetings to discuss it. New recruits said they found this helpful for demystifying what at first seemed like a remote institution, making visible the ways in which UN negotiations were constructed and might be contested. They elected to adopt this format to offer training to international peers, delivering 'expert' workshops within months. The Prezi was modified several times to incorporate policy developments and feedback from young people about how to improve user-friendliness. This is a good example of an informal educational resource that became owned and adapted by its users, in this instance as a means of supporting each other's understanding of and access to an elite political space.

A common public perception of NGOs is that they raise awareness, for example acting as public faces of particular social problems, sectors or marginalised groups (Smith, 2004b). Raising awareness might alternatively be thought of as making visible *roots* and *routes*; in other words providing information to provoke a public response, but also illuminating courses that such a response might take. GYA and YIC's members tended to already have some awareness of the issues their citizenship projects focussed on, such as climate change, human rights violations, violence and bullying. With NGO support they developed their understanding of root causes, but crucially were also provided with information about how they might try to effect change. This aspect of

the NGOs' intermediary role was vital because, as I have outlined, few citizenship spaces are straightforwardly and visibly 'public' (Staeheli, 2010).

Sometimes bridging meant highlighting pre-existing spaces where young people might find an outlet, such as GYA's work to publicise and support young people's participation in a UN youth constituency. YIC mentors helped young people to build networks relevant to their interests. For example, a team at Oak Grammar chose to do a project on civilians' rights in Afghanistan, as a counter-narrative to their school backing Help for Heroes as its official charity for the academic year. They were signposted to existing campaigns by Amnesty International and to local asylum-seeker support networks, and a professional campaigner from one of these networks was invited to run a workshop with them. Through these activities they came to possess more information about their chosen topic, but also knowledge of existing courses of action and potential project partners that they could choose to work with.

Sometimes bridging involved the NGOs making space for youth participation. GYA and YIC's projects were new platforms in themselves, providing means of self-expression and collective action. GYA was instrumental in establishing a youth advisory panel in a UK Government department where no such mechanism had existed before. Both NGOs lobbied for space for their young members at central Government consultations; meetings with Ministers, MPs and high level civil servants; broadcasted debates in traditional media; and at civil society press conferences. YIC regularly invited local councillors, businesses and voluntary sector organisations to meet its members and to learn about their projects at regional events. GYA established new partnerships with emerging European youth groups, effectively acting as a go-between and network developer for young people at each site.

As well as extending opportunities to young people, both NGOs offered training to support effective participation (section 6.4.1). GYA's organisers said they had modified their approach to training, as they had in previous years recruited people to their UN project at fairly short notice who subsequently felt overwhelmed and frustrated. Teams were now recruited months in advance, to offer tailored training and establish support networks. I twice attended UN conferences with GYA and certainly by the second one, its members appeared confident, often taking an advisory role in working groups. Afterwards they gave positive feedback about the specialist training provided. Faiza recalled that at the first training weekend 'we did a mock putting together an

intervention and actions, and that was amazing because it opened a window to what it could be like at the UN', and Jack remarked (interview):

> 'I definitely felt really prepared. I found a lot of situations where I was answering quite a lot of questions for people or people were asking me certain things, so in comparison to other people I felt more than average in terms of how equipped I was.'

GYA's training helped young people to better navigate the negotiating halls, but also previously unfamiliar civil society practices such as consensus decision-making, used by a range of NGOs and grassroots groups within and outside of the conferences they attended. Sally (interview) said that the most valuable training that GYA had offered her was

> '…seeing facilitation in action, I've never seen anything like that... just being with a group of people who disagreed on some stuff, but managed to get on really well and come up with solutions, I was really impressed by that.'

When her role with GYA came to an end, Sally chose to join her neighbourhood Transition Towns group as a result of this experience, a shift in focus from a career-orientated concern with international voluntarism to participation in local spaces of citizen engagement. This illustrates how *bridging* can work across various sites of citizenship.

GYA and YIC were able to effectively support youth participation by finding and creating opportunities for young people to take part, helping them to understand and navigate the systems they were engaging with, and offering a collective means of doing so. These findings support evidence from other research projects that suggest a link between youth activism and 'bridges to academic and civic institutions' (Kirshner, 2007 p.367). They also highlight NGOs' role in 'facilitating skills and attitudes required for collaborations' (McMurray and Niens, 2012 p.214), with GYA members suggesting that NGO guidance increased their 'credibility'. A secondary school citizenship teacher in McMurray and Niens' study (p.211) summarised the added value of involving NGOs in such work as:

> 'One of the main advantages of working with NGOs is that they have a range of experience of working with different groups of people and dealing

with a variety of social issues. They can share their experience with young people and help them to connect this to the community.'

GYA and YIC provided significant guidance and opportunities to their young members. There were however some difficulties within this bridging aspect of their work. The next sections consider whether the spaces that young people were encouraged to engage with were receptive of their participation, and how the NGOs and their young members responded when this was not the case.

6.3.2 Manoeuvring room

GYA and YIC promoted youth participation across a variety of citizenship spaces. Arnstein's and Hart's participation models are a reminder that citizen empowerment can be practiced superficially in some spaces; and Shier (2001 p.110) observes that 'at each level of participation… individuals and organisations may have differing degrees of commitment to the process of empowerment.' A crucial factor in GYA and YIC's *bridging* activities was therefore how their members' participation was construed by other organisational actors. Staeheli (2010 p.397) contends that 'efforts at empowerment are not unchallenged, as state institutions may not share the same ethical, non-instrumental vision.' My research revealed mixed messages arising from this 'chaotic context' (ibid.) of overlapping citizenship practices. This included variation in what was permissible for young people in different spaces, 'what kind of agency is deemed acceptable' and 'the power relations linked to such notions of acceptability' (Skelton, 2013 p.131). This section and the next consider how the case study NGOs and young people were affected by and responded to constraints, with examples drawn from YIC's work through schools and GYA's work at the UN.

Spaces of international governance and local school management are very different institutional settings, but some parallels may be drawn that are relevant to this discussion. Both are hierarchically organised, their overarching terms are set by national governments and international agendas, and in policy terms young people are typically envisaged as beneficiaries and future citizens who may, at best, expect to be consulted. GYA and YIC consequently encountered comparable limitations in trying to work towards youth empowerment whilst operating within spaces that imposed limits on young people's participation. Deference to adult and professional leadership, 'intractable' decision making, safeguarding concerns and narrow institutional

parameters of participation combined to curb NGO workers' and young people's aspirations for the impact that their actions might have. Two key examples of this are the way that *some* schools vetoed or strictly limited YIC members' project proposals, and how GYA members' experience of influencing decisions at the UN compared with their expectations.

YIC volunteer Arijit mentored a team that wanted to do a project on teen pregnancy awareness. When these students presented their project plan to senior school staff, it was dismissed as inappropriate. His team had a two-month delay to the start of their project as they tried to come up with a version that their teachers would allow, while Arijit and a YIC staff member worked behind the scenes to address the school's concerns. Arijit was not clear as to why the school initially blocked the project; his impression was that senior staff were worried that the topic was 'embarrassing', especially for a faith school. YIC's efforts eventually persuaded the school to let the project go ahead. Arijit reflected afterwards (interview):

> 'The thing with the project in a school… it is also the school itself who allow things, or some things are not allowed, and you have to operate within their guidelines. So for instance we started out with Daphne and some of the project ideas they came up with were not very welcomed by the school teachers… there came the school's own rules and guidelines, that again, could be a challenge.'

This is an example of limited success in making manoeuvring room by YIC, as the pupils were supported and their school eventually allowed them to pursue a self-chosen topic. However, it is also an example of how young people's agency was restricted: the students relied on permission from adult authority figures and this was only partially conceded, after they presented a significantly revised project plan. In the end these young people *did* deliver a project on teen pregnancy awareness, but only workshops for peers in school. Plans for more public campaigning activities were discarded as a result of the delay and the group's desire to avoid further confrontation with teachers.

Another YIC mentor gave an example of how the school context could also restrict young people's project plans in more subtle ways. Sean felt that his coaching efforts were undermined by teacher intervention (interview):

'Our contact teacher comes in now and again just to kind of keep an eye on what we're doing, which is fair enough, but she does keep reiterating to the students you can use this for – is it PHSE? Some sort of coursework that they have to do… it's kind of keeping the young people's heads – the idea of YIC was to create a project they can do not only within their school but in the local community and even the wider population I guess, but because she keeps coming in and saying that, it's quite challenging for us to keep saying think bigger, 'cause they keep thinking about the small… So both issues at the moment, they're only looking at it in terms of what they can do within their school, so it's quite frustrating in that sense.'

Here, young people's understanding of citizenship was nudged towards to 'making a difference' in school and completing coursework, impeding Sean's efforts to connect their interests with wider issues in their local community. Barriers to supporting active youth citizenship in schools are well documented in others' research, for example noting institutional bureaucracy and authoritarian attitudes (Trafford, 1998), tokenistic participatory mechanisms for young people (Matthews and Limb, 2003) and – as the previous chapter discussed – too narrow a focus on outcomes that support academic achievement and CV enrichment. Having chosen to place its citizenship programme in the context of schools, YIC arguably sacrificed depth of engagement for breadth of reach: it worked with hundreds of young people from diverse walks of life, but had to accept a somewhat stifling *modus operandi*. Team mentor Sue reflected: 'I think you're always going to be up against the current with them aren't you, the expectations of the school in terms of the activities young people do.'

Other examples of how YIC's *bridging* work was restricted in schools include: some schools' insistence that activities off-site were not allowed; schools reneging on promises of a weekly lunch hour allocation for YIC, with sessions squeezed into as little as half an hour and conflicting engagements booked; and young people being disciplined for missing registration to attend YIC, despite being promised exemption. This disciplinary action may seem trifling, but was raised by several young people at a focus group who felt that YIC ought to do more to build awareness and support for social action in their schools. McMurray and Niens' (2012) research similarly found that citizenship education projects led by external providers encountered problems with school timetabling and teacher reluctance or nervousness about supporting

community action, and Brooks (2009) likewise found that young people felt that extracurricular citizenship activities were undervalued by their teachers. Although NGOs such as YIC are presumably invited into schools because of their capacity to connect pupils to wider community activities, my research evidence suggests that this capacity can be overstated. In practice, bridging depended on the support and permissiveness of schools, institutions which Wood (2012 p.337) describes as:

> '...spaces in which power is unevenly shared between adults and students and sites characterised by high levels of adult regulation and control.'

YIC's staff and volunteers acted as intermediaries between young people's aspirations and schools' expectations with some success, but young people were not engaged on terms of equality.

GYA's members suffered few restrictions of their participation as they self-organised online, made decisions by consensus and had no authority figures to defer to initially. As a result, GYA seemed more able to get practical youth-led projects up and running quickly. Its members were typically publicly active within a month of recruitment - writing blogs, running stalls, making speeches – whilst YIC's members tended to move from project planning to action after three to six months, after having their project plans approved by teachers. Yet over the course of my fieldwork, there was something of a role reversal. YIC mentors progressively encouraged young people to be more ambitious with their projects, leaving them feeling more confident by the end of the programme. By contrast, GYA members' high expectations of 'scaling up' their activism met with a stark reality check at the UN. In my UN field notes I observed:

> 'Lots of meetings are happening behind closed doors since the Ministers arrived. It's hard to know what's going on. From what little information we know, the talks don't seem to be making progress and this is having an impact on group morale.'

Almost all in attendance afterwards described this experience as an abrupt lesson in managing expectations that left them feeling 'disempowered' and confused about their politics by the end of the project (interviews):

> 'It's easy to get stuck into the policy and think oh I really know about this, I can go to a negotiator and tell them exactly what we should do and they'll listen to me. That isn't necessarily true at all because it's not about how

well you know the policy, it's still actually quite hard to engage with the process... I was slightly disappointed in that… I think I was naive about the extent to which we were actually going to be doing that… I became very quickly disillusioned with the idea of the having any policy successes… even having an action, I didn't feel was going to achieve much.' (Lee)

'The last hour of the conference when it was just rattling off decisions and we had no idea what was going on, the fact that I didn't have the text in my hand that was being debated and passed, really I couldn't cope with that, I didn't like that at all... Basically, they have this wonderful open process that's so nice and so helpful and they spend so much time helping everyone participate in it, and then they say "Right now we're going to close that and start the actual negotiations", and they do it all in a closed room for a couple of hours.... At 2 o'clock in the morning when they were in the huddle and they were trying to pass these papers and I didn't know what was going on, I was like "What can I do now? I have no clue what's going on. I can't let this stand, it's really awful!" and my only thought of what to do was to go and press the civil society button, and I was getting really angry and I was about to go and press the civil society button [laughs]. I didn't in the end. I definitely should have... Just that last section where we'd seen everybody's objections and they just seemed to vanish, that just broke me... In my real life I'm used to seeing things and understanding them straight away, and I found having that closed and not understanding what was going on was so frustrating.' (Trent)

The contrast of expectations versus reality caused considerable upset: disillusionment and feelings of powerless seemed as if they would overwhelm the group at times during the conference. GYA encouraged young people to feel confident in expressing their views, and then took them to a place where these carried negligible weight. The international institutional setting that GYA chose was a peculiarly daunting and difficult one to navigate, but its members' experiences of frustrated hopes speaks to a broader difficulty for NGOs that act as civic intermediaries to formal political institutions. This is a cautionary example of how *bridging* from participatory citizenship spaces to ones that invite only partial or tokenistic involvement can result in negative outcomes.

There is a danger that experience of 'poor participatory mechanisms' could discourage future participation (Matthews and Limb, 2003).

GYA's coordinators knew from past experience that such risks were inherent in its UN project. They took pre-emptive steps to alleviate this problem by emphasising a relationship between 'officialized' and 'alternative' spaces of citizenship (McEwan, 2005) and encouraging young people not to measure success by their influence on the UN alone. They emphasised that multiple pathways of participation were valid, presenting young people with a choice and range of citizenship spaces that they might inhabit through training and practical partnership opportunities. This message was repeated on the day that GYA members arrived at the UN (field notes):

> 'Dave says he's excited about what's going on at the Occupy camp outside too and hopes to find out more about it. Nina responds by saying to the team, you might find that this is where you want to engage, and that's fine, it's not wrong and not a problem if that's where your energy goes.'

Especially during the second week of the conference, many GYA members looked elsewhere to take action. Holly recalled (interview):

> 'I wanted to engage more with the movement and with the individuals in it, rather than what was going on in the policy rooms. I got the buzz off working with them and I stopped listening to what was being discussed, it seemed almost of no consequence to me… I found it much more productive to be amongst other young people or at the NGO meeting than sitting in the hall.'

In my field notes I recorded who team members spent their time with during the conference. These largely corroborate their recollections that more time was spent outside of the official negotiations. Over sixteen days at the UN, GYA members connected with international young environmentalists every day, with other NGOs almost as regularly and with youth groups in the UK on ten days out of sixteen. They met with journalists and UN negotiators on seven days, but with senior decision-makers such as EU and UK Ministers only twice each. They spent two days at local civil society demonstrations, and three at a youth conference that connected them with high school and university students in Durban as well as their international peers. It is

clear that facilitating relationships between young people and policy-makers was neither the sole nor even the chief purpose of GYA's *bridging* work.

Attending a UN conference was the 'draw' of GYA's international project, but in the months leading up to this event, its members participated in other local, national and international spaces of citizenship relevant to GYA's environmental politics, from permaculture networks and campus activism to Tar Sands solidarity lobbying. New affiliations established through GYA's outreach ahead of the conference were maintained after the international project ended, even by those who were no longer GYA volunteers. Within GYA, manoeuvring room meant helping young people to recognise that 'political opportunity structures are an amalgam of many different institutions, only some of which are part of state apparatus' (Staeheli, 2010 p.396). This might be interpreted as young people finding solace in citizen engagement elsewhere in the absence of satisfactory participatory mechanisms within the formal spaces of citizenship; or it might alternatively be conceptualised as a reworking of citizenship to create 'more viable terrain' (Katz, 2004 p.247) for participation when obvious channels are not fit for purpose.

The NGOs' capacity to help young people find manoeuvring room in which to craft citizenship projects offers another perspective on the idea of 'liminality' as a resource for action. Feminist scholars such as Wood (2012) and Skelton (2010) have argued that young people disrupt the binaries of formal/informal and P/political participation, with examples of their agency in everyday spaces that intersect private and public life. Wood contends that young people's 'legal-political in-betweenness' (p.344) can generate creative social and political action. The majority of my participants were of – or otherwise approaching – voting age, but as young adults they nonetheless occupied marginal positions within the macro-Politics of schooling, social policy and international governance. Even GYA's university graduates felt that they were perceived to possess 'enough credibility' (Tim and Carol, interviews) to be consulted perhaps, but not to be welcome in such spaces as equal partners. By encouraging young people to consider what could be achieved from positions of liminality and finding room for manoeuvre, *bridging* was disruptive of the separation of P/politics as spaces apart, especially the 'untouchable' illusion of formal political institutions (Faiza, interview). Liminality drove GYA's members in particular to critically reflect on and challenge the authority of Political spaces that disregarded theirs' and others' voices. The next section considers a

specific aspect of the NGOs' role in supporting this reflection: coaching young people to recognise and resist tokenistic invitations.

6.3.3 Tackling tokenism

Manoeuvring room often meant signposting young people to alternative citizenship spaces where 'lack of agency' (Trent, GYA member, interview) was less acute or more easily addressed. However, another key aspect of GYA and YIC's *bridging* role was to support attempts to challenge citizenship spaces that had poor participatory mechanisms and little regard for young people's contribution. Many development and social movement scholars are wary of the latter tactic, suggesting that NGOs are complicit in the institutionalisation of marginalised groups by instilling 'good governance' to tame and curb dissent. This is encompassed in debates about radicals versus reformists, outsiders and insiders, and alternative versus official citizenship spaces (Cornwall, 2004, Horton, 2003, McEwan, 2005). My research evidence does not weigh in on this debate; instead it demonstrates how young people's empowerment may be supported, and 'taming' resisted, wherever the focus of participation. The various platforms, pathways and approaches to citizen participation described in this *bridging* section illustrate how often polarised tactics were not presented as mutually exclusive within GYA and YIC's work.

Youth participation initiatives are often beset by tokenism (Hart, 1992, Matthews and Limb, 2003). GYA's coordinators and YIC's staff were keenly aware of this. They often talked somewhat sarcastically of the media's and politicians' enthusiasm for 'nice youth stories' and 'photo ops with young people'. They felt that some of the platforms offered to their members were done so on this shallow premise. They would openly discuss whether such opportunities were worthwhile, not just amongst themselves but with the young people who would participate. Shier (2001 p.110) argues that a critique of tokenism among voluntary sector youth workers is at least in part attributable to the impact of Hart's citizen participation model on practice: 'the greatest practical benefit of Hart's work may be his exposure of these false types of participation'.

When GYA and YIC's members chose to engage within 'spaces of invitation' (Lefebvre, 1991), they did so aware that they might face dismissive attitudes and with due consideration of the costs and benefits involved in terms of time and effort. Both NGOs placed a strong emphasis on preparatory discussions before meetings with

decision-makers such as school governors, councillors and MPs. Mentors and group coordinators would give previous examples of where such meetings had been 'steered' off-course, advising young people to be clear about what they wanted to gain from the meeting, to set an agenda in advance, to prepare questions that would be useful for their projects, and to request follow up actions. They employed tactics such as asking young people to write a blog before and/or afterwards, to publicise the issue discussed, new information learned and any commitments made.

GYA's UN team was invited for a meeting with a Minister whom the previous year's group had found patronising and with whom they felt that they had wasted their time – at least, that is how returning member Nina recalled events. She questioned whether GYA would want to accept another invitation and if so, how they could avoid a repeat 'disaster'. With this knowledge a small sub-group of the team decided that they would accept the invitation, but first researched the Minister's key policy positions and developed some critical questions. I attended this meeting and was surprised when, in an admittedly busy conference centre, the Minister pulled up a chair and suggested the group sit on the floor nearby. As we sat down someone from his team started taking photographs, but Nina immediately put a stop to this. I overheard her say 'We don't mind taking a picture afterwards, but I don't want you to use those.' As group members asked the prepared questions, the Minister was evasive and gave long answers that left little opportunity to enter into discussion. After about ten minutes Claire interrupted, saying that she felt like she was at a 'press conference' and 'you're being really disrespectful; that's my future you're talking about'. She was visibly upset. Trent seized on this disruption to refute some of the claims made by the Minister and the two of them ended up in a heated debate. Afterwards, though no one claimed the meeting had gone well, the group seemed strangely elated to have 'taken back control' of the conversation and resisted condescending treatment, not least because this resistance had come from the youngest members of the team (field notes).

Awareness of the risks of manipulation, co-option and tokenism also helped young people to strategize and reflect on where their efforts were best placed. Holly (interview) said that she decided to work more within civil society groups than official channels because:

> 'When we did our action… when I went there I saw we were behind the
> barrier, we had a guard, they were telling us no, you have to be here at

certain times, you can't have more people, and it just felt like very tokenistic… it made me realise how difficult it is to have a conversation with those people. Even if we go to where they are, and we start discussing it outside of the room in which they're in, they don't want to come and talk really to us, and we're much more successful at engaging with other people.'

When she and others said in interviews that they had felt excluded from decision-making at the UN, I asked how they had responded. They described both a preference for the manoeuvring room provided by alternative spaces of citizenship, and key instances where they and others had broken rules to disrupt negotiations once they realised they were closed to them. Lee and Jack recalled a 'mic check' in plenary that most of the group participated in, to enable their youth constituency to extend its allocated two minute contribution and signal their displeasure at being side-lined:

'...being in that hall and doing the mic check. I think that was a key point where I really did feel quite moved and privileged to be able to take part in that thing, and then seeing how it really got a lot of interest afterwards. I think it's had like 50,000 views on YouTube or something, which is pretty exciting.' (Lee)

'...afterwards she did the mic check, which had all the young people at the back of the hall taking part and shouting for stuff. I thought that was really cool and amazing. It put me in a good mood for two days, so that was definitely my highlight.' (Jack)

As with the example of meeting the Minister, the disruptions described are fairly minimal. I do not claim that they necessarily had a reformatory impact towards democratising institutions or changing individuals' attitudes towards youth participation. The research evidence does however support the claim that tackling tokenism with NGO advice was an empowering experience for young people, encouraging them to expect and even demand a certain level of engagement and respect as competent political actors. GYA's participants made decisions about modes of participation on this basis, suggesting that reflections on their experiences of (non)participatory mechanisms played a role in 'consciousness raising' (Katz, 2004 p.256), sometimes stimulating 'oppositional practice' and acts that might be termed

resistance. GYA and YIC's synthesis of action and critical reflection underpinned this, and this is the third and final aspect of their civic intermediary role considered in this chapter.

6.4 Capacity Building

GYA and YIC's *amplifying* and *bridging* work was underpinned by efforts to *build critical capacity* in young people. This included formal and informal training to support skills development, incorporating: critical thinking through dialogue with peers and mentors; opportunities for action and critical reflection, together with direct experiences of impact that instilled confidence in future actions; and establishing and strengthening support networks. The theory behind this aspect of the NGOs' civic intermediary role is drawn from critical pedagogy literature and has been linked to the voluntary sector's work, youth work and citizen empowerment in previous research (Diprose, 2012, Gervais, 2010, Hanson, 2010, McCormack, 2008). This section considers: in 6.4.1 the training offered by GYA and YIC; in 6.4.2 opportunities for learning through dialogue, and how long these were sustained; in 6.4.3 how NGO participation can be conceptualised as praxis; and in 6.4.4 how supportive networks strengthened and outlasted young people's formal participation in both case study projects.

6.4.1 Skills training

GYA and YIC's projects offered young people opportunities to develop skills through firsthand experiences of project planning and delivery, and they also provided formal training. For instance, as well as coaching for confidence through facilitation and group work, both NGOs organised training sessions on different aspects of communications. These covered topics such as public speaking, using social media for campaigning, lobbying skills and giving interviews to the press. Some of these more formal training sessions were planned by NGOs from the outset – such as at YIC's regional events – but others were provided as and when young people asked for them, if they identified skills development needs relevant to their projects. GYA and YIC invited voluntary sector and corporate partners to help deliver this training, and also made us of the specific skills sets of their young volunteers (GYA) and mentors (YIC). This skills-share approach enabled young people to access a range of expertise. It also demonstrated knowledge co-production values by enabling volunteers to share their skills and

experience with the wider team. Almost all of GYA's members volunteered to lead sessions at training weekends, on diverse topics such as theories of change, schools outreach, and using social media for campaigning.

Several GYA members said that the NGO's reputation for policy training had been a key draw of the project when they applied. They did 'policy homework' set in team meetings and said that monthly training weekends – although costly – were an important core activity (interviews):

> 'I found the way the specific policy training was done incredibly useful and effective and quite fulfilling as well, and I learned a lot more from the process-focussed training sessions than I thought I would.' (Tim)

> 'The policy stuff I found really beneficial.... My favourite workshop was the anti-oppression workshop... both times I did it, I came out with a lot more, and it made me think about the way I conduct myself within a group and the way to work with a group... I think it's something all groups should try and do.' (Faiza)

Although this training was driven by their international project, it was not all UN-specific. Along with Faiza, Claire, Trent and Sally said that they were applying learning from anti-oppression training in local activism; while Jack and Lee felt that becoming more confident in communicating climate change to diverse audiences was a 'big outcome' of their training. GYA's members valued training and wanted more of it. They specifically suggested more sessions on political lobbying, working with the media and facilitation strategies when asked to reflect on the training provided in exit interviews.

Section 6.2.3 discussed YIC's members' perceptions of the skills gained through their projects and their mentors' focus on 'coaching' in weekly sessions. Specialist training was more ad-hoc in YIC, but three regional events per year included workshops about existing local campaigns alongside skills workshops on themes such as campaign planning, writing press releases and slam poetry. Unlike YIC's regular sessions, these were hosted outside of school hours in a city centre venue. They had a high attendance rate of around 100 young people at each (from 175 registered with YIC) and young people chose to attend in their free time, suggesting that YIC's members likewise valued training opportunities. YIC graduate Karin, who led an end of year focus group

(with a topic guide that she and I developed), said that skills-based training was a particularly prominent theme of discussion:

> '..many commented that the issue related workshops were highly interesting but would like to see more skills related workshops that would help them develop their presentation skills, communication skills (how to approach different types of people; teachers, press, potential funders etc) and how to FUNDRAISE.' (Karin, email, focus group feedback, original emphasis)

This feedback highlights that although young people valued training, there was a particular demand for transferable skills development rather than more of a deep dive into the issues that they were working on. This could be in part because the current balance in both NGOs' work with young people included more of the latter. However, given the emphasis of employability discussed in the previous chapter, it is very clear that young people viewed NGO participation as a vehicle for skills-based training.

Staeheli et al. (2013) have argued that with such an instrumentalist focus, active citizenship programmes may be training young people to become agents without agency, 'capable of engaging with social problems without challenging the structures and relationships that underlie them' (p.93). They suggest that a discourse of empowerment and skills development can obscure the extent to which efforts to shape citizenship may actually limit the possibilities of political engagement. Yet they also observe that 'skills used in one form of engagement may be transferred to other engagements', for example more activism-orientated attempts to challenge the status quo. In GYA and YIC, this suggested overlap between active citizenship and activism was expressed not only in how young people put training to use, but also in how the NGOs worked with critical education tools to offer a mix of personal/skills development and opportunities to engage in political discourse. The next two sections consider how, rather than being an accidental outcome of the NGOs' civic intermediary work, projects were by design capacity building to support 'autonomous agency' in young people.

6.4.2 Durable dialogue

Reporting on research on human rights education in a Bolivian NGO project for teenage girls, Gervais (2010 pp.13-14) contends that processes of citizen engagement

ought to be 'socially interactive, supportive and solidarity-building'. This section extends the discussion of speaking from solidarity in section 6.3.2 to illustrate that dialogue is a crucial aspect of empowerment through critical education. It adopts a Freiran perspective on critical education, conceptualising citizenship as a process of consciousness-raising as discussed in Chapter 2 section 2.8. In this approach, respectful and carefully facilitated conversational space is held to support the kind of autonomous agency associated with activist citizenship; by encouraging critical questioning and fostering 'a sense of participation in a common life' (Freire, 2005[1974] p.21). Freire's ideas about empowerment have had a broad influence within the UK youth voluntary sector (Shier, 2001). GYA's and YIC's work with young people certainly drew on educational approaches inspired by his theory of change, even if not in name. In their projects facilitators supported young people to work from personal experiences to develop dialogue with others and encouraged them to critique the status quo, with the aim of enabling their participation in socially transformative action (Freire, 1970).

Teamwork and discussion was foundational to the organising strategies of GYA and YIC. Young people were encouraged to talk about issues that were important to them, how their experiences related to others, and what they might achieve if they pooled their talents, concerns and interests. In YIC, this discussion was facilitated by staff during the first 5-8 weeks of its school programme. YIC's regional manager emphasised this 'engagement process' as the groundwork for any subsequent success, summarising it as:

> 'Young people brainstorm and debate issues that they're interested in and eventually whittle this down to one or several action groups.' (field notes, conversation with Kirsty)

Team mentor Arijit similarly summarised this approach as:

> '[H]ow the project ideas come from young people themselves, how it's them who develop and work as a team with dialogue between them'. (interview)

Each mentor used the same session plans and tools during this period, designed to encourage all group members to speak and to invite debate.

In GYA there was no such formalised programme, but both NGOs employed a similar repertoire of discussion tools such as team builders, icebreakers, group agreements,

photo boards, issue trees, value continuum, power mapping, impact matrices, world cafe and open space technology (Chambers 2002; Trapese Collective 2007). These tools featured prominently in staff and volunteer training, with an intensive focus on facilitation and coaching skills. This aspect of the NGOs' work was particularly instrumental in teaching young people to speak from solidarity. It can be related to an interpretation of citizenship as the practice of 'deliberative democracy' (Dewey, 1996 [1916], Harber, 1998), positing modes of group communication as political interventions by:

i.   insisting that everyone's presence is acknowledged (hooks, 1994); and

ii.   'deploy[ing] the metanarrative resources of 'equality', 'democracy' and 'participation' and the microtechnologies of peer groups, brainstorming, physical and social 'levelling', 'handing over the pen' etc. which effect the constitution of a new subjectivity' (Kesby, 2007 p.2814)

In these NGOs, facilitation strategies were recognised as both useful tools for effective meetings, and a provocative means of disrupting how young people related to one another.

Feedback from young people suggested that they particularly valued opportunities for discussion. When developing a new campaign, GYA organisers first set aside time to talk about the challenges young people face, drawing on members' experiences of precarious (un)employment, concerns about negative stereotyping in the media, and perceptions of their generation as apathetic. Young people responded well to this approach because it allowed flexibility to pursue projects based on group members' concerns and interests. Holly said of GYA's training weekends:

'I was just so happy that when we get together we can have those kinds of discussions... To bring such a group of passionate, intelligent people together is something really special and if they just come together and they chat and talk, that side is something that should be preserved. That bringing together of minds is really important.'

Other GYA members too said that conversations at training weekends were a welcome opportunity for critical reflection. The previous chapter, in section 5.5.3 (pp.139-140), discussed how some of YIC's members similarly expressed a preference for the 'big discussions and debates' that took place during the engagement process.

They said they liked the way that these structured activities helped them to consider campaign ideas from multiple perspectives and develop their critical faculties:

'We got to see the pros and cons of each issue we wanted to tackle, we sort of dissected it all and we discussed it with each other.' (Lisa, focus group, Elm Comprehensive)

'One thing I really liked was them big discussions we used to have… because it was showing you get to debate your own opinion, and you get to be really interactive with the whole group.' (Aisha, focus group, Ash Comprehensive)

'I suppose sometimes you don't find out your own opinion until you're in a debate and you think, wait a minute, I do think this, but you didn't notice before.' (Dana, focus group, Ash Comprehensive)

'I always think that having a debate is great for, even if you don't have an opinion at the beginning, you probably will by the end. And things like [YIC] really help people who maybe don't know what they think about certain things. Maybe… if they start listening to other people's opinions they can start thinking, well that sounds alright, or that sounds quite plausible, but I don't think you're right there and stuff, and they can forge their own niche.' (Bea, focus group, Ash Comprehensive)

Challenge from their peers played a significant role in subsequent strategies for social action, as young people learned to incorporate others' priorities and in some cases reformulated their own. This is illustrated by the earlier example in section 6.2.2 of Jake's experience of leading an equalities project, which evolved from his initial interest in tackling homophobia (p. 160).

A key piece of learning from YIC's experience, where a significant number of students dropped out after the engagement process, is the necessity of sustaining dialogue. As McEwan (2005 p.981) observes, 'the duration of participation is important'; yet spaces of citizen participation too often 'mobilize citizens for a particular purpose and then recede or disappear'. GYA and YIC were partly of interest for incorporating long-termism into their programmes compared with, say, the fleeting 'voluntourism' of global citizenship initiatives or the Government's National Citizen Service school holiday scheme. Young people were expected to volunteer with these NGOs for 8

months to a year. This timeframe seemed important, as McMurray and Niens (2012 p.214) have noted that:

> '...building relations between young people from different communities takes time and requires multiple opportunities for working together.'

For some YIC members and certainly for those in GYA, projects offered experiences of 'deep democracy' through sustained and effective teamwork. For others in YIC, once project planning became the focus, the balance between action and reflection was less well struck and trust in the process was lost. Dialogue was therefore important not only in provoking young people to think critically, but in sustaining their interest and engagement.

6.4.3 Participation as praxis

Freire adopts the term praxis to describe learning about social change through action, reflection and transformative action. This is perhaps the most obvious civic intermediary role for youth NGOs like GYA and YIC to play, as they are well placed to offer their members opportunities for experimentation with collective action and direct experiences of making a difference (Gervais 2010, Larson and Hansen, 2005). This was reflected in YIC management's use of the term 'experiential citizenship' to describe its schools programme. YIC was recommended to teachers on the premise that it would get young people out of the classroom and active in local communities, much like university service learning programmes (Lounsbury and Pollack, 2001). In a previous research project I considered how the value of experience in citizenship education can be overestimated, in the context of international volunteering purporting to offer young people an authoritative perspective as global citizens (Diprose 2012, see also Lorimer 2010, Simpson 2004). While I do not dispute that experience of practical action is an essential component of citizenship education, I prefer the term *praxis* as opposed to *practice* to emphasise critical reflection on experience. Based on the research evidence from the current project, GYA and YIC's capacity building role is conceptualised as supporting *reflection-informed action* to develop young people's independent initiative, in other words synthesising 'actionable knowledge' and 'theoretical understanding' (Larson and Hansen, 2005 p.335).

An example of praxis already briefly discussed in sections 6.3.3 and 6.3.4 concerned GYA members' evolving ideas about strategies for social change and movement building, prompted by their frustrated efforts at the UN. Experiences of disenfranchisement and disillusionment provoked critical reflection on what their role had been and where their actions might be more effective. For example, Lee said that he had learned about other ways to create political pressure:

> 'When we were going to be going to [the UN] I'd say I'm going to be lobbying negotiators, and actually I did very little of that. But then again I did a lot of other stuff that I still think was valuable. So I think my direct influence in the negotiations, I feel like that was more of an indirect role than I maybe assumed, in that it was being part of a movement that definitely influenced negotiations.' (interview)

Faiza took an alternative view, and was self-critical of the way she had adopted the language and social relations of the UN's institutional apparatus. She contrasted this with a more positive experience of helping to organise an autonomous citizenship space for young people beforehand:

> 'Coming from [the youth conference] and going to the UN was so heart-wrenching in the sense that you went from a place where stories were swarming about and people were passionate, to a place that was just soulless and it was all about the job and it was all about the policy… all these acronyms, and in a way people forgot - *I forgot*, forget about the negotiators, *I forgot* that we were talking about people.' (interview)

Section 6.3.2 on 'manoeuvring room' discussed how more experienced GYA members planted seeds of critique before the team arrived at the UN, openly discussing and encouraging participation in 'alternative' spaces of citizenship at their training weekends. In training sessions such as 'Theories of change', young people were prompted to reflect on the advantages and disadvantages of different strategies for social action, and to draw examples from past campaign successes and failures. GYA's coordinators did not take a laissez-faire approach to experiential citizenship education, as they did not assume that such reflections would emerge spontaneously, but purposely fostered a 'culture of questioning' (Giroux 2003 p.9).

YIC Team Mentor Sue similarly felt that its citizenship programme was about 'engaging young people in bigger thinking'. Mentor guidance and popular education tools helped YIC's members to break down and reconsider issues that interested them from multiple perspectives. At the end of their projects, its members talked about being more attuned to thinking critically about social problems. Young people at a cross-school focus group cited 'skills and knowledge' outcomes such as:

> 'The ability to change perspectives/stereotypes of youth… Creativity and being able to think outside the box… Through our social action projects, we were able to both inform ourselves and others about different issues and help to change opinions.' (Karin, email, focus group feedback)

At a reflection session at Beech Technology Campus, Dan said that he had learned through YIC '… that there's a lot more smaller issues that are actually really big, that no one knows about' (field notes). Here again it appears that YIC was engaged in promoting a culture of questioning among its members.

Katz argues that acts of resistance differ from resilience and reworking because they more explicitly invoke critical consciousness; and raise awareness of ways to recognise, confront and redress exploitation (2005 p.251). She draws on examples of community education projects to illustrate how even small-scale interventions can be disruptive of the status quo, with critical pedagogy work in the Freirean tradition blending the politics of reworking with resistance by up-skilling citizens as agents of social change. Active citizenship education in the UK is a markedly different context from the USA's activist tradition of radical community and anti-racist education, and likewise from earlier workers' education initiatives. It is an ambiguous space, but it is nonetheless a space that, through praxis, can appeal to young people's critical consciousness. Katz has also suggested that resistance should be driven by a vision of what else could be. In GYA, alternative future scenarios often featured in climate change campaigning and influenced how young people like Claire framed social critique positively, in spite of recognising the scale of the challenge:

> 'I learned more about myself, what I stand for, what I want for the future, how I see my ideal future. I don't mean just my life, I mean the world, as in what I want the economy to look like, what I want the environment to look like, what I want politicians to be like. I think I learned more about

that and a lot more about the in-depth politics of probably not just climate change but just generally people, what motivates people. I have a lot more time for different people.' (interview)

Might NGOs' practices in this field, by degrees, support a 'recalibration' of power (Katz, 2005 p.247) if enough young people learn that there is more going on than meets the eye and more than one way to react?

As well as consciousness-raising, another important aspect of participation as praxis was the confidence it instilled in future participation, as young people were able to come to their own conclusions about what makes effective social action. Confidence in social action resulted from practice, particularly from young people learning what was possible if they worked together. GYA members Jack and Dave reflected afterwards (interviews):

> 'I'll take a massive amount of enthusiasm from doing this and having such a positive experience... Just so many happy memories and a real confidence that young people really can do stuff – that we can be organised and make an amazing event that was just organised by us, without massive amounts of money around. So I'll take a lot of things personally and just really positive memories about what can be achieved.' (Jack)

> 'To see people coming together and getting excited about something and not feel like you have to be an expert to change things but really feeling like as a group of young people, just by being friends and being excited by it you can create something really powerful.' (Dave)

Other researchers have also observed that experiences of participation play a critical role in building young people's confidence in future action (Gervasis, 2010, Kirshner, 2007, Kiwan 2008); and some have suggested that engagement in activism is a means of developing 'social change schemata' (Watts et al., 2003). Hackett (1997 p.82) observes of youth politics that:

> 'Learning to participate, acquiring the means of participation is necessary when one is moving from a position of exclusion and powerlessness.'

GYA and YIC's capacity-building work was a form of empowerment because it was about young people acquiring the means of participation and the confidence to do so.

Learning from real experience of trying to make a difference and being encouraged to self-critique appeared to offer an effective means of engaging young people in what YIC's staff called 'bigger thinking' about what they are capable of.

6.4.4 Supportive networks

An especially prominent aspect of GYA's civic intermediary work was its role in bolstering young people's social capital in ways that enabled them to pursue additional projects. One aspect of this related to professional networking opportunities that supported future careers, but alongside these formal networks from young people emphasised the friendships they formed, within their team and with international peers. Several members joined GYA in the hope of making new friends with similar political interests, for example Claire said (interview):

> 'I knew I'd meet other people who are passionate about climate change. Before that, I hadn't actually had that many contacts with other young people who genuinely wanted to do it off their own back.'

The role of friendship networks in supporting youth citizenship and activism is well documented in others' research (Gervais, 2010, Hall et al., 1999, Kennelly, 2008, Weller, 2003). Within this study, young people saw friendship as underpinning the time they invested in projects, as a means of support, and also as a means of constructive challenge.

Friendship was most obviously a means of supporting the NGOs' bridging activities, when young people were being encouraged to engage with spaces of citizenship that were novel and sometimes daunting to them. The mutual support of taking part together with peers and mentors frequently made the difference in young people being present in these spaces at all. GYA's and YIC's members very rarely attended formal meetings or events alone; at the very least they were accompanied by another young person from their team and most often attended in groups. Young people used NGO email and social media accounts to seek assurance of others' attendance and to organise group travel, and would meet up in advance to consider what they expected from the meeting or event. As well as offering a social incentive, attending with their peers could be a social leveller in spaces characterised by unequal power relationships, by offering strength in numbers.

Social capital theorists posit social networks as the means through which people become invested in and better able to contribute to social life. This idea was reflected in GYA member's accounts of their participation, particularly the notion of building *bonding* social capital with other young campaigners with shared interests as a means of strengthening their involvement in activism. Young people felt that they were more likely to participate in future action because, through GYA, they now knew people that they could work with (interviews):

> 'I'll take away from this a group of people who I've met who are involved in climate change and [the UN] from all over the world who I still speak to and a group of people in the UK who I still speak to, to work on it.' (Jack)

> 'I've developed a connection with people on different topics that I've never had before. I've been interested and involved and passionate about different parts of politics, but becoming motivated and the reason I can get involved is because I know people like that in GYA and other people who are out there.' (Claire)

They also highlighted how the friendships formed through the project had not only provided the means to take action, but in some cases quite profoundly influenced their commitment to campaigning. Sally, who originally joined GYA so that she could put a voluntary fundraising position on her CV, said:

> 'I feel like I've had my eyes opened to this whole world, which has been really exciting, where young people, as long as they work hard and work together, are able to make an impact and get involved in their global society and actually have a voice… I've been so galvanised, in all aspects of my life. I can't really emphasise enough how much of an impact working with everyone has had on me, and how grateful I am, even when it is frustrating and difficult.' (Sally, interview)

Dialogue, critical thinking and young people's newfound confidence in social action were underpinned by peer education and the constructive challenge that this provided.

6.5 Conclusion

Debates about the value of the voluntary sector posit NGOs as civic intermediaries, but it is important to consider what kinds of citizenship they are supporting, in

particular whether – and how – they provide 'opportunities, resources, and capabilities' for their members (March and Olsen, 1995 p.91). This chapter has analysed GYA and YIC's civic intermediary work from the perspective of young participants, volunteers and staff, and identified *amplifying*, *bridging*, and *capacity building* as three interrelated and mutually reinforcing strands of NGO activity that support young people's participation in social and political life. The conceptual model in Figure 3 below summarises the core and common aspects of this work that emerged from frontline accounts of what constituted an empowering citizenship experience for young people, and the critical success factors that support each strand of activity. This conceptual model complements the Ladder of Participation frameworks that are often used to reflect on youth empowerment practice, by specifying activities that can enhance young people's participation across various spaces of citizenship. As well as being useful for critical reflection on practice, this model contributes to the disambiguation of empowerment as an operational concept in NGO youth work.

Figure 3: Core NGO empowerment activities to support youth citizenship

Amplifying	**Bridging**	**Capacity building**
Advocacy +	Platforms	Skills Training
Speaking from Solidarity	Pathways	Durable Dialogue
Coaching for Confidence	Manoevering Room	Participation as Praxis
Raising Reputation	Tackling Tokenism	Supportive Networks

In addition to portraying young people's positive experiences of experimenting with social action, this chapter has also acknowledged some challenges for empowerment-focussed civic intermediary work that can impede the implementation of the activities outlined above. This discussion has focussed mainly on practical challenges and

constraints, concerning how NGOs might support best practice with limited resources and in spaces of citizenship outside of their direct influence. It has not however considered the ambiguous ethics of youth citizenship projects that support both employability and empowerment, and whether this dual purpose poses any difficulties.

When asked to explain the purpose of his team's project in a nutshell, GYA member Tim succinctly expressed how *amplifying*, *bridging* and *capacity building* work in tandem to support present and future participation by young people (interview):

> 'It's a way of getting the voice of some of the most affected i.e. young people into the rooms where decisions are being taken, bearing witness and providing training for young people who might otherwise think that they don't have the capability to engage with these issues, so they're going to go off and do something where they can actually make a difference and end up getting involved in other forms of activism.'

This experiential approach to citizenship education was characterised by young people learning actively *as citizens* rather than passively *about citizenship* (Checkoway et al., 2003). Yet NGO empowerment work shares in common with employability a developmental focus whereby young people were encouraged to work upon themselves for anticipated future benefits. The final empirical chapter picks up on this convergence to argue that NGO youth citizenship projects are conflating self and social transformation and in doing so, primarily cultivating entrepreneurial active citizens.

Chapter 7 Discussion: Resilience, stories of self and unfinished journeys

7.1 Introduction

The previous empirical chapters dealt with the two largest subsets of my research data and considered NGO youth citizenship projects from two alternative standpoints: on the one hand as protectors of privilege through the promotion of employability; on the other as social levellers working towards the empowerment of their young members. Multifaceted ideas about *self* and *social* transformation underpinned the efforts of the voluntary sector and the young people that it supported. This final empirical chapter considers a more emerging theme that the two case studies had in common that links the self and social: the promotion of resilience as an aspirational goal for effective self-management. I argue that this demands a critical re-reading of Katz's (2004) conceptualisation of resilience and its relationship with reworking and resistance, identifying four effects of resilience that are detrimental to oppositional practice: putting up with precarity, instilling inequality, relocating responsibility, and deferring demands for change. By adopting resilience as an aspirational goal, both NGOs framed young people's participation as 'stories of self' and 'unfinished journeys' and this focussed their achievements primarily on personal development for their members. Because this chapter deals with largely unanticipated research findings and a smaller subset of the empirical data, it is more of a discussion-based chapter that raises issues and explores questions that I think worthy of future research.

7.2 Putting up with precarity

To understand why resilience emerged as a prized quality in both of my case studies, it is important to appreciate the wider social and economic context affecting young people in 2011. My fieldwork coincided with the aftermath of a global financial crisis and the worst recession to hit the UK since the Great Depression of the 1930s. The young people I worked with were affected by problems such as parental or personal redundancy, lowering of household incomes, cuts to public services and youth services in particular, cuts to financial support for those in education, cuts to social security benefits in real terms, and increased competition for fewer jobs. The long recovery from recession brought into sharp focus an escalating 'standard of living crisis' and its

impact on young adults, who are fairing less well than their parents' generation in terms of real incomes and with more of them dependent on family support (Belfield et al., 2014). In 2011 there was rioting in London and other English cities and many of the rioters were angry young people. This section contends that the valorisation of personal resilience has the effect of encouraging young people to endure crises without upsetting the status quo, and that it reflects increasingly widespread acceptance that young people will craft their lives and political projects in 'challenging times with a heightened sense of uncertainty' (Davoudi, 2012 p.299).

Chapter 2, in section 2.5, (pp.34-35), considered Beck's well-rehearsed 'risk society' theory about how young people negotiate a new risk environment in late modernity, and how this adversely affects their political agency. I agree with other researchers' contention that Beck's work overemphasises the pre-eminence of lifestyle politics and individualisation, neglecting important facets of collective and structural experience (Rheingans and Hollands, 2013, Waite, 2009). Nonetheless, it is difficult to dismiss the argument that neoliberalism has profoundly disrupted social and economic life. Kelly (2006 p.18) discusses the generational emergence of an 'entrepreneurial Self', characterised by the social reproduction of 'rational, autonomous, responsible behaviours and dispositions of a free, prudent, active Subject'. The first empirical chapter on employability explored some themes associated with 'self-regulatory' (Simpson, 2005) and 'entrepreneurial' (Swyngedouw, 2005) citizenship in the specific context of neoliberal professionalisation. Alongside cultivation of the means of economic prosperity, a broader conceptualisation of the entrepreneurial self might also include psychosocial qualities such as self-reliance, self-awareness and resilience.

Some researchers have explored this through a focus on 'precarity' as characteristic of younger generations' experiences of labour market transition, of weakening ties between education and work, and of the destabilisation of employment-enabling structures such as family, community, workplace and social security (Krestos, 2010, Wyn, 2007). Waite (2009 p.413) differentiates between using precarity to describe conditions arising from 'a generalised societal malaise', and its more specific attachment to people's experiences of precarious employment in neoliberal labour markets. The latter use, she argues, encapsulates the political potential of precarity as not merely a *condition*, but a point of *mobilisation* for many contemporary social movements (p.415). This project is not a study of workplace organising, but I was interested in whether the

NGOs or young people themselves attached their activism to shared experiences of economic insecurity – in other words whether precarity offered a rallying point – and whether practices of resilience, reworking and resistance offered a robust means of response.

This chapter will discuss how resilience was the most apparent of Katz's three practices of socio-symbolic reformulation in the empirical research. In Katz's work resilience suggests a communitarian approach to citizenship, through the presence of local networks of care and mutual aid. However, the resilience I most often encountered in practice was a kind of 'self-provisioning' (Smith, 1995) and self-disciplining. For example, after the 2011 riots a host of youth work and other voluntary sector organisations established a 'Resilience Consortium', positing community and personal resilience in young people as a safeguard against public disorder (Sugden, 2013). This rendering of resilience was also reflected in the wider policy environment.

In the environmental policy I studied with GYA's international team, resilience was tendered as a climate change adaptation strategy, a policy-makers' panacea for everything from flooding to famine. This is evidenced by the focus on resilience in national adaptation plans (Department for Food and Rural Affairs, 2013) as well as international adaptation programmes (Department for International Development, 2014). In social services, a focus on strengthening resilience is seen as a means of taming troublesome elements of society while gradually withdrawing support. Building a resilient economy was the theme of the Chancellor's Budget speech in March 2014 (Osborne 2014). Davoudi (2012 p.299) observes that there are 'a growing number of governmental and non-governmental reports which aim to develop ready-made, off-the-shelf toolkits for resilience-building'. Far from an act of self-determination or defiance, resilience in these instances appears to support the maintenance of business as usual. In a climate of austerity, it has ousted popular policy buzzwords like social mobility and empowerment, which rebrand neoliberalism as a way of giving power to people, to become the preferred means of encouraging resourcefulness (Porter and Davoudi, 2012, Slater, 2014). In such accounts resilience is proffered as a creative response to vulnerability (Glover 2009), but more as a means of enduring precarity than challenging it.

Resilience can be understood as a product of precarity insofar as the need for resilient communities, resilient sectors and resilient people is a result of economic instability (Beck, 1992[1986]). Chapter 5 discussed how GYA's members worried for their present and future job security and responded to this by campaigning for green jobs. Their prognosis of problems they shared with their peers (p.123) also included concerns about social division and disillusionment, as well as fears about their future on an environmentally volatile planet. These were not abstract concerns, but borne from personal experience. Some of GYA's members lived in neighbourhoods where there were riots; some were upwardly mobile and had ambiguous relationships with class, community and identity; some struggled to find work, were on temporary contracts or had been made redundant; almost all befriended young people from other parts of the world profoundly affected by climate change; and all of these issues affected their thoughts about the future. During my fieldwork at the UN there were many occasions when GYA members were visibly very upset by (what they considered to be) insufficient remedial action; one even said it was affecting her decision on whether or not to start a family.

YIC's members also expressed concerns about employability, economic security and the future. Towards the beginning of my fieldwork with YIC, I was asked to work with a group of six students on its 'grads' scheme, to help them design a member survey about the 2011 England riots. Staff wanted this to explore themes such as racial justice and cohesion, but the young people were emphatically more interested in the impact of austerity. The survey questions they developed included agree/disagree statements such as 'The riots show that we need to improve youth facilities e.g. youth clubs', 'The riots are related to the economic situation in the UK e.g. cuts' and 'I'm worried about finding work or being able to go to university'. They also wanted to know if – and how – their peers had been affected by public spending cuts. Their online survey was forwarded to YIC's then-current membership in autumn 2011 and they received 50 anonymous responses. Over half of respondents claimed to be directly affected by public spending cuts. Although 8 in 10 said they felt confident about the future, the same proportion also indicated that they worried about finding work or being able to go to university. The abolition of Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) and higher university fees were the two main ways that young people said they were personally affected. Some elaborated on the impact of the recession in open responses such as:

'I have had my EMA reduced and there isn't many grants and scholarships available. Also with the cuts, less companies are willing to hire so I am currently struggling with money.'

'With the loss of my EMA, it's harder to contribute to bills for my mum, and we have to buy very cheap food. My dad has lost his business, and mum's going to be made redundant in February. We're downsizing houses to lose some bills, but that means i have to work extra hard to get into Uni, or i[sic] doubt ill[sic] have anywhere to live.'

Supporting this survey and a subsequent workshop delivered by YIC's grads was the only time I really got an insight into young people's personal experiences of precarity within this NGO. As I watched their social action projects unfold, it often struck me that a programme designed to challenge apathy and promote social responsibility seemed somewhat divorced from the anxieties and responsibilities that many of these young people experienced daily in their private lives.

As YIC's grads group recognised, the youth and voluntary sectors that support young people were also under considerable stress. YIC's regional manager Kirsty spoke of the personal and organisational challenges of the job, cautioning: 'You have to be resilient to work in this sector' (field notes). Issues discussed in Chapter 3, such as shrinking budgets and shadow state governance, and striking the balance between accountability and co-option, mark the evolution of what Salamon (2003) has termed the 'Resilient Sector'. Management of multiple priorities is a trite phrase but one that nonetheless reflects the experiences of GYA and YIC as they were affected by financial difficulties, decisions on whether and where to allow mission creep to attract funding, recognition of failed projects and organisational limitations. GYA's members fretted that their focus on environmental issues no longer resonated in a nation concerned with economic recovery, and its membership dramatically fluctuated. YIC lost the favourable Government links it had developed since its inception with a change of political administration. Though neither NGO capitulated, both seemed to be on the back foot throughout my fieldwork, and both underwent considerable restructuring during this time. The YIC regional office where I did my field work has since closed in the time I have been writing up the research.

Chapter 2 (section 2.3.2) outlined Katz's concepts of resilience, reworking and resistance as she describes them: mutually reinforcing acts that provide the means through which people do what they can to fortify themselves and their communities. The previous empirical chapters worked with Katz's formulation in their analysis. Some of the emerging evidence from my case studies however suggests that resilience may warrant a more cynical critique – that it may in practice just as readily reinforce neoliberal common sense as offer a resource for resistance.

Katz defines resilience as everyday actions than enable 'material and spiritual survival' and 'the recuperation of dignity' (p.242); acts like caring for community members and adapting to new ways of working. She suggests that resilience and reworking, finding ways to survive and thrive against the odds, can make a considerable difference to whether people develop fateful or fatalistic attitudes to coping with change, and to whether they find the wherewithal to resist undesirable change. Katz's analysis is focussed at the level of community practices, but Thomson et al. (2002) employ a similar line of reasoning about individuals in their study of 'critical moments' in youth transitions. I do not disagree with these researchers that some measure of resilience supports young people's active participation, but my research evidence also suggests that there are aspects of developing resilience which may be detrimental to young people's sense of personal agency and the possibilities they envisage.

When I unpacked the example of GYA's green jobs campaign in Chapter 5, I suggested that its members' critique of the neoliberal economy was a modest form of resistance; their campaign demands an attempt at reworking the socio-economic distribution of resources; and their skills development and training for employability a form of resilience. This example illustrates how resilience work can be personally beneficial, whilst reinforcing a problematic status quo - Katz indeed acknowledges this problem when she says that acts of resilience 'sustain the general trajectory of the developments that necessitated these acts in the first place' (p.246). On the basis of my research evidence I would add that practicing resilience took time and energy away from what GYA and YIC purported to be their core purpose, namely empowering young people to make a difference in society. Resilience was pacifying. Participation in social change promises tenuous outcomes at best; personal development, stronger social networks and enhanced job prospects may be a more dependable offer.

Even when collective action was emphasised, much of GYA and YIC's empowerment work offered an illusion of security without posing substantive challenge to the systems that made young people feel unsafe. Resilience can therefore be conceptualised not only as a product of precarity, but as a way of encouraging people to accept that precarity is inevitable. Climate adaptation and economic adjustment are good examples, whereby the debate concerns how the problem might be alleviated, while the continuing existence of the problem is assumed. Katz argues that resilience can breed dissent and lead to critical questioning, but GYA and YIC's emphasis of employability chiefly supported the status quo. When asked about project outcomes in interviews and focus groups, young people talked about seeing society from different perspectives and future plans for participation, but they talked a lot more about transferable skills, dealing with setbacks and labour market entry. By practising resilience, are young people learning that all they can change is themselves?

When I asked GYA's members about a typical week's volunteering, or YIC's members about why they left projects, young people used the metaphor of balancing or juggling to describe how they dealt with competing commitments such as school, work, volunteering, relationships and friendships. They expressed frustration that it was not possible to manage all of these activities effectively at once, and said that investing their effort in one area could be detrimental to another. GYA's members were typically spending between ten and twenty hours a week on their voluntary project, most of them on top of full time work or study. They described negative consequences for relationships, as well as the need for supportive families and partners. Holly said, for example:

> 'I really struggled to fit everything into my daily life and I always had constant guilt that I wasn't doing enough... I felt like a school child that hadn't been going to class and you just have to catch up constantly... I was studying as well, and volunteering, and with [GYA] it was just quite a lot of things to be juggling. I think sometimes when I looked at my to-do list, you'd have a whole section for your Masters [degree], a whole section for life, a whole section on [GYA]...'

Admitting personal responsibility for quitting the project early, students at Cedar Comprehensive discussed the difficulties of managing competing extracurricular activities alongside school work (focus group):

> Dana: You've got other things to do, you've got class work that you need to do, so it just kind of piled up and you think OK, I'll have to let it go.

> Bea: It was like, at the beginning of year 12 as you're starting A levels.

> Elle: The reason why I kind of dropped out was 'cause of my exams, when I was revising for them, so that was another issue.

> Kristina: And do you think there's anything that can be done about the workload?

> Dana: I think that's individual... Depends on how you can balance and how you can juggle.

For the young people who managed them well, GYA's and YICs' projects offered experience of self-discipline and coping with multiple pressures. This is a useful transferable life skill, but it also inculcates a degree of managed anxiety.

GYA's and YIC's young members were resilient with reasonable hope of future economic success, but there are many others for whom insecurity is more than an inconvenience. Carlin (2013) has studied the influence of employability and resilience rhetoric in youth work with young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), residing in an area steeped in long-term economic and social decline. For the young people in Carlin's work, coping with issues such as violence, addiction, social isolation, and personal or familial unemployment is commonplace. Although Carlin acknowledges young people's 'extraordinary resilience' and informal support networks in these circumstances, he argues that resilience can mean surviving without thriving. This is neither an acceptable long-term arrangement nor a socially just policy outcome. His work suggests that where precarity becomes a point of mobilisation for young people around the politics of resilience, this is not just problematic in the abstract, but can have far reaching material consequences.

7.3 Instilling inequality

Writing on social mobility, Boliver and Byrne (2013) observe how prominent policy projects still promote the idea of meritocracy: 'a society in which social position is absolutely a product of innate ability, coupled with application or effort - with the implication that social origins have no influence on outcomes.' Resilience can be

likened to social mobility as a policy framing device, to the extent that both are employed as shorthand for active citizenship of the do-it-yourself, no rights without responsibilities variety. Chapter 5, in section 5.5, explored how GYA and YIC's focus on employability reproduced differential citizenship, by emphasising young people's individual merit and progression through and beyond their programmes. Citizenship projects that enhance young people's confidence in this manner, as graduates of competitive recruitment processes and semi-professional campaigns, may encourage the view that participation is an earned privilege and non-participation a result of personal deficiencies or a lack of resilience.

A promotional flyer claimed that YIC's workshops were designed 'to inspire a new generation of social entrepreneurs, building skills for business and society… Raising aspirations to achieve more and make a change.' Although this flyer was primarily aimed at teachers, it is notable for suggesting the same negative youth stereotype that YIC claims to challenge; namely that some young people do not take part for want of aspiration. Like the politicians' proverbial 'hardworking families', this positions YIC's members and graduates as exemplar young citizens worth listening to, and allows underachievers to be justifiably ignored. Pike and Hughes (2013) contrasted media coverage of youth during the London riots and the Olympic Games, noting how 'aspiration' or lack thereof is mobilised to encourage young people to 'work upon themselves', juxtaposing those who are deserving and undeserving citizens.

The meritocratic logic of resilience suggests that some young people can earn rewards that others are disqualified from enjoying. When I interviewed GYA's members about recruitment, they were clear that their volunteer roles required certain attributes of applicants. Here resilience was an especially prominent theme, with the recurring idea that young people who are not resilient would be unable to cope with the demands of the project. Nina, project co-ordinator in 2011 and also involved in the previous year's selection process said:

> 'In 2010 we wanted to be inclusive, and have as broad a scope of people from the UK as possible, so in our criteria… you didn't have to be an activist… we wanted there to be access for everybody to go. And we actually got into quite a lot of arguments… 'cause it's such a stressful experience and because it's really hard… even for people who are really dedicated and committed, it can be massively disempowering and it can

really burn people out. So my criteria for 2011 really changed. I still wanted there to be equal opportunities… but I wasn't actively seeking to have a very diverse range in that sense, more just people who'd proven already that they were committed and understood the issues… I wanted people who'd really shown their capacity to deal with, or had been really committed to it for a few years, or to other forms of activism, because I feel it's those people who are going to come out of the project a lot better.'

Trent, the youngest group member and participating in 2011 for the first time, gave a similar rationale for why he felt such an opportunity could not be extended to everyone:

'To date it has been the best experience of my life, but it was also the hardest. It was really tough… It sounds stupid but it was a struggle... I think about my friends and whether or not I should recommend them to apply. I will tell people who I think are quite strong and stable. I think you need to be quite strong to do this project. You need some sort of backbone, some sort of stability somewhere… You need to have something beyond this that you can rely on and make sure you can be supported.'

On a pragmatic level these young people have good reason to want 'strong' colleagues: GYA relies entirely on its young volunteers and has limited capacity to recruit and train them. However, their focus on individual commitment/personal resilience is at odds with how Katz talks about resilience as a collective practice through which communities support each other. Instead, resilience is being employed in such accounts as a rationale for inequality of opportunity based on perceived personal strengths and inherent characteristics, as a way of safeguarding and justifying privileges enjoyed by just a few 'committed' participants.

In YIC's riots survey, although young people bemoaned the effects of austerity, 9 in 10 thought the riots were 'just for the sake of rioting' and expressed concerns about others' reckless behaviour. For example, one respondent said:

'...the media portrayed the younger generations as thugs and vandals but what about those that are trying to make something of their life by getting good grades in school, enjoying things without getting out of hand. In my

opinion the media gives off a lot of negative feedback of the youth of today but doesn't bother to look deeper and find the youths wanting to make a difference like with YIC.'

A contrast is established between the 'good' young citizens of GYA and YIC who deserve to have their voices heard, and contemporaries who do not participate properly because they are insufficiently interested or irresponsible.

GYA members' comments about what they liked about the culture of the organisation gave an impression that its members were more hardworking and driven than most. While I was witness to and acknowledge their dedication, I was also troubled by the ways in which this commentary obscured the privilege of a disposable income, free time and other kinds of support, to commend commitment as an intrinsic personality trait. Claire said:

> 'People in GYA are different because they're *so* motivated. No one's paid so you're using your own money and time… so people give levels of responsibility and they ensure it's done, they are really dedicated',

Meanwhile, Jack suggested that 'it showed the commitment we had… that we would go around the country together.' The assumption that easy mobility is indicative of more or less motivation is especially problematic if used as the basis for filtering 'deserving' from 'undeserving' would-be group members. Yet Nina said that willingness to self-finance travel was taken into account at a GYA selection day in London:

> 'We didn't offer any funding to support anyone to get there, but people came down for it... which really gave us an idea of who was going to be committed and that turned out to be true.'

Young people travelled for this selection day from as far away as Northern Ireland and Aberdeen with about a week's notice, and the majority of applicants were not in full time work. It is not difficult to imagine obstacles other than lack of motivation that might have prevented some from attending. GYA's members recognised material barriers to participation, especially at the international level of their work, but these are obscured when they profess superior commitment and fortitude. In other words, celebrating resilience makes inequality about what people *are* instead of what they have access to.

I suspect that GYA's campaigners are no more inherently resourceful than the 'NEETs' in Carlin's (2013) study discussed in the previous section, yet the first group has all the appearance of resilience while the other confronts a disproportionate share of material risk. One group is vaunted as model citizens while the other is chastised for antisocial behaviour, one confidently risk-taking and the other just risky. The way that the stresses of GYA's volunteer roles were perceived to build and reflect strong character reminded me of Ansell's (2008) research on gap year travel and the role of risk in individualised biography construction. She argues that risk 'has an ambiguous materiality: representations of risk differ from objective experiences of misfortune' (p.235). Does valorising the qualities of resilient young people contribute to the vilifying of those perceived to be less successful? Resilience has become prized a personal attribute at a time of increasingly aggravated social inequality and it seems to function to individualise collective failure, deflecting blame and responsibility.

7.4 Relocating responsibility

By focussing on the qualities of people and their communities, resilience relocates responsibility for wellbeing and change as outside of the purview of state control. The onus is on active citizens in charge of their own destinies. On face value arrangements like new localism, voluntary action and Big Society sound appealing because they seem to promise power to people. These terms idealise self-regulatory, entrepreneurial citizenship in place of a rights-based narrative associated with social citizenship (Kisby, 2010). For some communitarians and republicans this transition would seem desirable, but in the context of the neoliberal state resilience is a vehicle for the devolution of risk, not additional rights.

The relocation of responsibility works in tandem with instilling inequality: loss of rights is justified for people and communities who are unable to help themselves. Slater (2014) observes in relation to urban planning that 'Resilience so easily supports not only austerity, but the territorial stigmatisation that so often precedes strategies of dislocation'; that is, communities deemed to lack resilience can be more easily disregarded and displaced. Resilience is about encouraging people to take personal responsibility, and it is also a means of resigning responsibility to informal social networks and formal civil society. Although this entails demonstrably detrimental effects, it also presents opportunities for voluntary sector organisations willing to

frame citizen empowerment projects as a means to a more responsible society (Changfoot, 2007).

When the 2011 riots broke out concurrent with my fieldwork, GYA's members expressed a feeling of collective failure. They saw swathes of young people resorting to vandalism, violence and theft as a damning indictment of their limited organisational capacity for outreach, which showed that they had not been effective enough in their efforts to give young people a political platform. Project coordinator Nina said:

> '…watching young people across London destroying the local communities that they lived in, for me it didn't feel like a political event, it felt like it was just a lot of suppressed anger and disengagement… focussed around consumerism and being able to take objects, and I was like wow, I kind of realised that, although the people who are involved with GYA are amazing, like 99% of us are going to be fine anyway… we have really strong social networks, we're educated, all of those kind of things, and I was just like, I am so – not really helping people who genuinely need to be helped… And part of it I think is you've got to work with people who want to work with you, but at the same time I think we need to be better at speaking to people who might also be interested in these kind of opportunities and these issues, but aren't necessarily going to be on it already.'

The group's prognosis of the problem and the appropriate response located responsibility with individuals, who should not have done as they did, and with their peers and voluntary groups, who should have been there to guide these young people towards more constructive pro-political behaviour. YIC's members who responded to the post-riots survey similarly gave examples of alternative courses of action young people might take. Some also suggested that parents were to blame as bad role models or for taking insufficient interest in their children. Although they felt that the riots related to austerity, young people also saw them as symptomatic of apolitical individualism. They emphasised personal and social responsibility, not state responsibility, as the realm of remedial action.

Young people contrasted the wanton individualism of the riots with the social responsibility they exemplified through GYA and YIC's youth citizenship programmes. However, the NGOs in their own way promoted another kind of individualism, with

young people's participation a recognisable expression of the 'self as life project' (Giddens, 1991). Faiza explained how she drew on her self-confidence and personal identity when in doubt of her abilities in comparison with older and more experienced GYA members:

> 'I said that okay, I may not have key skills sets that I can bring on, but being myself has got me through a lot of things, so maybe being myself will contribute in some way to the selection day.'

Chapter 5 discussed at length how employability and personal gain was emphasised throughout GYA and YIC's programmes, from recruitment through to opportunities for role specialisation and progression. Alongside this, another trend seemed pertinent and pervasive: the way that young people were encouraged to use their project participation to tell 'stories of self', constructing a particular kind of risk biography about their persistence and ability to overcome challenges.

7.4.1 Stories of self

The idea of conceptualising participation as a 'story of self' is taken verbatim from GYA, for whose members developing a personalised 'public narrative' formed the basis of all campaigns training. Public narrative is a storytelling for social change technique borrowed wholesale from Barack Obama's first election campaign (Ganz, 2008), that connects transformative action with personal experiences of triumph over adversity. Self and social transformations are discursively linked as if the former breeds the latter, reminding people of their resourcefulness, resilience and personal values. All GYA members were required to devise a public narrative at their first training weekend and to use this in subsequent blogs and public speaking appearances. In each case, this narrative portrayed the storyteller as a protagonist who had overcome a challenge to achieve something important, and implored other young people with shared values to follow this example.

Some GYA members said that they found this approach uncomfortable and even exploitative. Their initial feedback within the training session was that they felt uneasy about sharing very personal information with people whom they had only just met, and embarrassed about manufacturing 'sob stories' from relative privilege. For example, Tim felt it inappropriate that the biggest personal challenge he could think of was a

difficult transition to a private school, while Carol asked what the death of a loved one had to do with her commitment to climate change campaigning. At a later training weekend, events co-ordinator Amelia joked about being 'the girl without a story' and asked why that made her participation less valuable.

Public narrative was not used in YIC, but as discussed in section 5.5.4 of Chapter 5 (pp.143-144), its senior management team had wanted to employ triumph over adversity narratives in individual case studies of YIC members. They particularly sought to profile young people who met 'disadvantaged' criteria such as BME, poor, at risk of exclusion or homelessness, in the criminal justice or care system or carers themselves, refugees or asylum-seekers. These young people make good case studies because they prove against the odds struggle possible and 'bounce-back-ability' a matter of individual choice. This particular initiative was however resisted by frontline staff, who were opposed to vulnerable young people being profiled primarily for such characteristics instead of as a result of their actions and projects with YIC.

In both case study NGOs, reference to young people's 'personal journey', 'incredible transformation' and 'becoming leaders' peppered staff and volunteers' explanations of project outcomes. This casts young people themselves as the key site of struggle, conflating social transformation with personal development. YIC prominently highlighted quotations from young people about their learning and development and what role believed they could play as a result of participation. For example, on one promotional flyer: 'It made me more aware of issues facing young people today and inspired me to attempt to tackle them', and 'YIC has been a worthwhile experience as I have learnt a lot about myself as a person, what I am capable of achieving and how I can help others'. On another flyer, the rationale given for YIC's experiential citizenship approach was: '…if you want young people to be responsible, you have to give them real responsibility'.

Young people were encouraged to see their actions as the answer to a plethora of problems, from tackling discrimination to climate change. For example, GYA member Lee came away disappointed from a UN conference reflecting on how various youth and civil society initiatives had failed, as opposed to the decision-making process at the core of the conference itself:

'There's all this rage and there is all this energy and there are all these different approaches and yet it still doesn't seem to be working.... I realised that there was no way we were ever ever ever even working on their wavelength, like us saying [stay below] 1.5 degrees [of global warming] to them would have absolutely no effect... and we needed to radically rethink what we were doing.'

Many YIC projects that originated in discussions about systemic issues ended up as youth self-help or peer mentoring initiatives. NGOs themselves similarly interpreted their difficulties as arising from external events, but also assumed total responsibility for recovery. At a GYA training weekend, key organisers described the detrimental impact of the failed Copenhagen climate negotiations in 2009 as a way for current members to learn to be more tactical (field notes):

'...our story is similar to the story of the environment movement at the time. We'd put all our hopes and energy on one event. Afterwards, we needed time to pick ourselves up, learn from that and regroup.' (Harriet)

'...most people will remember the feeling of unbelievable despair following Copenhagen... we had to pick ourselves up and figure out where to go.' (Alice)

At a YIC national visioning session, senior management apologised that there had not been much opportunity to talk about long-term strategy because 'we had to focus on survival'. They referred to the impact of the UK recession on YIC's work as 'Armageddon', which had meant 'working with a blitz mentality' (field notes). Such narratives demonstrate resilience, but they also indicate that a considerable amount of personal and organisational energy is spent in internalising change.

Relocating responsibility is the nexus between empowered and entrepreneurial forms of participation. On the one hand, developing the confidence and capability required to weather change offered young people and NGOs hope. Their stories of self, critical reflections on what they had learned, achieved and overcome and *what I/we can do*, forestalled a fatalistic response to the challenges they faced. They provided a means to keep calm and carry on, to 'pick themselves up' and to persist in their efforts, because they believed their actions could make a difference. In this respect, being resilient was a resource for future resistance.

However, their preoccupation with self-transformation also gives cause for concern because it deflects attention and effort away from other sites of struggle, confining contestation to the psyche. It became the responsibility of young people, their peers and the voluntary sector to cope, but not to expect to drive substantive social change bigger than themselves. Although self and social transformations were discursively linked by stories of self, more often than not the NGOs and their members seemed to settle for just the former.

7.5 Deferring demands for change

Chapter 2, in section 2.8, considered the role of developing capabilities (Sen, 2010, Whiteside and Mah, 2012) and awareness of 'unfinishedness' as a foundation to activism (Freire, 2001). Chapter 6 developed this idea with evidence that young people's participation can be effectively supported by NGOs through opportunities for action, critical reflection and skills training. Although this evidence illustrates that GYA and YIC's youth empowerment work as civic intermediaries was felt to be effective and considerably valued by young people, it is also worth reflecting on the impact of their activities – in particular whether they resulted in recognisable achievements beyond the personal development of their members.

On the one hand, developing young people's confidence in their abilities seemed to support their on-going participation, warding off fatalistic or indifferent attitudes to tackling social problems. There is purpose in being sufficiently resilient to regroup when, as Nina put it, 'You come back to the UK and suddenly it's cold, it's miserable, you haven't saved the world.' However, over the course of fieldwork I observed that as GYA and YIC projects progressed (or did not in some cases), self-transformation became a comfort in the absence of sought after material change and indeed a proffered alternative outcome. When GYA members spoke of the disjuncture between their ambition for policy change and the reality of stagnation, they nonetheless spoke with a sense of personal achievement:

> 'Whether I reached [my goals] or not, the one single thing that kind of annihilates everything I could have ever imagined is the personal change I went through.' (Faiza)

> 'I didn't want to be the kind of person who used it in a selfish way and I didn't go over there to do something for my CV... But coming back I have progressed personally and I don't think that's a bad thing for anybody. I think it's brilliant if anyone gets an opportunity where they can develop as an individual and maybe help other people along the way, even though I kind of saw that as a negative beforehand.' (Claire)

Self-reflection and personal development were justified as reliable fallback fruits of their labour, because they made young people more confident that they might regroup to succeed in the future:

> 'I've developed a lot personally. I think I will be a lot more effective in whatever I choose to do next and that's great... even if I can't pin it down to one particular thing, I am a lot stronger than before, and I'm more resilient and I know how to work in groups, and I can be patient and get over troubles and things a bit more.' (Trent)

Here, there was no evidence of a logical flow from self-transformation to social transformation; rather self-transformation became a consolation in place of unfilled project goals. GYA's members similarly settled for enhanced employability instead of their desired 'healthy and sustainable' secure jobs in a green economy (Alice). This is an uncomfortable critique because it feels unfair: it is not intended as a criticism of these individuals, but rather as a means of provoking reflection on the entrepreneurial self's susceptibility to settle for less in the short-to-medium term.

I suspect that this problem is not unique to youth citizenship initiatives, but it may be exacerbated by a still prevalent developmental view of young people as moving into full citizenship (Lawy and Biesta, 2006). This seemed to be particularly the case in YIC, whose members were typically slightly younger minors and whose staff and mentors seemed to view the project as primarily a practice run for future participation. Danni's explanation of why she was fairly relaxed about the limited progress that her team was making is typical of the way that YIC participation was envisaged as an unfinished journey (interview):

> '…even if your project goes completely awry and you end up not doing anything, I think the fact that young people have just had eight or nine months where they can go to a room, talk openly and grow in confidence, I

think that's the most important bit, the journey they go on rather than what they get to at the end.'

YIC regional manager Kirsty said she found it frustrating that they had difficulty securing funding to work with more YIC grads over a longer time period. She felt that YIC's core programme brought young people only 'so far along the journey' and that grad projects need not be so limited in their ambitions (field notes).

GYA mostly worked with young adults, but its members' perception of volunteering as a 'springboard' (Holly, interview) to professional campaigning work meant that much of its effectiveness was justified by what it would enable young people to do in the future, as opposed to what they concretely achieved in present projects. Dave said in a strategy call 'I think empowering people is sometimes more important than getting stuff done early' (field notes) and co-director Harriet said 'GYA is everything that its members go on to be and do' (field notes). The limitations of this development-focussed approach are encapsulated, albeit inadvertently, in Carol's end of project reflection: '…it empowers a small group of young people really effectively and it's fantastic for their personal development... I think it's also a great springboard to other things.' Like YIC, the majority of GYA's members did not stay with the NGO for more than a year to apply their learning to more effective and ambitious action.

In GYA and YIC, empowering young people meant readying them for an unfinished journey, helping them to navigate risk and become more resilient. Freire (2001, 1970) has argued that 'unfinishedness' is a radical and hopeful state of being because it concedes no end of history and no immutable facts. However, within my case studies it seemed to have had a subduing effect as NGOs' and young people's ambitions for projects were not necessarily given up, but scaled down and deferred. Resilience was about young people reflecting and regrouping, reconciling themselves to temporary defeat, limited success or personal development. The satisfaction of the self-as-life-project supported inertia and indecisiveness, encouraging young people to 'tell a story about possible futures that are connected to indefinite options' (Wyn, 2007 p.176).

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter has taken a critical look at resilience and how this intersects with the idea of the self-regulatory, entrepreneurial self. Porter and Davoudi (2012 p.329) argue that

'elastic concepts' like resilience 'that are employed to justify diverse and even conflicting ends, need careful deconstruction.' I have examined how the two case study NGOs promoted particular forms of resilience in young people, and how GYA and YIC exemplified resilience themselves by adjusting their strategic focus to remain viable (Salamon, 2003). Both NGOs supported young people taking action as citizens now, yet young people's participation was also modelles as a 'becoming' (Lawy and Biesta 2006), a transformative personal journey that is unfinished. Framing participation through the narrative of a 'story of self' and unfinished journey offered encouragement for the future and a means of articulating the benefits of empowerment as self-development, but the outcomes of this identity work were somewhat vague.

The analysis in this chapter prompts a critical re-reading of Katz's work on resilience and its relationship with oppositional practice. Katz argues that resilience can be a resource for resistance, yet she also contends (2004 p.242):

> '[F]eeling good, even when it is called something as fancy as "reconstituting one's subjectivity in the face of power", through all manner of discursive practices and independent readings, is simply not enough to transform the social relations of oppression and exploitation that are the cornerstone of so many people's daily lives. Autonomous, even "counterhegemonic" agency is just the beginning. Yet it is so often presumed as an end."

In other words, it is not sufficient to envisage empowerment as simply transformation of the self, of one's attitudes, dispositions and aspirations. I do not disagree with Katz's analysis that resilience sometimes gives rise to other forms of practice that might be more comfortably characterised as political. However, the discussion in this chapter has highlighted ways in which learning to be resilient can also be detrimental for young people and the NGOs that support them. I have considered how assuming the burden of risk management means putting up with precarity, instilling inequality, relocating responsibility and deferring demands for change, and as a result how young people and NGOs more reliably succeeded in feats of self-transformation than their professed ambitions for social transformation. The concluding chapter brings this finding into conversation with the themes of employability and empowerment, to consider the value of taking an unfixed view of young people's citizenship practices.

Chapter 8 Conclusion: Unfixed citizens: beyond a binary view of youth citizenship

8.1 Introduction

This chapter brings together the main strands of the empirical research and reflects on the key learning and implications from this PhD project for voluntary sector youth citizenship practice and scholarship. It argues that the ambiguity of GYA's and YIC's citizenship projects in supporting individualist and collective goals is in itself an important research finding. Their indeterminacy illustrates the complexity of 'actually existing' youth citizenship (Staeheli, 2010) as young people oscillate between multiple, even contradictory, meanings, practices and subjectivities. Their members were encouraged to serve selfish and social impulses through conscious attempts to work upon themselves as active citizens. This self-actualisation was underpinned by not only personal development but participation with peers that explored questions of identity, shared values, just causes and ways and means of shaping a part society. This key finding, its context and scope are discussed in detail below.

8.2 Scope of the research contribution

The scope of the critical ethnographic methodology employed sacrifices breadth for depth in its exploration of the research topic. The analysis has explored links between the citizenship practices of GYA and YIC, wider policy projects and socio-political trends, but a degree of caution must be exercised in extrapolating from these case studies to comment on the general character of citizenship in the UK's voluntary sector. Chapter 4 discussed some distinct features of these cases and why they were optimal sites for a study focussed on youth engagement. A variety of other organisational approaches have been acknowledged that also contribute to the institutionalised promotion of idealised forms of citizenship, including service provision and youth work, campus activism, curriculum interventions and service learning, and the incorporation of young people into general membership structures such as local groups. Public and private projects to marshal and mobilise young citizens also exert influence and encompass diverse organising principles.

The selection of two cases that employed a citizenship-as-practice approach (Lawy and Biesta, 2006), with programmes designed exclusively for young people, has

undoubtedly influenced the findings on the role that NGOs can play in supporting youth empowerment and of the benefits that they offer their young members. This study is also vulnerable to criticism of confirmation bias in its focus on young people who participate in NGO citizenship programmes. It is hardly surprising that those who choose to engage with these organisations have reason to value the work that they do and the collective experiences of participation that they offer. I would not use this evidence to claim that all young people are positively predisposed to take advantage of institutionalised citizenship projects, nor that this is necessarily their best option.

Chapter 7 discussed GYA members' feelings of failure after the 2011 riots, when faced with overwhelming evidence of disaffectedness among a significant minority of urban youth. This thesis has from the outset asserted that it is unhelpful to conceptualise young people's social and political practices homogenously. It is clear that many young people's lived experiences of citizenship contrast starkly with that of my research participants. Had I spent a year working with street gangs in South London, a social welfare provider or an anti-fracking camp, I might have seen evidence of other kinds of practices of resilience, reworking and resistance, other kinds of identity work, and other kinds of relationship with the dominant political architecture of neoliberalism.

Key learning from this thesis includes outcomes that may be of particular interest to those working in a similar organisational field of practice. Section 8.3 below discusses the research evidence that supports a view of NGOs as valued civic intermediaries, the coexistence of instrumental and intrinsic notions of value in young people's accounts of their citizenship experiences, and how this might inform reflections on practice. The chief contribution of my research to the wider literature on youth citizenship is the theoretical frameworks employed to 'move beyond the claim that young people are either politically engaged or disengaged' (Farthing, 2010 p.181), an approach which may be adopted by studies in different contexts. Section 8.4 reviews insights derived from my wider application of differential citizenship as a tool for analysis, including some emergent themes for future study. Section 8.5 considers the ambiguity of the research findings on active and activist citizenship, and the merits of an indeterminate approach.

8.3 NGOs as civic intermediaries: instrumental and intrinsic value

The research evidence illustrates that for some young people, NGOs are valued and effective civic intermediaries, and that a co-ordinated citizenship-as-practice approach

can support tangible outcomes for them. NGO participation offered young people a range of benefits, including: access to training; transferable skills and increased confidence; opportunities to expand social networks; knowledge of different approaches to social action; a bridge to formal civic institutions, other voluntary sector organisations, social movements and private enterprise; and for some young people, transitions to professional campaigns and policy work. For practitioners and researchers working in a similar organisational field of practice, the conceptual model of NGO empowerment work developed in Chapter 6 offers a means to articulate and reflect on the work of voluntary sector youth citizenship projects, and may be employed as a tool to support programme design and evaluation.

Young people attached both 'instrumental' and 'intrinsic' value (Sen, 2010 p.326) to their citizenship experiences through GYA and YIC. Examples of instrumental value include the perceived/professed worth of these projects for university applications, CVs and as a means of developing multifarious forms of social capital. This was most obviously expressed in the emphasis of employability as a primary outcome of participation. Yet young people also articulated personal experiences of empowerment greater than the sum total of direct benefits: what it meant to realise that as young people, they could come together to create something powerful; or how it felt to be challenged to consider alternative approaches to social action. The ability to participate, deliberate and reformulate ideas through 'public reasoning' (Whiteside and Mah, 2012) and 'praxis' (Freire, 1970) was held in high esteem for its own sake by young people and by the staff and volunteers who supported their projects. The mutually reinforcing acts of amplifying, bridging and capacity building identified in Chapter 6 integrate both 'opportunity' and 'process' dimensions of citizenship (Sen ibid.), illustrating the role that the voluntary sector can play in enhancing citizenship by adopting a capability or consciousness-raising approach.

The research evidence also shows the importance of collective and structured experiences of participation for the young people who took part in these programmes. My case studies illustrate that NGOs are not irrelevant, inauthentic, nor necessarily 'hierarchal, bureaucratic, and distant', as has been suggested by some authors (Juris and Pleyers, 2009 p.61, Putnam, 1996), but to the contrary fertile sites for exploring youth citizenship and social connectedness. There is a civic intermediary role for the

voluntary sector in local, national and transnational spaces of youth citizenship that is not convincingly supplanted by lifestyle and sub-politics.

8.4 Developing 'differential citizenship'

One of the ambiguities explored in this thesis is the relationship of the voluntary sector with public and private spheres of citizenship (Trudeau, 2008). I have used theoretical frameworks derived from geographical work on the shadow state (Wolch, 1990) and working the spaces of neoliberalism (Bondi and Laurie, 2005) to consider the implications of this relationship for youth citizenship. Chapter 5 broadened the application of the idea of the 'differential citizenship' of the shadow state as a tool for analysis (Lake and Newman, 2002), from looking at the demographic distribution of voluntary sector activity to considering how processes of professionalisation in the sector reinforce the social reproduction of inequality. This discussion identified a number of emergent themes that would benefit from further investigation in other organisational contexts, including:

- How citizenship is construed as an optional extra for academic achievers as part of an assumed higher education trajectory; the impact of this assumption on material opportunities for participation among different groups of young people; and how it affects young people's expectations of project outcomes.

- How NGO professionalisation affects young volunteers' perceptions and performance of participation, including their desire for credibility as competent citizens, such that membership can become competitive, exclusive and daunting.

- The role of 'emergent adulthood' and age mixing in professionalising youth participation, including the influence of mentoring, peer learning, and intensified competition for volunteer roles in prestigious citizenship projects.

- How financial and policy incentives promote distinct, targeted citizenship projects for 'problem' and 'privileged' youth, which focus on the performance of social responsibility in the former and social mobility in the latter. NGO staff suggested that there was less support available for 'social mixing' and work with 'the middle ground'. This warrants verification through empirical study of grant making bodies, outside the scope of the current project.

- The spatiality of the performance of differential citizenship, including the role of transnational institutional networks in elite *internships* for privileged youth, and governmental efforts to contain communities through targeted *interventions* for problem youth.

Applying differential citizenship as a tool for analysis in this manner highlights the paradox of citizenship beyond the state, namely that:

'While the concept of (stake) 'holder' is inclusive and presumably exhaustive, the actual concrete forms of governance are necessarily constrained and limited in terms of who can, is, or will be allowed to participate.' (Swyngedouw, 2005 p.1999)

My research evidence suggests that forms of governance affect not only *who* can participate as a citizen-stakeholder through the voluntary sector, but *how* they participate. Differential citizenship can be extended as a useful concept for not only critically engaging with young people's access to opportunities, but also the quality of citizenship that is being produced (Farthing, 2010, Staeheli et al., 2013) for different socio-demographic groups. Taking up these emerging themes I have identified in future youth citizenship research could provoke a more nuanced debate about the potentiality and pitfalls of NGOs' work as civic intermediaries.

8.4 An unfixed view of active and activist citizenship

Another core theme running through the empirical research has been the coexistence of self-regulatory active citizenship and experimentation with activism at the level of practice (Staeheli et al., 2013). As standalone themes, each of the empirical chapters on employability, empowerment and resilience might support different conclusions about the kind of citizenship that is being fostered in young people through voluntary sector action. However, considered together as co-existing facets of young people's citizenship experiences, the implications of these practices are ambiguous. For example, the evidence presented on employability could support the conclusion that:

'in an economic system driven by choice and risk, young people may act out civic roles for instrumental purposes without an accompanying commitment' (Levine and Youniss, 2006 p.4).

Yet many of the young people in GYA and YIC were – or became – passionate about the social and political goals of their citizenship projects, and invested beyond the scope of the formal volunteering roles that they sought for their CVs. Framing these citizenship projects solely as 'something for the CV' (Brooks, 2009) would be a cynical and incomplete account of their contribution. Together, key findings illustrate that an instrumental focus on transferable skills for active citizenship and employment is not incompatible with an ethos of activism, although there are uncomfortable philosophical tensions between the two (Changfoot, 2007, Staeheli et al., 2013). In other words, utilitarian and utopian ideas about the purpose of citizenship were not considered mutually exclusive by young people and the NGOs that supported them.

The ambiguous forms of citizenship that GYA and YIC supported shows that voluntary sector spaces of citizenship are *governed, but not governable* – that they admit multiple possibilities for young people. YIC was unmistakably embedded in governmental agendas as an 'active citizenship' provider, and GYA in the institutionalisation and professionalisation of global civil society networks by the UN. It did not follow that frontline staff, volunteers and young people blithely replicated policy-makers' preferred notions citizenship in their everyday practices, no more than school teachers and pupils take curricular citizenship on face value (Pykett, 2007). YIC's staff opposed changes to their programme when they felt these were not in young people's best interests. Chapter 6's discussion of manoeuvring room and tackling tokenism illustrated how the NGOs were willing to challenge poor participatory mechanisms for young people, and how GYA encouraged its members to critically oscillate between 'official' and 'alternative' spaces of citizenship (McEwan, 2005). Some members, like Sally, described how a project begun on a self-serving premise transformed their understanding of the purpose of participation entirely. NGOs are implicated in neoliberal governance, but also in practices that support thinking and doing otherwise.

This thesis has applied Katz's concepts of resilience, reworking and resistance as a means to critically explore points of tension and convergence in youth citizenship. The empirical research identified instances of all three kinds of socio-symbolic practice coexisting, but as discussed in Chapter 7, an especially prevalent attitude of personal and organisational resilience. It is helpful to contextualise the fieldwork underpinning this finding in the UK's post-recession recovery and retrenchment. It could also be argued that citizenship projects that specifically target youth are from the outset more

predisposed to promote transformation of the self – developing dispositions for participation – than transformation of the social. Nonetheless, it is pertinent to consider whether such a focus favours active citizenship over more overtly political forms of practice; whether it renders young citizens as 'agents without agency' (Staeheli et al., 2013) unlikely to pose substantive challenge to the status quo?

Chapter 2 introduced Sen's (2010) concepts of 'capabilities' and 'realization-focussed comparison' to suggest that the quality of citizenship can be considered in terms of the freedoms and choices that it enhances, including the material difference that it makes to people's lives. The conceptual model of empowerment discussed in Chapter 6 highlights both opportunity-enhancing and choice-enhancing dimensions of NGO work; and GYA and YIC certainly helped young people to become more knowledgeable and confident about different forms of social action. For activism, though, the question is 'so what?' How do young people move 'from a position of knowing to a position of engagement in more radical forms of struggle' (Seupaul 2011)? This project was semi-longitudinal in design in the hope of documenting some of this process, but from the research data I find it hard to offer anything but an evasive conclusion about young people's political agency. The evidence suggests that it is fair to admit more than one possibility; to allow that degrees of apathy, active citizenship and activism coexist not only in the same projects but within each young person's actions and choices.

Chapter 4 discussed my desire to avoid an analysis premised on the assumption that NGOs are inherently good or bad. Likewise Chapter 2 argued that youth citizenship research needs to move beyond a binary view of young people's politics as either engaged/disengaged or apathetic/activist, 'to address the qualitatively different political intent of young people that is realized through different agendas, spheres and forms' (Farthing, 2010 p.192). My analysis has wherever possible acknowledged 'the contingency of social outcomes rather than the unfolding of structural logics' (Gibson-Graham, 2008 p.615) in both case study NGO projects. I have not made fantastic claims about the voluntary sector or its young members as the vanguard of social innovation, but nor have I portrayed an entirely doom and gloom account of the 'hollowing out' of citizenship (Marquand, 2004). Instead, I have explored grounds for the reformulation citizenship as an indeterminate practice through which multiple aspirations and agendas counteract each other and find ways to co-exist, in a way that I hope leaves room for optimism and challenge.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Participant information sheet

Appendix B: Field note template

Appendix C: Field note sample (GYA)

Appendix D: GYA end of project interview schedule

Appendix E: YIC team mentor interview schedule

Appendix F: YIC focus group schedule - Cedar Comprehensive

Appendix G: YIC focus group schedule - end of year evaluation

SCHOOL OF GEOGRAPHY

FACULTY OF ENVIRONMENT

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Youth Citizenship, Social Change and NGOs

Invitation

You are invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thanks for reading.

About the research

Youth Citizenship, Social Change and NGOs is my PhD research project about young people's experiences of taking part in social and political action, ranging from action in local communities to practices of global citizenship. I am especially interested in the role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in supporting young people and widening participation in such projects. The research aims to inform and make recommendations for future NGO youth outreach work.

Why have I been chosen?

My research focuses on two case-study organisations. One of these is [case study1]/[case study 2]. I would like to recruit as many young people as possible who are involved in [case study 1]/[case study 2] projects, and am especially interested in talking to you as a member of.... [specific team/local project].

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. You can still be just as involved in [case study 1]/[case study 2] without being part of this research. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form) and you can still withdraw at any time without it affecting your group membership of [case study 1]/[case study 2].

What do I have to do?

This study uses multiple methods of research, and not everybody will need to be involved at every stage. At the moment, I am recruiting people to [will delete/modify as appropriate]:

Permit me to **observe your regular group meetings** for ... weeks and make field notes.

Take part in a **focus group discussion** with other members of ..., which will take place....

Attend a **workshop** exploring ..., which will take place on....

Take part in a **semi-structured interview**, to discuss your role and experiences with [case study 1]/[case study 2] in-depth. This can be arranged at your convenience and will last approximately half an hour.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are no foreseeable risks of taking part in this research. It may take up some of your time, but hopefully usefully and enjoyably.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for participants, it is hoped that this research will support [case study 1]/[case study 2]'s future outreach work and inform wider debates about young people's participation in citizenship projects.

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All the information collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be able to be identified in any academic reports or publications.

What will happen to the results of the research project?

In addition to my PhD, results may be published in academic journals and reports, which I will be happy to send you copies of. I am interested in communicating the research in ways that you would find useful and accessible, and I would be glad to hear your suggestions for ways of sharing feedback from this project.

Who is organising and funding the research?

This project is supervised within the University of Leeds' School of Geography, and funded by the Economics and Social Research Council.

Contact for further information

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Appendix B: Field note template

Date: What: When:

Who: Where:

Descriptive notes: Asides/Commentaries/Memos:

Appendix C: Field note sample

The following field note record, taken from a CS1 training weekend, shows how I documented and reflected on participation in practice throughout the ethnographic study. There is no such thing as a 'typical' field note: some are longer, notes of team Skype calls are much shorter, and some include more extensive asides. This extract from my field notes is included to illustrate my process of producing ethnography.

Date: 10th- 11th September 2011   What: CS1 Organising team weekend   When: All day (from 10am approx.)

Who: From IE team, me, MW, NF, CS, LH, TL, TY + Co-directors + several other teams (30   Where: Quaker meeting house Nottingham
approx.)

Descriptive notes: Asides/Commentaries/Memos:

I'm at a bi-annual organising team weekend for CS1, which is a little like IE team weekends but for all volunteers within the organisation, not just one team. We are sleeping in crash pad accommodation in the Quaker meeting house, as a member of another team is a member here so they loaned their space. During the first evening those there chilled out and watched In Bruges on a projector, all social and little talk of organising. Many more people arrive first thing Saturday morning with large bags as we work out cooking and cleaning rotas.

Surprised by just how many people I don't know – shows how little I'm integrated with the rest of the organisation, contrary to expectations when I started the research.

After a brief introduction and ice breaker at around 10am, we break out into usual teams for specific sessions. CT from GCCA has visited to give the IE team an expert brief on communications in the run up to Durban. All IE team present except LH and TL attend this; LH is with the campaigns team and I don't really see TL as part of IE team all weekend. We all sit on cushions on the floor, around CT and his laptop, which has a short presentation from CAN on expectations for Durban. We can hear the muffled sound of other sessions nextdoor. I mainly scribble policy notes during this session, it's all about international NGO campaign and communications strategy.

I realised afterwards, like with Bonn, most of what I'd written in field notes was about policy and not about my research project – easily distracted when I'm trying to get my head around the complicated stuff! I don't replicate all of those notes here, only stuff I felt reading back through might be relevant to understanding my case study's approach.

CT talks about how the key message should be "Durban delivers" – if Cancun was about saving the process that people were losing faith in, then it makes sense for Durban to be about delivery and slowly rebuilding confidence. It can't be about saving or wrecking the process again: that was the mistake made in Copenhagen communications. It's wrong to hype Durban up too much as it could lead to disappointment and depression within the climate movement. CT talks about how Durban will lack ambition and civil society is not likely to persuade countries to move their pledges up this year. CT says this links to CS1's work on PSEU – of course it's ok to still call for more ambition within the EU publicly, but internally campaigners need to be realistic/prepared in their expectations. He says: "I'm sorry. We know what sort of targets we need to save the planet from climate change, and we know we won't get that. But we have to keep those targets alive."

CT identifies four levels of communications, which he shows in an onion diagram of increasing circles: youth, local, national, global. These are not meant to represent scale, but different target audiences that CS1 should frame communications around. He advises that CS1 mainly talks in a UK context and for peers, but with the EU level and PSEU networks at the back of its mind. He says work mainly with the levels that are closest to you. He says MW as our communications coordinator can act as a checker, and can feedback to us/GCCA when we/they produce content that's too much in a UN bubble. It should always be filtered for a UK youth audience.

He says unfortunately in the UK, climate change has dropped off in terms of priority. It's all about economic and financial things and what that means in terms of your private life, general sense of fear about the future. CT says we know some of these issues are partly to do with climate change and need to find a way of making those links. If we only talk about the UN and whatever country A or B is doing, it's not going to connect with people's priorities at the moment. CS1 is right to focus on

Another example of the role of storytelling – in this case salvaging a story of success from failure – in shaping young people's participation. Limiting expectations about power to change things in the present, deferring to some imagined future when conditions will be better, change more possible.

translating things into ordinary language – but should also start thinking more systematically about content. Don't just think about accessibility when you write on a particular topic, but develop a comms strategy so all content tells part of the same story that connects with people. It's important to have a filter about what level you're communicating at, and think about what channel goes to what audience.

CT talks about the main communications challenge: what if there was a collapse of the Durban climate talks? Would be a shame to have another post-Copenhagen period. CT says civil society made a mistake by drumming up expectations massively and unrealistically and "we destroy a lot of our own work if we fail to take people along", and we don't want "another crap conference ending in another crap result." How would supporters feel if this happened? NF says this will always be the challenge and progress will always be slow. CT says one way to remedy this is to always start off with a narrative that says a lot of good change is happening, and that more and more people support it (use examples of civil society around the world) BUT it all doesn't add up to what we need to see to secure a clean and sustainable future: a global agreement is still needed. That way, if UNFCCC fails there are still positives that people can hold onto. He says it's good to tell "stories of the new realities of the inevitable and positive changes already happening" e.g. communities in Africa doing green grassroots work. Have a few generic blogs that use this messaging that you can go back to. First point of contact is social media channel, then website (don't abandon it). He says CS1 should build links: can you connect with student and green groups in your university? How can you get into their networks? Make better use of your own networks e.g. if you're a member of any other green groups.

After a brief tea break and social chat, we have a session called 'Coordinator Carousel' where we get to meet the coordinators (i.e. in NF's position) of teams

Teamspace is a new online resource that CS1 are trying to encourage people to use to post internal documents, strategy, contacts etc. so

other than our own. First I chat to CI who coordinates the Coalition team and in response to my questions about who is and is not a coalition partner, he says anyone can look at the new coalition map on Teamspace. He says Teamspace is good because "before we weren't very transparent with what we were doing, and now it's much more visible." When CS1 is restructured, coalition will be part of the home or UK team e.g. by helping to coordinate cross-blog posting with coalition partners.

Next I chat to RB, who coordinates the Training team. She says training works in three key areas:

- Internal
  It delivers training for CS1 internally, supported by associates, e.g. coalition partners and CS1 alumni, people who can offer ad-hoc training sessions but aren't active team members all the time. Looking at polling members to find out what training they would like.
- Training packages
  CS1 has two training packages, which it can offer other organisations: Ganz public narrative, and teaching young people about climate change. The second one is in development, and is envisioned as a package for PGCE students.
- Social Enterprise
  New role for training envisioned for the immediate future (social enterprise coordinator role currently under creation/recruitment) – using training as internal support, as a way to support income generation for CS1. BUT this is not just about giving any old training and hoping people will pay for it, RB says "we've got to believe that the training we have to give is valuable."

RB says enterprise is currently at the policy and paperwork stage. MW has just been recruited and is looking to build in a decision-making process for members, and

it's visible to other teams. It's a little like a wiki. I am still getting the hang of using it, as I think is everyone else from the feedback I've heard so far. Still at low-ish levels of usage apart from a few coordinators.

CS1 membership package similar to Amnesty or P&P fan club?

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developing a membership package for CS1 which could also support income generation.

Next I am with IT to talk about the Campaigns Team, which she has recently taken over as coordinator of. She says CS1 campaigns team previously did a good job with the constituency MP campaign at engaging people for a short while. She says she sees this more of a tool than a campaign itself. This could be developed by working more with Coalition partners to come up with specific asks, e.g. Robin Hood Tax campaign could provide a specific thing for people to go to their MP with one month. Bank on the Future suffered from the same problem in that it wasn't really a specific, targeted campaign: success isn't measurable, it doesn't have a defined end point or an exciting thing that young people can rally around. Entrust, which is the third campaign that IT inherited, is still at research and development stage. She says it's "quite a legally, wordy, policy-based campaign" and will come out when it's ready. IT thinks it will "need a lot of communications framing to make people understand it, let alone like it." She thinks it doesn't have any urgency about it, and this presents a problem. At the moment, her immediate quick turnaround focus as campaign team coordinator is a post-PS campaign with a tangible political ask, something that will be empowering for young people to take part in. Has the problem of "quite low capacity, quite high demand." IT says she took on the campaign coordinator role because after delegation last year, she felt like important delegation work at the UNFCCC wasn't really supported by a strong mandate from youth in the UK.

Next I talk to CB, coordinator for the PS Team. She says recruitment for people to attend the event is a struggle at the moment and needs support, but she's "confident that it will be fine." She asks for all CS1 volunteers regardless of their team to help with recruitment for the next few weeks. Says she understands that

Note how campaigns themselves have to be stories – measureable things with a challenge that mobilises people and a definite 'ending'.

IT's comment about lacking strong work/mandate from youth in the UK to complement international work is pretty much exactly what FI says in debrief interview.

recruitment can get quite dry as people can just feel like they're just pushing, selling, and not really offering an opportunity. That's why they've chosen to focus on a green jobs campaign as a theme, so that CS1 is offering people something and its members can feel more confident about recruitment.

Next I talk to Ch about Operations team, which seems to be just her! She started about a month ago and is currently looking at decision making processes. HS (co-director) says that "decision-making conversation is going to be an open process, you won't just inherit a culture of decision-making, you'll have agency within it."

Next with JL, co-director, who talks about the Fundraising Team. He says this team has had two coordinators come and go in a short space of time so they're currently rebuilding the team from scratch. Fundraising team's current priority is building a core case for support from different funders. They are also trying to fundraise for a full-time salary to be split between the two co-directors to help with living costs. At present, the co-director's workload is such that you can't work full time and do it, and you have to be in London some of the time. So CS1 has two choices: reduce what it does, or support current capacity with better finance. This is important, JL believes, because it means anyone could become a co-director from any financial background, not just people who can self-support. At the moment, that fair access definitely isn't the case. HS adds that one thing CS1 co-directors are looking at doing at the moment is mapping the UK youth climate movement, thinking about mainstream and marginalised voices. Also looking at the injustices young people face in the UK and being more holistic about climate change. Youth unemployment is the big issue at the moment, and that's why in European work they're looking at "Enabling young people to craft green jobs". She says "That's what thematically guides us at the moment." The Co-directors' funding decision was made by the coordinating team. Co-directors will still volunteer half their time, as coordinating

Note confusion about decision-making: in theory, everything decided by consensus but coordinating team made a big decision on co-director funding that ought to have gone to an AGM. Restructure addressed problem by lessening workload and having 4 co-directors, as they were not successful in their core funding bids. Note also role of volunteering/ unpaid work in creating atmosphere of equality among organisers. Coordinators can be paid as long as this isn't seen as asking for a lesser commitment of voluntary labour– they also have to volunteer some of their time.

team felt it was important that directors volunteer the same number of hours as other volunteer organisers, and are not raised above their level. The funding would be to support the "bare bones" of what CS1 needs to do.

We cook and eat lunch together around a long table and chat informally, taking photos and playing games to energise. The first afternoon session is on PS recruitment. They suggest members start using teamspace as a resource, looking up what organisations they know and contacts in different areas. They also get everyone present to compose and send a text to their friends, recruiting them to come to PS then and there. Obvious anxiety about recruitment.

For the second afternoon session we sit outside on the lawn in the sunshine. MW and RB lead a session on Ganz Public Narrative training as this will be a major component of PS with parallel sessions running for ALL attendees. Most CS1 volunteers present indicate that they are already Ganz trained through CS1. MW introduces it as being used in door-to-door campaigning in Barack Obama's election campaign. MW says CS1 would like to draw it out very carefully in relation to green jobs. Each CS1 volunteer who offers to facilitate a Ganz session will be asked to give a Green Jobs "story of self, us, now" example. RB says at PS, Ganz will be delivered to all participants in regional groups. Each group will have one deliverer, from the training team, supported by facilitators drawn from the wider CS1 organising team. The facilitators' job will be to "coach" small groups in breakout discussions to develop their own stories of self/us/now. RB notes that it can be an invasive workshop depending on how well or badly it's delivered. It's asking people to sit down in a room full of strangers and share stories, so emotional intelligence is required. We play an old school icebreaker game called 'liar liar' to explore emotional intelligence (people tell two lies and one truth, and we have to spot the truth). RB introduces the game badly so everyone gets confused and frustrated.

It is hard to envisage how young people's stories would link organically to green jobs without a strong steer from facilitators.

As RB introduces what will happen at PS and how it's important for session facilitators to be emotionally intelligent and sensitive to what they're asking of people, I can't help but recall the first ever training day I attended and how this definitely wasn't the case with her own facilitation style! We were all confused about why we were being

When we reflect on this afterwards, she says she did it on purpose to show how poor facilitation can make people feel uncomfortable in sharing personal information. She shares some tips for facilitation in Ganz session:

- Ask open ended questions
- Don't let one person dominate
- Keep time (4 mins each in this case)
- Don't offer criticism or feedback, because it's really important that people feel like story of self is being delivered in a peer-to-peer environment, not like you're a teacher who's judging them.

CS says that at the team's first session when we did this training, people struggled because they didn't see a story of now. CS says it's also unfair to drag stories out of people if they're not relevant to the story of now; she relates this to her own uncomfortable experience and says she personally finds Ganz "a bit much" and doesn't always know how to start the story of self. RB suggests asking people what got them to where they are now, why they care about the issue of green jobs and decided to come to PS. JL asks if anyone has any experience of dealing with dominant group members, as this was a problem for him when delivering Ganz. HS suggests we all think about training we've had on mainstream/marginalised / step forward/step back and what this means when facilitating a discussion. CB and CI suggest facilitation tools that they have used in the past e.g. traffic lights to rate talkers (self-identification); thanking a talker and inviting someone else to speak. EB suggests using different roles. Conversation gets very internally focussed on different ways of running a Ganz workshop by those who have done a few, and I struggle to follow. HS makes a process point that the conversation has become too technical for most people to follow, especially those who haven't done the Ganz training before. TY asks if anyone has used their Ganz training to give speeches? HS

asked to tell stories about ourselves in such a way, worried about what was and wasn't relevant in our past experience and several people afterwards said it made them feel very uncomfortable.

I was relieved when CS raised this issue, as given my own reflections and notes on previous Ganz training I felt something should be said - rather than pretend that everyone is comfortable with this training. But didn't think it right to raise the concern in my research position, especially when unknown to the wider team of people there.

says she used it on Facebook to get friends to donate last year and also opens any CS1 talk she gives with a story of self. TL says he uses it all the time, especially when giving talks to climate sceptics. JL says he uses it and thinks it's good as your audience goes on a journey when you use it. He gives an example of a speech he made where he had to ask people to do a campaign action at the end and he had a good response rate. He felt like without Ganz he "wouldn't have been able to get people there." RB says that at PS, she also wants to frame Ganz training within the context of an action: in this case, how can CS1 get young people to use it to approach their MP to make an ask about Green Jobs? She also says in story of us, it has to be positive as there's no point in trying to mobilise people around a negative message or identity e.g. "I'm just like you because we're all doomed/thieves/etc."! She then talks about something that sounds similar to NLP training that was discussed in the volunteer training session I attended with CS2, last weekend. Get people to think about how people see them. RB says she usually picks a category to get people talking e.g. how do people see climate activists? Then, once people have explored negative stereotypes, how would you like to be perceived? (Possibly preceded by: how does that [stereotype] make you feel? If you have time). Use this to encourage positive framing, as the second set [of positive] words are more powerful. It's also important that the story of now focuses on a tangible ask. To conclude, RB passes around her laptop and asks us all to fill in on the table if we'd be happy to facilitate or deliver a session. I make a general point about seeking diversity within the delivery team if they're seeking diversity of attendees. We disband and most people head to the pub. I stay behind to work, to write up these notes, along with two girls from the fundraising team.

*   *   *

Sunday morning we can't use the Quaker church as the congregation is meeting

NLP (neuro-linguistic programming) training featured in a CS2 regional skills share training for mentors, and I know of two CS2 volunteer mentors who identify as NLP practitioners.

there, so we tidy up and go to the park. The group plays a game in the park called wizards, giants and pixies, which involves fast team decisions, two teams facing off, running and catching each other. I sit it out. We then head to Costa for discussing whatever we want to discuss in our usual CS1 teams. In IE team we talk about comms strategy and make a giant mindmap about possible communication channels, ones the team has used already and ones it could use, on flipchart paper. NF says she will type this up and email it round to us all. We then go back to the meeting house and have tea and chat with the Quakers for half an hour. Once they leave, we then have a circle discussion and each team feeds back what they were discussing in Costa. Updates from coalition, fundraising, PS, IE, campaigns, outreach, training, similar issues (e.g. green jobs, PS recruitment) raised as discussed yesterday.

In fundraising update DJ Says they have been discussing a monthly meet up, possibly in London, to support each other "because we can be quite a cloud-based organisation, virtual, online. Sometimes it's important to go analogue and actually get people together."

We have the next session sat all together in a circle outside on the lawn again. It's a discussion about working on Green Jobs more in the future. TL introduces some of the main issues in campaigning on Green Jobs. He and HS have been working with the East London Green Jobs alliance. There's a conflict between government definition of a green job (high tech skilled e.g. wind turbines, and medium skilled e.g. retrofitting) and a movement definition, which is anything that contributes to a sustainable economy. We have a brainstorm discussion about what an ideal green job is. DJ Says we need to think about morality and ethics in our definition, because that's something you just can't put a number on when it comes to work. I ask about what the next step is in coming up with a decision about CS1's vision for green jobs?

The green jobs discussion is very similar to the one I recorded at the PS training weekend in Bath, and I notice the same people are speaking. Conversation seems to be going round in circles, which is why I asked about decision making.

HS says this will be the role of the Visioning WG. She clarifies what it has been doing. It was proposed by AM last year and voted for at last year's AGM. The Visioning WG is responsible for coming up with wide collective visions that can be sent around CS1 for feedback.

Afternoon discussion is split into two open space technology sessions where anyone can propose a topic of conversation and anyone is free to join that discussion/ move between parallel discussions. HS spends some time introducing open space carefully, with a picture timetable up on the wall that people can help fill in the blanks of. She goes over the history of OST, the laws e.g. "whatever happens happens", why it's used etc. She says it's about "giving people agency" and talks about the law of two feet, the role of butterflies and bumble bees who "cross-pollinate discussion" and like to know what's going on everywhere. Mostly these sessions are just open conversations about stuff people are interested in, in small groups, rather than organisational strategy. TL leads one on common cause and NF one on CS1's international work. I told the peer research team that I had been trying to establish over email that we would have a session for planning during organising weekend, and tried to hold it here, but only three people came including two non-CS1 members who live locally.

It was at this point that I realised that the peer research team wasn't going to work, that it was no one's priority but mine.

The weekend comes to an end with people leaving to catch trains. We take a quick group photo outside beforehand.

Appendix D: GYA End of project interview schedule

Getting started

- Cast your mind almost as far back as this time last year. What were your reasons for applying to join the international engagement team?

- How did you hear about the opportunity?

- Can you describe your experience of the recruitment process? [Prompt] What was your impression of the other applicants? How did you feel at the selection day?

- What hopes and expectations did you have for the year?

- How would you describe the project in a nutshell? [e.g. How did you explain it to friends and family]

- A lot of campaign groups, including many who care about climate change, think that the UN is ineffective, or argue that the limited impact civil society has there doesn't justify the air miles. Why, for you, was participating at this level important?

Core activities

- Can you describe a 'typical' GYA week for you last year? [Prompt] What did you spend time on? How much time? Who with? How did it fit into your daily/weekly routine?

- From memory, what stands out about training weekends? Any big positives or negatives (or both)?

- In your opinion, what was the value of coming together in one place for those weekends? Was it important?

- Can you describe what kind of outreach work you personally did in the run up to Bonn and Durban?

- What, in your experience, were the biggest challenges of your role on the team?

- Do you feel that you had a good balance between GYA and other commitments (e.g. work, university, relationships, friendships)?

- The role involved a lot of virtual participation, and I found this quite isolating at times compared with, say, belonging to a local action group. Would you agree or disagree with this, based on your own experience?

- In some conversations about outreach at training weekends, I noticed concerns that GYA might be perceived as a white middle-class organisation, and people wanting to move away from that stereotype. Do you share these concerns?

- GYA members seem to care about diversity and engaging with young people regardless of their background. What does that mean for this project in particular, and does it present challenges?

- Did you do much work with the UN youth constituency?

- For me, the role involved striking a balance between focussing internally/internationally on UN policy work, and externally/locally on outreach activities in the UK. In your opinion, what's the right balance, and do you feel that the team achieved this?

In Bonn

- How did working with the youth constituency in Bonn compare to interacting online? Did you feel as though you had established relationships beforehand? Do you still have those relationships?

- What did you *personally* spend most of your time and energy on in Bonn?

- Is this what you expected to be doing?

- What were the main ways that you engaged with people who weren't in Bonn whilst you were there? [Prompt] Who/how? Was it easy to do this? Why/not?

In Durban

- How did working with the youth constituency at COP compare to interacting online? Did you feel as though you had established relationships beforehand? Do you still have those relationships now?

- What do you feel you *personally* spent most of your time and energy on in Durban?

- Is this what you expected to be doing?

- What were the main ways that you engaged with people who weren't in Durban whilst you were there? [Prompt] Who/how? Was it easy to do this? Why/not?

- Can you tell me about a time that really stands out from your COP experience, perhaps a time when you felt the most empowered, or inspired, or like – *this is what I came here for*?

- Can you tell me about a time that stands out for the opposite reasons: a time when you felt disempowered, or ineffective, or questioned why you were there? What was your response?

- Do you think you were sufficiently prepared for COP?

Coming home

- If not, what other training or support would you have liked, on reflection?

- When do you think this training and support would have been most useful?

- How do you feel since coming home?

- What do you say to family and friends when they ask you about Durban? Do you enjoy being asked?

- What are your next steps?

- Do you see your engagement with the youth constituency/UN continuing? If so, how? If not, why?

- What advice would you give to someone considering applying for this year's team?

- Looking back on your hopes and expectations when you joined the team, do you feel as if they've been met? [Or have they evolved..?]

- There's going to be a lot of reflection on the future of this project (and GYA as a whole) over the next couple of months. As someone who has been deeply involved, what's your honest impression of its flaws and its strengths?

- What should GYA continue doing, and what should it do differently in terms of international engagement?

- Finally, what are the main outcomes of your involvement in this project – what will you take away from all of this?

Appendix E: YIC team mentor interview schedule

- What interested you about the volunteer team mentor role with YIC?
- What hopes and expectations do you bring to the role?
- What experience do you bring?
- What was your impression of YIC before you started volunteering in school?
- Now you're actually doing the role, is it quite similar to or different from what you expected?
- How do you feel about working with young people?
- How would you describe YIC's work in schools to someone who doesn't know anything about it? (Imagine you're telling a friend...)
- Can you tell me about what *you* do in a typical YIC meeting?
- Can you describe how young people act in YIC meetings? What have you noticed about their attitudes or behaviour?
- Why do you think they behave in this way?
- It could be argued that working in a school setting presents challenges for youth workers. What do you think?
- In your opinion, what's the most important aspect or value of YIC's work?

Appendix F: YIC focus group schedule - Cedar Comprehensive

The beginning
- What do you remember about the whole school assembly in September, with the Powerpoint and video about YIC?
- What did you expect or want to gain when you signed up?
- How well did the presentation represent your experience?
- What was different? Does this matter?
- Do you think there are any barriers to taking part?

Continue
- What do you remember about YIC meetings? What did you like/dislike?
- How did you feel in meetings?
- Did you enjoy working in groups and teams? Why/not?
- Did you go to the Launch event in November? Why/not? What did you like/dislike?
- Was there anything that you enjoyed with YIC that you would have liked to do more of?

Stop
- Is there anything you think YIC could do less of? (Did anything feel like a waste of time?)
- Roughly what point in the year did you stop attending YIC meetings?
- Can you describe why you decided to stop coming at that point?
- Did you get as far as choosing an issue for your project? If yes, what did you want to focus on and why?
- If yes, how did you find the decision-making process? Was it too long/short?

Start
- What kind of support do you think YIC is there to offer?
- How did you find the support from YIC?
- Would you have liked more guidance/structure?
- How might YIC provide a better experience in the future?
- What could YIC do to encourage more people from [school] to take part?

- Do you think YIC is something anyone could do, or do you think it's more suited to a certain kind of person?

Appendix G: YIC focus group schedule - end of year evaluation

End of Year focus group

1. Engagement (15 mins)

Show a short clip from the Engagement video and recap first assembly

- What made it effective for you?
- What impression did you get of YIC?
- How well did the presentation represent your experience? Does this matter?
- Did it influence your project? How?

2. The structure of the YIC year (10 mins)

- How did you find the timing of the YIC year (Sep/Apr)? Should it be longer/shorter?
- How did you find the decision making process? Was it too long/short?
- When did your team choose their issue to tackle?

3. Games, Tools and Resources (20 mins)

Value Continuum, Issues Game, Photoboards, Issue Tree.

Depending on numbers, students split into 2 or discuss together. Remind them of each activity using visual prompts; ask them to comment on how well each works as team-builder/educational activity.

- Out of 5 (5 very well, and 0 not very well): How well does it work as...

    - A team-builder;

    - Introduction to issues;

    - Working towards choosing your issue?

    - Any other comments or ideas?

- Were you given any other resources by your mentor? How useful were they?
- What other resources or information would have helped you with your project?

4. Support (10 mins)

- What is the support from YIC as you see it?
- How did you find the support from your mentor?
- Did you feel you needed more guidance/structure from YIC?
- Did you receive any support from your school/college/teachers for your project?

5. Events and opportunities (15 mins)

Introduce timeline of events on flip chart – the Launch, the Challenge, Summer Ceremony

- Did you go? Why/why not?
- What did you like about the event? Was there anything you didn't like?
- What impact did they have on your team project?
- Would your experience have been as good without the November and March events?
- What would you like to see more of at YIC events?

6. Skills and Knowledge (10 mins)

- What did you expect/want to gain?
- Were your expectations met? If not, how can YIC meet them in the future?
- How did YIC help your skills/knowledge of social issues?

7. Evaluation and reflection (10 mins)

- Recap tools (print off December reflection cards, YIC CV and End of year Evaluation forms)
- Discuss – Were they helpful? How did you find the reflection sessions?
- How could YIC have done this differently?
- Do you think evaluation/reflection makes a difference to YIC's work?