

YOUTH **in**



Civil
Society

PART TWO



GLOBAL TRENDS

Chapter 4

By virtue of their membership in a family unit, a neighbourhood, a school district, a cultural group, and a multitude of other community building blocks, young people both shape and are shaped by the society around them. This second part of the publication examines the priority issues for youth development that relate to the dynamics between young people and their societies. It begins by outlining how young people view the environment, highlighting their role as the vanguard in sustainable development and its application to their local surroundings. Another focus is leisure-time activities and the growing awareness of the vital contribution discretionary hours make to the social inclusion of young people in their societies. Participation in decision-making is the third major area explored, in recognition of the fact that young people need to be involved in the processes that help shape their socio-economic environment.

Within the context of the five new areas of concern recognized by the United Nations since the adoption of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, this part also examines two important developments that have brought about significant changes in the socialization and participation of young people. One is the ageing of societies, which has profound implications for intergenerational relations. The other is the expansion of information and communication technology (ICT), the multiple dimensions of which were still emerging when the Programme of Action for Youth was adopted in 1995.

When considered in connection with priorities such as leisure-time activities or participation in decision-making, it becomes apparent that ICT has contributed enormously to the development of a global media-driven youth culture. The effects of this emerging culture are increasingly identifiable in the lives of many young people and are altering socialization patterns, processes and experiences. The magnitude and implications of this trend make it imperative that a closer look be taken at what it means to grow up in a global media-driven youth culture. Chapters 5 and 6 of this part of the publication focus specifically on how this dynamic is creating new forms of socialization within societies, the implications of new media for young people, and the influence of these media on young people's participation and civic engagement.

Recognizing that they will bear the consequences of current environmental policies, young people continue to have a strong interest in protecting and preserving the planet's resources. The participation of young people in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 set the stage for participation by youth groups in other global conferences, culminating in their relatively high-profile involvement in the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg in 2002.

The environment-related proposals in the World Programme of Action for Youth are reinforced in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. The World Programme of Action calls for mainstreaming environmental education and training in general school curricula and training programmes. Throughout the process surrounding the World Summit on Sustainable Development, young people advocated for renewed commitment to education

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for sustainable development. At its fifty-seventh session in December 2002, the General Assembly proclaimed 2005-2014 the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. The International Implementation Scheme for the Decade establishes a broad framework for all partners, including youth, to contribute to its activities.

Environmental education has grown steadily over the past decade through its inclusion in both school curricula and non-formal and informal educational programmes. Increasing numbers of national and regional professional associations of environmental educators are lending strength to this trend. However, the real challenge lies in achieving visible gains from environmental education, or in other words, translating environmental values into changes in behaviour, which requires increased political commitment and lifestyle adjustments. Environmental education should incorporate provisions for effecting well-designed and concrete changes. Working with young people at the local, grass-roots level to preserve the environment is critical to achieving the Millennium Development Goal of ensuring environmental sustainability.

The World Programme of Action for Youth proposes strengthening the participation of young people in the protection, preservation and improvement of the environment. Youth have been and continue to be actively involved in implementing environmental projects and in identifying new strategies for addressing environmental problems. Such experience qualifies them for increased participation in decisions relating to environmental policy. At a practical level, enhancing the role of young people in environmental protection will require their integration into the decision-making structures of government-supported programmes and non-governmental organizations.

Lessons can be drawn from the Tunza Youth Strategy adopted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in 2003, which is designed to engage young people in the work of the organization and in a broad range of activities aimed at enhancing environmental conservation and sustainable development. At the annual Tunza International Youth Conference, young people take stock of the progress achieved with regard to the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and review their role in promoting sustainable development within the UNEP framework.

The World Programme of Action for Youth recognizes the essential role of the media in the widespread dissemination of environmental information among young people. It is felt by many youth, however, that the mainstream media have not provided comprehensive reporting of environmental issues, so they are increasingly disseminating environmental information through their own channels. At the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Global Youth Reporters Programme provided live news feeds offering a unique perspective on what world leaders were undertaking in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Young people, who tend to adopt technology very rapidly, are increasingly using media such as camcorders, digital film editing software and the Internet to produce and distribute their own environmental material. Growing numbers of young people are relying on environmental films, videos, blogs (web logs featuring short Internet chats and journals), and zines (small handmade publications) to reach out to each other and share their environmental values and concerns.

LEISURE-TIME ACTIVITIES

The past decade has seen a shift in perceptions regarding the role of leisure-time activities in a young person's development. In the traditional view, leisure time is simply seen as "free time", but there has been a growing awareness of the vital contribution discretionary time can make to a young person's social inclusion, access to opportunities and overall development. Terms such as "leisure", "informal activities" and "free time" imply a casualness of purpose and practice that does not do justice to the way a majority of young people use their unrestricted hours. In many cases, young people's leisure time and activities relate directly to important issues affecting them, including education and employment. Out of both necessity and interest, they are increasingly seeking and finding new ways to spend their free time.

HIV/AIDS, delinquency, conflict, drug abuse and other threats to a young person's well-being constitute a particular danger during discretionary time; however, many projects and programmes designed to engage young people in more positive pursuits are focused on these very issues as well, though they may or may not be available in certain settings. Given such interconnections, it is critical that leisure-time activities be viewed within the overall context of youth development and the participation of young people in their communities and society.

In many industrialized countries, cuts in government subsidies for sports activities, music and art instruction, and other leisure and recreational options have endangered many valuable extracurricular programmes in and out of schools. The loss of these opportunities is producing greater numbers of latchkey children, who either return home to empty dwellings or roam the streets. Some young people are initiating projects in areas in which public programmes fall short, but they require assistance and support, including supervision, the provision of meeting places, and increased access to other public facilities. The leisure needs of young people must be considered in the processes of urban planning and rural development in order to ensure that they have access to a range of constructive voluntary activities and opportunities.

Leisure activities in which young people are positively engaged in volunteerism are particularly important, as statistics show that individuals who volunteer in their youth are more likely to continue to do so in their later years. Some studies in North America show that young volunteers are more likely to do well in school and to vote. The International Year of Volunteers in 2001 played an important part in broadening traditional perceptions of the nature, role and contributions of young people as volunteers. By the end of that year, there was a general consensus in the international community that the canvas of youth volunteerism encompassed, but was much broader than, leisure-time activities. Young people volunteer in a number of ways, engaging in activism, participating in formal service organizations, and even assuming responsibilities within mutual aid systems, which are particularly prevalent in developing countries. The momentum generated during the International Year of Volunteers must be sustained, as volunteerism has the potential to engage large numbers of young people in activities that can contribute greatly to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

There has been increasing affirmation of the connection between leisure-time sports activities and development, as participation in sports not only improves physical health, but also contributes to the development of a positive self-concept and essential social skills and values such as teamwork and tolerance. Furthermore, sport is a universal language that brings all types of people together, regardless of their origin, background, religious beliefs or economic status. It cuts across barriers that divide societies, making it a powerful tool for promoting positive goals such as conflict prevention and peace-building among young people, both symbolically at the global level and more practically within communities. Well-designed sport-based initiatives are practical, cost-effective mechanisms for achieving peace and development objectives.

An increasing number of variables are determining how young people make use of their time outside of school or work. Universally high levels of youth unemployment and the rising costs associated with higher education often compel young people to limit their leisure pursuits to career exploration and preparation activities that facilitate the transition from school to work. This trend helps explain the sustained decline in memberships in sports associations and other organized forms of leisure activity.

ICT has also affected leisure-time habits, as social interaction is increasingly taking place within an electronic environment through such means as text messaging and online meetings. New leisurely pursuits such as downloading music, using instant messages, and playing electronic games are for the most part solitary activities. Some of these pastimes are replacing more traditional pursuits, such as sports. A Norwegian study indicates that children and young people are spending less time participating in physical recreation and sporting activities, and that only 47 per cent of young people between the ages of 20 and 24 engage in physical training of any kind every 14 days (or more often) (Mjaavatn, 1999). The development of modern technologies may be contributing to the evolution of a culture of "individualized leisure" as young people increasingly devote their free time to computer screens and mobile keypads.

PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING

The past decade has seen a growing acceptance of the importance of youth participation in decision-making, and successful efforts to engage young people in the political process have led to improved policy formulation, adoption, implementation and evaluation. Participation strengthens young people's commitment to and understanding of the concepts of human rights and democracy. The traditional view that "youth are the future" fails to take into account that young people are very active contributors to their societies today.

While involving young people in the decisions that affect society is beneficial from both a policymaking and a youth development perspective, it is not always effectively practised. The nature of youth engagement ranges from manipulation and tokenism to the assumption of full responsibility for the design and implementation of programmatic responses. Effective youth participation requires fundamental changes in the way societies perceive young people. To induce such changes it is necessary to provide adequate funding, introduce innovative ways to spread information, furnish training to facilitate intergenerational collaboration, and create organizational structures that welcome new voices. Strategies for youth participation must move away from ad hoc, activity-based

approaches and focus instead on making youth input a central component of social structures, institutions and processes. Efforts should be undertaken to foster intergenerational relationships and strengthen the capacity of young people to participate meaningfully and equally with other generations in programmes and activities that affect them. Girls and young women, in particular, may need additional support to overcome social, cultural, and economic barriers to full participation.



In national efforts to include youth in decision-making, consideration must be given to the changes occurring in the political attitudes of young people and in the patterns and structures of youth movements. In many countries, political parties are having difficulty attracting young members. Campaigns that encourage youth to vote seek to reverse the trend of reduced political interest among young people. Apathy towards politics and a lack of interest in joining traditional youth organizations seem to characterize the younger generation in many countries. To many young people, the world of politics seems far removed from their daily realities of school commitments, leisure activities, and employment challenges. Many youth fail to see a connection between these realities and the impact of public policies on their lives. Low voter turnout and dwindling membership in political parties should not lead to the conclusion that young people are uninterested in the political future of their societies. Although most student movements are still confined to university settings, the range of student-driven causes has expanded beyond educational reform and funding cuts to include democratic reforms, employment and health issues, racism, arms proliferation, environmental challenges, and a host of other concerns. Student movements have played a crucial role in a number of major social and political transitions that have occurred in various countries in recent history and are likely to continue to be at the forefront of the struggle for democratization and progressive social action.

In many countries, local, regional and national youth councils are major outlets for political and civic participation. Youth councils and forums, which may vary in terms of structure and mandate, have been the traditional channels through which young people have cooperated and communicated with national authorities and other decision makers. In a number of settings, however, these youth structures face an uncertain future, as the stable public funding they need to remain viable can no longer be guaranteed and is often not available in developing or transition countries. Many youth organizations must be results-focused and project-driven in order to receive funding. An interesting irony is that because formal youth councils are often mirrors of the political structures currently in place, some young people feel they are being asked to participate in the very same structures that they believe preclude true and effective participation. Some studies indicate that the motivation for joining formal youth organizations is changing, with many members having a pragmatic rather than an ideological interest in their activities. Membership is increasingly viewed as a way to enhance a young person's career or other prospects rather than as an opportunity to advance youth-driven ideas and policies.

While the importance of participation and its role in a young person's life has not diminished, its nature has changed. Youth participation today tends to be issue-specific and service-oriented. Increasingly reluctant to join formal organizations or councils, many young

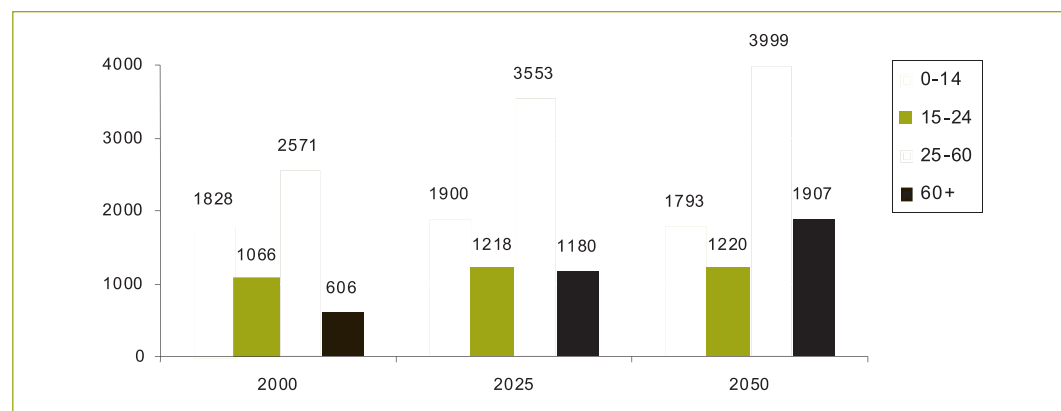
people prefer to take advantage of open opportunities created by communities and institutions to become involved in addressing the issues that concern them. In line with this trend, new participatory structures have evolved that tend to be based on collaborative networks and common interests. One popular option that seems to be playing an important role in reversing the decline in traditional participation and civic engagement among youth is Internet-based activity involving the exchange of ideas and information and the coordination of plans and programmes for localized action. Through cross-boundary websites, tele- and video-conferencing, chat boards and webcams, ICT has facilitated the development of new forms of creative, open and non-hierarchical channels of cyber-participation. Youth are gradually becoming more aware of resources outside their communities and of opportunities to share in and reinforce each other's work. While these new modes of participation are not substitutes for strong and effective youth councils, they can provide more young people with opportunities to become active in decision-making and in shaping their societies.

Policymakers should familiarize themselves with these new configurations and the types of activities in which young people are engaged in order to gain some insight into their concerns and priorities, and to provide whatever support is necessary to ensure that effective use is made of these new participatory opportunities. To ensure that effective participation is an option for all young people, explicit efforts must be made to address obstacles such as cultural norms that favour hierarchical relationships, economic circumstances that preclude participation in anything other than income-generating activities, and the lack of access to the information and skills necessary for active political involvement.

INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONS

Before the middle of this century, older persons and children will comprise a roughly equal share of the world's population. The proportion of those aged 60 years and over is expected to double, rising from 10 to 21 per cent between 2000 and 2050, and the proportion of those under 14 years of age will decline by a third, from 30 to 20 per cent (see figure 4.1) (United Nations, 2003a). The youth population will decrease from 18 to 14 per cent of the total (United Nations, 2003c).

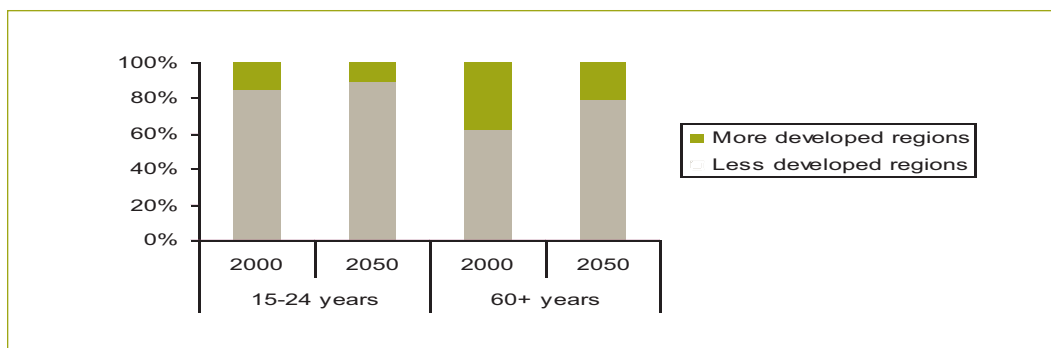
Figure 4.1
The global population, by age group, 2000, 2025 and 2050 (Millions)



Source: United Nations, *World Population Prospects: The 2002 Revision; Volume II: Sex and Age* (Sales No. 03.XIII.7).

The ageing of society is already apparent in developed countries; however, the process is actually occurring much more rapidly in developing countries, and in many cases the necessary infrastructure and policies will not be in place to deal with the consequent developments. Today, 6 of every 10 older persons live in developing countries, but by 2050 the proportion is expected to rise to 8 in 10 (see figure 4.2). Africa remains the region with the youngest population; over time, however, the proportion of youth is expected to decline and the proportion of older persons will likely double.

Figure 4.2
The proportions of youth and older persons in the total world population, 2000 and 2050



Source: United Nations, *World Population Prospects: The 2002 Revision; Volume II: Sex and Age* (Sales No. 03.XIII.7).

Between 2000 and 2050, average life expectancy is expected to increase from 65 to 74 years (United Nations, 2003b). Consequently, families consisting of four or more generations will not be uncommon. This raises questions about the responsibilities of individuals within the family and the capacities of welfare systems to meet old-age pension and health-care needs. The interdependence between younger and older people will increase in the future. Youth development will become a more urgent prerequisite for meeting the growing care demands of older people and a condition for the development of society as a whole.

Related members of different generations continue to live with one another in the family context. However, family structures are undergoing profound changes. There has been a shift from extended to nuclear families and an increase in one-person households. The age at first marriage has risen to the mid- to late twenties in many areas, often owing to extended educational careers and delayed entry into the labour market, particularly for young women. There is also a trend towards later childbearing and having fewer children.

The AIDS pandemic has reversed decades of gradual gains in life expectancy in sub-Saharan Africa. In the worst-affected countries of eastern and southern Africa, the probability of a 15-year old dying before age 60 rose from between 10 and 30 per cent in the mid-1980s to between 30 and 60 per cent at the start of the new millennium (World Health Organization, 2004). The intergenerational impact of the epidemic has been felt most acutely by young people. Youth are frequently forced to take on new roles and responsibilities in their families and societies, caring for infected relatives, coping with the loss of family members, and raising their younger siblings orphaned by AIDS.

The extent to which a young person is economically dependent, independent or depended upon within the household can change extremely rapidly. This has important implications for the present and long-term well-being of both the young person and his or her family. Unemployment, which is relatively high among youth, prevents many young people from becoming economically independent from their families, or from contributing substantially to family well-being.

Intergenerational relations are also linked to cultural trends. In the transitional phase from childhood to adulthood, young people establish their own identities, adopting the cultural norms and values of their parents and adapting them to their own social and cultural environments. The globalization of media has expanded the scope of norms and values upon which young people draw in creating their identities. Young people are increasingly incorporating aspects of other cultures from around the world into their own identities. This trend, along with the “intergenerational digital divide”, is likely to widen the cultural gaps between the younger and older generations.

Increased attention should be given to the socio-economic impact of ageing societies. A two-pronged approach may be adopted to address this issue at the most fundamental level: first, human development efforts should focus on different stages of the life course through age-adjusted policies and programmes that encourage workplace flexibility, lifelong learning and healthy lifestyles, with particular attention given to transitional periods such as youth to adulthood, family formation, and middle age to later years; and second, steps should be taken to strengthen the social environment at the family, neighbourhood and community levels.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Young people are at the forefront of the technology revolution, which is the driving force behind the global emergence and evolution of the information- and knowledge-based society. Youth are often the leading innovators in the development, use and spread of ICT. They adapt quickly and are generally very eager to access the great quantities of local and global information made available through technological innovation.

A national survey conducted in the United States indicates that 91 per cent of young people aged 18-19 years use the Internet to e-mail friends and relatives, and 83 per cent use it for instant messaging. A recent study in the United Kingdom reveals that 94 per cent of youth have cell phones, and that young people were responsible for half of the roughly 10 billion text messages sent in 2003 (British Broadcasting Corporation, no date). Cell phone users are getting younger, and teenagers are spending more money on mobile communication every year. In 2001, the total number of mobile phone subscribers in the world stood at 860 million (Curtain, 2003). An average of 80 per cent of young people in the European Union use a mobile phone at least once a week (European Commission, no date). In China, nearly 60 per cent of cell phone subscribers are between 20 and 30 years of age.



ICT has become a significant factor in development and is having a profound impact on the political, economic and social sectors in many countries. While many associate ICT primarily with mobile and more advanced technologies, a more useful definition of the term is one encompassing all technologies that enable the handling of information and facilitate different forms of communication. Expanding the characterization of ICT to include both older and newer technologies ranging from newspapers, radio and television to camcorders, computers and cell phones makes it possible to acquire a better understanding of the full impact of ICT on the social development of youth. The distinctions between old and new technologies may soon disappear as radio, television, satellite technologies and the Internet are combined in innovative ways to reach a wide range of target audiences.

The proliferation of ICT presents both opportunities and challenges with regard to the social development and inclusion of youth. Young people often use the Internet to access entertainment, news sites and virtual meeting spaces. They also utilize new technologies to participate in a number of civic activities. ICT is increasingly being used to improve access to education and employment opportunities, which supports efforts to eradicate poverty. However, while ICT clearly has the potential to empower young people and improve their lives in many respects, questions remain regarding its role in deepening existing inequalities and divisions in the world. The important concerns surrounding the global digital divide apply as much to youth as to any other age group.

There are still wide disparities in the distribution and utilization of many forms of technology. For example, 331 out of every 1,000 people in Europe use the Internet, but the same is true for only around 92 per 1,000 in Latin America and the Caribbean, 37 per 1,000 in the Middle East and North Africa, and 15 per 1,000 in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Although these data are not age-specific, young people are among the principal users of computers and are likely highly represented in these figures. It is important to note that the disparities are not as great for the use of older forms of technology such as radio and television, which makes these media extremely useful for information distribution. For example, rates of radio ownership are 813 per 1,000 in Europe, 410 per 1,000 in Latin America and the Caribbean, 277 per 1,000 in the Middle East and North Africa, and 198 per 1,000 in sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank, 2004).

ICT access remains a major challenge for many young people. Rapid advances in wireless technology have made it possible to overcome the physical impediments of distance and topography that have limited the development of traditional telecommunications infrastructure in rural and other outlying areas; in other words, it is now theoretically possible to provide ICT services almost anywhere in the world at a relatively reasonable cost. Nonetheless, many poor youth are unable to take advantage of new technologies because of access limitations or cost factors. In the most remote and sparsely populated areas, there may not be enough of a market incentive for private investment in communications technologies, and government funding may be required. The digital divide, characterized by highly unequal ICT access and use, persists both within and between countries and should therefore be addressed by both national policymakers and the international community.



The terms cyber-participation and e-citizenship are indicative of a growing trend towards ICT-based social action and community development among young people. ICT and new media are becoming core components of youth activism and civic engagement. Because new technologies provide immediate and direct access to global information, young people have become more aware of issues, problems and crises in other parts of the world. These technologies are used by youth movements for communication and coordination, allowing instantaneous contact between young activists, and also serve to strengthen the sense of e-solidarity among individuals and groups with different agendas. In many countries, the Internet is the least-controlled information medium and can be a powerful tool for activists and advocacy groups, contributing to increased transparency, the development of civil society, and democracy. List servers, temporary and long-term websites, and collective online document writing and editing are common features of today's youth activism; these and other tools are commonly used by young people to prepare and contribute their submissions to international meetings and to facilitate their participation in political processes. This subject will be examined in greater depth in the coming chapters on the emergence of a global media-driven youth culture. Measures to improve Internet access and increase ICT literacy across the board will promote youth participation, and the effective use of technology should help to strengthen various forms of youth engagement.

ICT has the potential to improve young people's access to educational opportunities and to enhance the quality of education through new modes of learning. Many schools and vocational training centres are taking advantage of new technologies to provide distance learning and to train educators in new instructional methods. Digital opportunities are particularly beneficial for rural communities that lack libraries and other educational resources. Through ICT, curricula can be updated, adapted and even personalized to satisfy a broad range of learning needs, and can be distributed more effectively over a wider area. Even within the more traditional learning environments, technology is changing the way classrooms operate; the integration of multimedia subject presentation, online research, changing teacher-student dynamics, and innovative project approaches are making the learning process more interactive and participatory. ICT is only useful in improving educational access and quality if it is widely accessible and used appropriately; fortunately, cost-effective and country-differentiated solutions have been developed that may be used or adapted to address these issues.

ICT has been increasingly used to promote youth employment over the past decade. As mentioned, distance learning can provide individuals in all settings with academic credentials and vocational and professional skills that can greatly enhance their career prospects. E-commerce opportunities abound; young people who pursue this option may have commercial dealings with individuals or companies all over the world but will often be able to receive professional training and conduct their business without having to relocate away from their families and support networks. At the grass-roots level, there is a growing number of ICT-related entrepreneurial opportunities for lower-income youth. One increasingly popular option for a young entrepreneur is to purchase a mobile phone through a microcredit programme and earn an income by providing low-cost phone services to others. ICT literacy, skills and accessibility are essential if young people are to use new technologies to take advantage of employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.

Large numbers of young people remain excluded from the information revolution; others are adversely affected by the ways in which the ICT revolution has challenged traditional forms of socialization. Many struggle to balance family and community influences with the global and cross-cultural influences of ICT. The increased use of mobile phones and the Internet has affected the daily interactions of youth almost everywhere. ICT can be a force for independence in the lives of young people, influencing behavioural and value patterns that differ from those of older generations. In this sense, ICT creates a new socialization landscape that in many ways challenges or erodes the traditional socialization process involving the transmission of long-established beliefs and practices through successive generations. The direction of socialization can even be reversed as the younger generation teaches the older generation about the uses and applications of emerging technologies. It is important to recognize, however, that ICT and the media do not preclude the continuing influence of such traditional actors as parents and schools in the socialization of children and youth. As further elaborated in the coming chapters, the emergence of a global media-driven youth culture propelled by ICT creates conditions for bidirectional socialization between generations. This challenges the common assumption that young people are not full members of society until they complete the process of socialization.

The next two chapters focus on various aspects of the emergence of a global media-driven youth culture. Chapter 5 begins with an introduction to youth cultures and examines the impact of new global media on the socialization of young people. It also explores the origins of new media, particularly as they tie in with young people's sociocultural status, and examines the need to provide young people with the tools they need to navigate their changing social environment. Chapter 6 focuses on how the new global media are affecting young people's roles in shaping their immediate societies. ●

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Chapter 5



The **IMPACT** of global
media on youth culture

The increasingly widespread use of information and communication technology (ICT) must be viewed within the context of a much broader trend affecting the lives of young people today. The ongoing process of globalization is expanding the reach and influence of new technologies. It is becoming increasingly apparent that through modern-day media, ICT and global interconnectedness have combined very powerfully to influence the lives of young people, creating what is referred to here as a global media-driven youth culture.

WHAT IS YOUTH CULTURE?

Young people today are growing up in an increasingly commercialized, media-saturated world. In many ways, the concepts of “youth” as a distinct category and of a shared “youth culture” are relatively new, having emerged in the 1950s in the wake of the post-war expansion of consumerism in the Western world. Young people acquired greater spending power and were able to express their own wants and needs, and marketers increasingly began to target them with distinctive products such as youth-oriented music, fashion and media. Traditional youth cultures existed well before this time (Bennett, 2000); however, the modern media have reflected, and to some extent have produced, significant changes in both the socialization and sociocultural status of young people.

The concept of a “global youth culture” is not easy to define, as it reflects the implicit assumption that a majority of the world's young people share a common cultural framework. How can youth living under very different social conditions be incorporated into a unified cultural category? It is possible if the concept of youth culture is used to contextualize the lives of contemporary young people by acknowledging the combined or overlapping dimensions of personal and collective identity formation. In this sense, youth culture serves as a reference point for individuals developing their identity, very often while testing their ascribed roles at home, school and work. It is an unregulated area between the control and authority of the adult world and the freedom experienced among one's peers (Brake, 1980). In essence, youth culture can be interpreted as young people's own free space, which offers an alternative to the adult world as one develops, questions, and assumes roles in one's society.

In the late 1970s, researchers began examining youth in working-class subcultures and middle-class countercultures, both of which are cultures of consumption. There are also differentiated youth cultures with conscious group identities, connected with civic organizations or other articulated fields of operation such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Anti-consumerism movements represent a type of global youth culture in which the links between participants are based not on the consumption of particular products but on shared values and objectives such as promoting global democracy. By the late 1990s, it became natural for shared-value cultures to extend beyond national borders.

The various alternatives notwithstanding, youth cultures today tend to be strongly associated with commercialism—increasingly so as young people become more widely acknowledged as autonomous consumers and targeted by marketing campaigns. Superficial or not, a central feature of the global youth culture is that young people around the world are connected by their consumption of certain commercial products. Consequently,

it is impossible to undertake an effective examination of youth cultures without exploring young people's relationship with the media. Global youth culture is created, adapted, accessed and disseminated largely through worldwide telecommunications networks that are rapidly expanding to reach many different parts of the world. The Internet, local and satellite television and radio, and other popular media are the channels through which youth-oriented cultural influences are transferred using music, direct advertising, websites and other means. Defined within this context, the current youth culture is clearly international in nature, as the consumption habits associated with it are to be found wherever young people have purchasing power.

Media and communication channels are being used to generate and strengthen new youth cultures centred around music, movie and sports stars, and around particular consumer goods and lifestyles; these cultural products have, in their own complex way, linked young people from all different countries and cultures and have produced a shared consciousness, leading to entirely new patterns and forms of socialization.

THE OLD AND NEW LANDSCAPE OF SOCIALIZATION

For young people, the traditional process of socialization involves gradually taking on the adult roles and responsibilities assigned to them by society. Developmental psychologists speak of certain developmental tasks with cognitive, affective and sexual dimensions that contribute to the formation of one's social, cultural and individual identity. Socialization entails becoming a more active, productive member of society, assuming the obligations of adulthood, becoming independent, and possibly leaving one's family home. In societies offering a formal education, this transition also involves achieving a relatively stable position in the education, housing, and labour markets. The more complex a society is, the more gradual, unclear and difficult this process becomes. The young people of today face many challenges in cobbling together a workable identity, a process many scholars refer to as "identity work" (Ziehe and Stubenrauch, 1982; Ziehe, 1992).

From a sociological perspective, socialization generally represents a process in which a younger member of a society or community adopts the values, norms and moral order of his or her group. In anthropology, this is often referred to as enculturation, or the process through which the cultural heritage of a society or community is passed on to its children and young people. Within these contexts, an individual is considered an adult when he or she has thoroughly internalized the prevailing values, or in other words, has been completely socialized.

In general terms, cultures may be classified as postfigurative, cofigurative or prefigurative (Mead, 1970). In a postfigurative culture socialization is straightforward and unidirectional, involving the transfer of basic values from the older to the younger generation. Such societies are often strict and authoritarian.

In a cofigurative culture, both children and adults also learn from their peers, though the direction of socialization is still from the older to the younger generation, configured so that the relationship between parents and children and between teachers and students is hierarchical. Various agents, including parents, extended family networks,



schools and other institutions, deliver a values package for children and young people to adopt. The succession of generations is seen as natural in the traditional model of socialization (Giddens, 1994). An important aspect of this relationship, as implied above, is the fact that the transfer of traditional symbols and practices from adults to children requires hierarchy. In such a setting, adults are capable of compelling children to conform to social and cultural demands and expectations. These circumstances are believed to be more typical of oral cultures, which anthropologists usually consider very traditional. In literate cultures, traditions tend to become thinner and weaken,¹ the succession of generations fractures, socialization becomes more complicated, and customary authority figures lose their hold on society's younger members.

In the traditional model of socialization, children and young people are regarded as subordinate to adults. In the contemporary interpretation, children and young people still learn important values from their elders and strengthen their socialization experience through peer interaction,² but they are also engaged in the transfer of knowledge to the older generation, as they have new skills and perspectives to share in evolving cultures. This prefigurative cultural framework features a two-directional process of socialization that often occurs when societies are changing rapidly and intergenerational roles and relationships are not as clearly defined. Arguably, these circumstances characterize many of today's societies, in which children and young people effectively grow up with new operational structures and measures of competence, often learned through the process of education and play. In some areas, the knowledge and skills of society's older members have become obsolete, and there are fields to which the younger members of a culture are almost by nature more receptive than their elders.

In many ways, the characteristics of a prefigurative culture are exemplified by the relationship between young people and the Internet, which (along with television) has played a major role in creating and perpetuating a global media culture. Young people are adept at both using the Internet and contributing to its content, which means that they are able to exercise some control over the very processes that are influencing their socialization.

There are a number of popular misconceptions surrounding young people's use of the Internet. Several theories suggest that children of the "information age" are micro-monsters and web sharks whose cognitive processes, hand-eye coordination and functional observation speed are such that their levels of ability and skill far surpass those of their parents and teachers (Tapscott, 1997). Furthermore, terms such as Generation@ or Net-Kids imply that virtually all young people are engaged in a broad range of ICT activities and that any disparity in the use of new technologies is above all a generational problem. However, the results of most empirical studies indicate that claims of a generational divide are exaggerated (Welling, 2003). Inequalities in ICT use appear to be more closely associated with income and educational factors; statistical evidence shows that young people who have little formal education and/or come from low-income households are less likely than their higher-income and more highly educated peers to be regular users of computers and the Internet (Welling, 2003).

Massive amounts of technology literature relating to online socialization and similar themes have been churned out.⁵ However, the issues are almost always addressed from a theoretical perspective; consideration of what the Internet might represent in societal, social and cultural terms is lacking. Furthermore, the research field is characterized by fragmentation, small sample groups, non-comparability, and a Western cultural focus. Research has been conducted that extends beyond simple case studies, with qualitative and quantitative methods employed and both online and offline materials utilized; however, such research has not yet reached the level of cultural comparison. There is little empirical data indicating how young people really use the Internet and other forms of ICT in everyday life (Holloway and Valentine, 2003).

According to Paul Hodkinson (2003), who has researched the Internet forums of one youth subculture, net forums tend to strengthen existing strands of identity and pre-existing style-based subcultures. Young people who have access to the Internet seem to use it as part of their local socialization. They participate less often in so-called virtual communities, tending to do so only when they are driven by special interest in a site's programme (Hodkinson, 2003; Holloway and Valentine, 2003; Media Awareness Network, 2004).

In some contexts, the Internet may signify a dimension of identity and group belonging beyond one's immediate social environment; for young people in sparsely settled areas the Internet has global symbolic value (Laegran, 2002; 2003a; 2003b; Sharkey, 2002), and for young immigrants it may be a cross-border bridge-building place to maintain contact with their native cultures (Kinnunen, 2003). Research and theories concerning young people's relationship with the Internet have been criticized for making those who use it extensively sound like strange, perhaps exotic and weird creatures, somehow detached, floating through empty space in everyday social situations. The criticism relates to contextualization and demarcation; research tends to be focused on the way young people in such studies seem to be totally and excessively immersed either in virtual life on the Internet or in offline culture, with little effort made to analyse the interactions between these worlds (Hodkinson, 2003; Holloway and Valentine, 2003). The critique also concerns the scant attention generally paid in such research to the ways in which young people build their Internet-centred interactive culture in existing institutions such as the school and the family (Holloway and Valentine, 2003).

Identifying an aspect of the global media culture such as Internet use as part of a prefigurative, two-directional socialization process raises a series of questions: Into what are children and young people being socialized? What are the values, norms and moral structures of the global media culture into which they are being initiated? How does this socialization take place under conditions of rapid social change? The media culture context also raises an important question with regard to the direction and agents of socialization: If the global youth media culture is best defined as prefigurative (two-directional), what does this mean for tradition?

YOUTH CULTURES, PEER GROUPS AND SOCIALIZATION

The birth of youth cultures has been tied to the development of teen marketing (Brake, 1980). In today's world, peer groups and the products of the culture industry are contributing greatly to the evolution of youth culture; peer groups are becoming ever-stronger agents of socialization, and at times this creates conflict within the socialization process, as the role of parents and family has weakened in many contexts. The traditional roles and assumptions associated with the succession of generations and their inherent hierarchies have started to crumble. Socialization is no longer an automatic process in which adults simply transfer prevailing values to young people for their own use, as is the case with so-called direct socialization. In some settings, formal institutions have become more necessary; public, civic⁴ and other organizations specializing in youth development have taken over some aspects of the socialization process, as parents, extended family members and neighbours can no longer manage on their own. For many, youth has come to signify a period during which young people are exposed to a multitude of influences and adopt values only through experimentation, with social values modified to such an extent that the whole society changes. Peer interaction has a surreptitious impact on socialization as young people experiment, investigate and test the principles, rules, customs, and habits of adult cultures outside the realm of adult influence.

The shift from traditional and controlled processes of socialization to more contemporary, two-directional socialization on a global scale has brought about a massive increase in the number of hybrid youth cultures. As mentioned previously, this process challenges and breaks down traditions and weakens the succession of generations; presently, the impact of these changes is most apparent in developing countries, where traditional socialization has maintained a strong foothold. It is important to recognize, however, that there are wide variations within and between countries; how adult relations with children and young people take shape in different cultures is often determined at the level of each community and society.

The emergence of the global media-driven youth culture signifies the building of a new landscape of socialization. With the structures and traditional roles of families undergoing major changes, youth cultures and youth media have emerged as entirely new agents of socialization, giving rise to new forms of socialization. One of the earliest examples is the student and youth movements of the 1960s, which had a major impact on popular culture. In some societies, the activities of this era brought about cultural change, including a rearrangement of relations between different age groups and generations and the breakthrough of the "consumer culture" mentality (Martin, 1981). In using the example of the student movements of the 1960s and the expressive revolution of the time, it is not implied that a global media-driven youth culture would give rise to the same sort of youth revolts in different countries. The point being made is that fundamental changes are taking place in the relationship between generations that have altered authority structures and the conditions of socialization in many societies.

THE INTERPLAY OF GLOBAL AND LOCAL CULTURES AND SOCIALIZATION

One traditional feature of peer groups and youth cultures is that they are local by nature, which derives from the conventional assumption that interaction typically occurs face-to-face.⁵ When this apparent axiom is considered within the modern context, it might be said that young users of media products have mediated relations within the global culture but that their peer groups are still local by nature. Local and global influences are not mutually exclusive; rather, the former may be understood as an aspect of the latter.

The previous section reviewed the changes in the conditions for socialization in many societies following the Second World War, indicating how young people's new relative autonomy in the use of their leisure time and the emergence of youth-focused marketing formed a free space and optimal conditions for the development of a youth culture. From the beginning, the youth movement and youth culture were perceived as subversive, as they challenged the system of education and other institutions symbolizing or promoting adulthood through their own (often ambivalent and politically unarticulated) forms of rebellion. Films, pop music and youth fashion have further defined this culture as distinct from the more general or traditional culture.

Media messages are not transmitted or received in a vacuum; people are surrounded by resources for specialized interpretation and operate within their own interpretive communities. Most people process information based on values, perspectives, opinions and modes of understanding acquired through early socialization, membership in social networks and personal experience, and this shapes their responses to media content. Even when people are exposed to subjects they know nothing about, their core beliefs and general orientations – or interpretive schema – will determine how they selectively assimilate and interpret the information (Curran, 2002). Global media have accelerated this assimilation process, but it is not new; historically, there have been some surprising and often complex reciprocities and interactions between countries around the world, the result of which has been the hybridization of both Western and non-Western cultures (Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1996). Cultural currents tend to be defined by certain features or qualities depending on the cultural landscape; global cultural currents tend to be multidirectional and highly variable and adaptive.

Successful global media marketers are able to distinguish and cater to the unique needs of various target audiences; they understand that they must adapt their products and services to local cultures in order to gain a foothold in local markets. Local and regional media markets are growing in Brazil, Egypt, India and Mexico, for example, with specialized content presented in different languages (Sinclair, Jacka and Cunningham, 1996). Whether or not media messages are adapted to suit particular audiences or presented in their original form, responses can vary widely. Local conditions and traditions always imprint incoming information, so messages may be met with a positive reaction, ambivalence, or even opposition and criticism. Soap operas, for example, can be interpreted differently by viewers from diverse national or ethnic backgrounds because they draw upon different belief systems and cultural references to make sense of media content (Curran, 2002). Much of what appears in the global media originates in the West, and

non-Western cultures have become actively selective and adaptive in their consumption, whether it is a question of television programmes, consumer goods, or thoughts and ideas. This type of two-directional interplay between local and global influences is reflected in the concept of “glocalization” (Robertson, 1994).



To sum up some of the major points made thus far, the emergence of a global media culture represents an extension of developments that have occurred over the past half-century—namely, the emergence of distinct youth cultures in the urbanized and industrialized areas of the world following the Second World War, the rising influence of peer groups and formal educational institutions, and the diminishing role of parents and community elders. Global media have come to constitute an independent and powerful agent of socialization for young people, and tensions have arisen as it has effectively challenged the more traditional agents of socialization.

In a contemporary interpretation of socialization, children and young people are seen as participants in the formation and maintenance of peer groups, and their interaction with one another produces a socializing effect. Through their membership in peer groups and shared youth cultures, young people have thus been able to contribute to their own socialization, and tools such as the Internet and other elements of the global media culture have reinforced this trend. These developments require serious, in-depth research before any pronouncements are made about whether they are positively or negatively affecting the lives of young people.

GLOBAL MEDIA AND THE SOCIOCULTURAL STATUS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Within the ever-evolving global media context, the category of “youth” must be continuously reexamined. As the significance of age differences within the marketplace has increased, so have the designations applied to them. Marketers now use newly invented terms such as “tweenagers”, “middle youth”, “kidults” and “adultescents”—categories that intentionally blur the differences between children, youth and adults. The emergence of labels such as “Generation X” (and its subsequent mutations) reflects both the importance and the complexity of age-based distinctions in the contemporary media landscape (Ulrich and Harris, 2003).

“Youth” has become a symbolic value that can be marketed to a wide range of audiences; examples include the marketing of fashion products and make-up to young girls aspiring to escape the constraints of childhood, and the marketing of much contemporary rock music to adults aspiring to recover “lost” values of youthful energy and rebellion. In the increasingly competitive environment of contemporary media, such distinctions have a growing commercial significance. How old you are—or how old you imagine yourself to be—is increasingly defined by what you consume. Youth culture, it would seem, is no longer just for young people.

Global media products and globally recognized brands are a crucial dimension of young people’s identity formation worldwide; however, as mentioned, they are not consumed in a vacuum. A common presumption is that the pressures of global marketing

are leading to a kind of homogenization, in which cultural specificities are all but effaced. This fails to take into account that youth culture is a local as well as a global phenomenon (Nayak, 2003). Young people use, adapt and interpret global products in unique ways based on their own local cultures and experiences; in the process, they create “hybrid” cultural forms whose meanings vary according to local and national circumstances. For example, hip-hop music may have originated in the United States, but it has come to mean something different as it has been appropriated and (increasingly) produced in France, Germany and South Africa (Bennett, 2000).

Because global media developments tend to have such a powerful impact on young people, it is worth taking a closer look at the changing nature of contemporary media and to consider the implications of its new forms.

THE CHANGING NATURE OF CONTEMPORARY MEDIA

Much of the discourse on young people and the media is polarized. On the one hand, there is the idea that childhood, as traditionally defined, is dying or disappearing, and that the media are primarily to blame. It has been observed that it was the printing press that effectively created the concept of childhood, and television has destroyed it (Postman, 1983). Some scholars point to the demise of children's traditional games and distinctive styles of dress; the increasing homogenization of young people's and adults' leisure pursuits, language, eating habits and tastes in entertainment; and the increase in youth crime, drug-taking, sexual activity and teenage pregnancy—all of which, it is argued, can be traced to the influence of the media. Further reference is made to the erotic use of children in commercials and movies, the prevalence of “adult” themes in young people's books, and what is seen as the misguided emphasis on children's rights (Postman, 1983).

On the other hand, media are also seen as a liberating force for young people, creating a new “electronic generation” that is more open, democratic, and socially aware than previous generations. In this context, the Internet is seen as having given young people “powerful new tools for enquiry, analysis, self-expression, influence and play”; as a result, members of the “net generation” are “hungry for expression, discovery and their own self-development” (Tapscott, 1997, p. 5). Rap music, talk shows and cable television, along with the Internet, are seen as examples of the “great creative explosions of modern culture”, and it is argued that they represent a growing, and welcome, challenge to centralized adult control (Katz, 1997).

There may be some truth in each of these perspectives, but it may also be argued that both overestimate the power of the media and underestimate the ambivalent and contradictory nature of contemporary social change. To regard young people as *either* passive victims of, *or* somehow liberated by, the media is to grossly oversimplify the process. It is possible to gain a better understanding of the changing nature of the modern media and its relevance to youth by exploring several different aspects of the issue using a more multifaceted approach. In the subsections below, technologies, economics, texts and audiences are given separate consideration; in each of these areas, young people have been among the avant-garde in many contemporary developments.

Changing technologies

In many countries in both the developed and developing world, the most critical aspect of the recent changes in media technologies is their proliferation.⁶ The household television screen has become the delivery point for a growing range of media and means of distribution. The number of channels has grown, both on terrestrial television and (more spectacularly) with the advent of cable, satellite and digital technologies; the screen is also being used for video in various forms, as well as for an ever-broadening range of digital media and products including computer games, CD-ROMs and the Internet.

There has been a convergence between information, communication, and media technologies, made possible by digitization; like the other developments identified here, this process has been commercially driven. Digital television, Internet set-top boxes, online shopping, video-on-demand and other developments are increasingly blurring the distinctions between linear broadcast or “narrowcast” media such as television and interactive media such as the Internet.

These and other developments have made media technologies more accessible. Media products that were once prohibitively expensive, as well as a wide range of new media forms and options, have been brought within the reach of the domestic consumer. The retail price of video camcorders, digital cameras and multimedia personal computers (PCs) has steadily fallen as their capabilities have increased. In principle, at least, the Internet represents a means of communication and distribution that—unlike many earlier media forms—is not exclusively controlled by a small elite. With the exponential increase in users and applications, it is argued, the boundaries between production and consumption, and between mass communication and interpersonal communication, are beginning to break down.

These changes have several implications for young people. Families with children constitute a very receptive, and therefore important, market for new media technologies. Cable and satellite television programming has been strongly targeted towards younger audiences, and much of the advertising and promotion for home computers trades on the popular mystique surrounding young people’s natural affinity for technology (Nixon, 1998). The take-up of satellite and cable television, video, camcorders and home computers is often proportionally much higher in households with children than in those without. Greater access to an ever-widening range of media technology options has been accompanied by increased individualization and personalization in their application. Young people, particularly in rich developed countries, are now likely to live in households with two or more television sets; in the United Kingdom, three quarters of teenagers now have televisions in their bedrooms, and almost half have video cassette recorders.

While collective uses of the media, particularly “family viewing”, have far from disappeared, there has been a marked trend towards more independent usage, encouraged by the general democratization of relationships within the family and the relaxation of parental authority (Livingstone and Bovill, 1999). Young people’s increased access to various media has generated growing concern about their exposure to violence, pornography, and other material hitherto largely confined to the domain of adults. In many instances, this has led to calls for stricter regulation and censorship; the creation of the V-chip and content-blocking software reflects the search for a “technological fix”.⁷



While new media technologies and their use have been characterized by explosive growth, the scale of these developments should not be exaggerated. Levels of access will certainly increase significantly in the coming years as prices continue to fall, yet there is also a growing polarization between the “technology rich” and the “technology poor”. In most countries, Internet users tend to have relatively high levels of education and income. In Bulgaria, the poorest 65 per cent of the population account for only 29 per cent of Internet users. In Chile, 89 per cent of Internet users have a tertiary education; the corresponding figures are 65 per cent for Sri Lanka and 70 per cent for China (United Nations Development Programme, 2001). In the United Kingdom, fewer than half as many working-class children as middle-class children have access to a PC at home, and only one tenth as many are linked to the Internet (Livingstone and Bovill, 1999). As true today as it was in the 1950s with the advent of television, those with more disposable income are almost always the early adopters of new technologies; they have newer and more powerful equipment, and more opportunities to develop the skills and competencies needed to use it. Economic considerations are particularly important in developing countries, where a large majority of young people do not have computers or Internet access, mainly for financial reasons; buying a computer and getting “wired to the Web” are still big investments in many countries. Poor infrastructure puts young people in smaller towns and villages at a further disadvantage. Technical problems can discourage widespread Internet use in some countries and can prevent young people from fully appreciating or taking advantage of all the possibilities the Web offers. Apart from these considerations, there are also young people who shy away from the Internet because of the prevalence of English-language content, or more to the point, the absence of content in their own language (Gigli, 2004).

The various limitations notwithstanding, new technologies and many of the cultural forms made possible by them are typically identified with the young. Computer games are predominantly aimed at the youth market, and popular music (particularly dance music) is increasingly being generated by digital technology using sampling, editing and other software. In Australia, young people between the ages of 18 and 24 are five times more likely to be Internet users than are those over the age of 55. In Chile, 74 per cent of users are under 35 years old, and in China the corresponding share is 84 per cent; other countries follow the same pattern (Gigli, 2004). The growing accessibility of ICT (especially new media technologies) is enabling some young people to play a more active role as cultural producers. In the wealthier population sectors, more and more teenagers have home computers in their bedrooms that can be used to create music, manipulate images and edit video to a relatively professional standard.

Changing economics

The technological developments reviewed thus far have both contributed to and been reinforced by fundamental economic changes in the media industries. These changes are part of a much larger trend towards the development of a global free market economy. Reforms such as economic liberalization and the privatization of State-owned enterprises are at the centre of this historic shift, particularly in developing countries. The telecommunications and broadcasting sectors have been among the early targets in the restructuring of public services and State industries in many countries (Petrazzini, 1995).

Recent developments such as these in both developed and developing countries point to the growing privatization of the media and the relative decline in public sector service provision in the relevant sectors. The large majority of media forms and outlets are commercially driven; even those that initially were not, such as the Internet, are increasingly subject to commercial imperatives, such as the need to carry advertising. Technological convergence has been mirrored by economic convergence, as large media conglomerates have flourished under the liberalization policies of many national Governments. Meanwhile, in settings in which the State remains involved in this realm of activity, public sector service provision has gradually been commercialized from within, and regulation concerning the social and cultural functions of the media is gradually being abandoned.

One inevitable consequence of media commercialization has been the integration of media industries. The media market is now dominated by a small number of transnational conglomerates; for nationally based companies, success in the international market has become a necessity for survival. Many of today's largest cable and satellite companies have a stake in a number of sizeable world markets, including Europe and the United States. Significantly, most of these corporations are cross-media conglomerates; they integrate broadcasting, publishing, digital technology, and other aspects of media-focused ICT, and in many cases are involved in both hardware and software industries. Vertical integration has thus been achieved through a form of horizontal integration. However, integration does not necessarily mean homogenization; growing competition has led to the fragmentation of audiences and the rise of niche marketing. Media and media products are increasingly being targeted towards specialized segments of the mass audience, albeit on a global scale.

These developments are affecting young people in a number of different ways, some of them ambiguous. In the contemporary era of niche marketing, young people have become an increasingly valuable market, not only because they have their own disposable income, but also because of their ability to set trends and influence other consumers. For example, cable television offers a plethora of specialized channels competing to attract youth audiences, and on both terrestrial and non-terrestrial channels there has been a significant increase in the amount (though not necessarily in the quality or diversity) of material and airtime targeted at young people.

Integrated marketing has become an almost indispensable aspect of media directed at young people. Television programmes are tied in with films, CDs, comics and computer games—not to mention T-shirts, posters, food and drink, and a multitude of other products. One of the most successful schemes to emerge in this context is the cross-media franchise, in which the identity of the “original” text is far from clear; media commodities are packaged and marketed as integrated phenomena, rather than the text coming first and the merchandising following later. These developments are particularly apparent in mainstream popular music.

Despite such efforts, a significant proportion of commercial products aimed at young people fail to generate a profit; the market is more competitive and therefore more uncertain. Within such a milieu, there is some justification in producers' recurrent claim that young people are a volatile, complex market that cannot easily be defined or controlled.

Changing texts

The developments described here are perhaps most obviously manifested in the changing characteristics of media texts. Here, too, there has been a significant degree of convergence, both between texts themselves and between media. The distinctions between video products, computer games, movies, television shows, advertisements and print texts have become increasingly irrelevant, and more and more media texts are spin-offs of or tie-ins with other texts or commodities. While this may be most evident in developed countries, such convergence is spreading to other parts of the world through global marketing campaigns and the advancement and diversification of satellite technology (Volkmer, no date).

Intertextuality has become a dominant characteristic of contemporary media. Many of the texts that are perceived as distinctively postmodern are highly allusive, self-referential and ironic. They self-consciously draw upon other texts in the form of pastiche, homage or parody; they juxtapose incongruous elements from different historical periods, genres or cultural contexts; and they play with established conventions of form and representation. In the process, they implicitly address their readers or viewers as knowing, "media literate" consumers.

Many of these new media forms are characterized by interactivity. Some of the more enthusiastic advocates of interactive multimedia see them as a means of liberation from the constraints of more traditional linear media such as film and television; hypertext, CD-ROMs and computer games are seen to blur or even eliminate the distinction between "reader" and "writer". In recent years, interactivity appears to have become an increasingly important characteristic even of the mainstream media, as clearly demonstrated by the success of so-called reality television.

Many of these developments are dictated primarily by economic considerations. Pastiche and parody often serve as little more than window dressing for media that are in all other respects highly conventional. It could even be argued that irony has become just another marketing device, enabling media corporations to secure additional profit by recycling existing properties. Likewise, intertextuality can be seen as a consequence of increasing commodification and the need to exploit successes across a wider range of media on a shorter time scale. Further, despite the potential for interactivity, there is an undeniable gap between rhetoric and reality in a great deal of commercial software; many so-called interactive texts are far from interactive, offering a fixed and highly circumscribed repertoire of possibilities.

Many of the features and characteristics described above apply particularly to media texts that are aimed at, or are most popular with, young people. Many of the most innovative new cultural forms have initially been targeted at this audience, reaching the adult market somewhat later. There is clear evidence of the trends described here in, for example, the ironic, self-conscious intertextuality of contemporary comics; the use of sampling in rap and dance music; the allusive, montage-based style of music videos; the convergence of music, visual arts and electronic media in club culture; and the genuinely interactive and highly complex nature of some computer games. It is important to note, however, that for all the inflated rhetoric surrounding "cyberculture", there have been some highly innovative uses of the Internet among a small minority of young people that genuinely do point to its emergence as a distinctive cultural form.



Finally, mention must be made of important changes at the level of content; it is developments in this area that often cause the most alarm among adult critics. In many countries, children's television has undergone a steady transformation over the past 20 years and now incorporates topics that would once have been considered taboo, such as sex, drugs and family breakdown. Likewise, magazines and books aimed at the early-teenage market have attracted widespread criticism for their frank and explicit treatment of such issues (Rosen, 1997). There is also, increasingly, a degree of subversiveness and cynicism apparent in mainstream popular culture, as evidenced by the content of various youth-oriented cartoons that have been launched in recent years.⁸ Such cartoons are permeated with references to other texts and genres, sometimes in the form of direct quotations or "sampling". They raid existing cultural resources, borrowing from both the high culture and the popular culture of the past and present in a fragmentary and often apparently parodic manner. Comparing current animation series with those of 30 years ago, one is struck not only by the much faster pace of the former, but also by their irony and intertextuality, and by the complex interplay between reality and fantasy; these factors are characteristic of postmodern texts (Wells, 2002). Their ability to disturb more conservative adult commentators appears to derive, at least in part, from the fact that they contain "adult" content in a genre that is traditionally associated with children.

Changing audiences

The new media environment presupposes quite different kinds of competence and knowledge—and might be seen to encourage very different forms of "activity"—among audiences. Contemporary media are increasingly addressing young people as highly "media literate" consumers. Whether they actually are more media literate, and what this term actually means, are issues that require careful consideration.

Although it is frequently claimed that ICT/media-related developments are creating a wider range of choices for consumers, this assertion is only partly true. The proliferation of television channels has led to a significant increase in the quantity of programming available, even taking into account that much of it is repeated. On one level, these developments clearly do empower audiences to schedule their own viewing, at least within the range of material available; however, they also raise some awkward questions about how viewers locate and select what they want to watch. Once again, there is the issue of the skills and competencies young people require to effectively navigate and evaluate the increased content being made available.

The dramatic increase in options appears to be contributing to the fragmentation of audiences, as media are increasingly targeted at, and their products marketed to, specialized groups of consumers. The increasingly affordable access to enormous numbers of television channels through cable, satellite and other service providers may bring about a decline in general audience broadcasting (and the “common culture” that makes it possible) in favour of “narrowcasting”. The Internet is perhaps the best and most promising medium for those with specialized or minority interests.

One factor to consider in relation to these issues is, again, interactivity. Leaving aside the question of whether surfing the Internet actually is more “active” than surfing television channels or browsing through a magazine, there are some important questions about whether audiences actually want greater activity. The Internet may allow users much greater control over the selection of content and the pace at which it is perused; however, it also permits much more detailed surveillance of consumer behaviour. It is now very easy to track users' movements within and between particular websites and thereby build up consumer profiles that can subsequently become the basis for targeted electronic advertising.

While the eventual outcomes of these developments are difficult to predict, it is clear that young people in all parts of the world are regarded by many in the media industries as being at the forefront of change, largely owing to the natural evolution of young people's place in modern society, but also, perhaps, as a consequence of having been placed in such a position by the operations of the market. Young people are encouraged to be “early adopters” and may perhaps serve as an indication of what is likely to occur within the general population. In several respects, young people's uses of media do seem to be characterized by increasing choice, interactivity and diversity—even if these opportunities are not equally available to all.

The consequences and implications of these changes have been interpreted in sharply contrasting ways. In the English-speaking world, at least, sensational stories about the harm allegedly inflicted on young people by the media are increasingly dominating the headlines. The furor surrounding the influence of video games following the massacre at Columbine High School⁹ is only one recent example of the recurrent moral panics that have come to characterize public debate. Various segments of the media routinely and uncritically recycle examples of astonishingly weak research purporting to show, for example, that large numbers of children are busily swapping computer-generated pornography on the playground, or that young people are being encouraged to commit car thefts as a result of their exposure to video games. The view of the media as an essentially corrupting influence has a very long history (Barker and Petley, 2001).

While the public debate has increasingly centred around shielding young people from harm, reflecting a kind of moral protectionism, the discourses that circulate within the media industries seem to be moving in an entirely different direction. In the latter context, young people are no longer seen as innocent and vulnerable to influence, but are increasingly regarded as sophisticated, demanding, media-wise consumers. Attempts to protect young people and to educate them through media such as television have increasingly been condemned as paternalistic and patronizing. Adults, it is argued, have been talking

down to them for far too long. There are those who contend that in this new market-led environment, young people are at last being empowered to make their own decisions about what they will experience and learn about, without the controlling hand of adults who profess to know what is good for them. These discursive changes clearly reflect broader changes in the status of young people as a distinct social group. However, there is often a fundamental blurring or confusion between the notion of young people as potential or actual citizens and the notion of young people as consumers.

BLURRING BOUNDARIES AND THE AMBIGUITIES SURROUNDING YOUTH

Broadly speaking, it is possible to discern two sets of forces at play in the developments that have been described. One is that the boundaries between young people and adults appear to be blurring. To a much greater extent than traditional broadcast television, the newer media such as video, the Internet, and cable and satellite technologies allow young people access to material previously restricted to adults (Postman, 1983). Youth are increasingly addressed as autonomous consumers who are encouraged to make their own decisions about what they will buy, watch and read. Via the Internet, they can communicate much more easily with each other and with adults, without even having to identify themselves as young people. Even in the material produced explicitly for them, there are manifestations of aspects of the world that were previously considered unsuitable for them to see or to know about.

As noted previously, “youth” has become an extremely elastic category that seems to be extending ever further upward (Frith, 1993). In their shared enthusiasm for certain kinds of music, sportswear or video games, for example, 10-year olds and 40-year olds may be seen as members of a “youth” market that is quite self-consciously distinct from the “family” market. In this environment, “youth” has come to be perceived as a lifestyle choice that is defined by its relationship to specific brands and commodities and that is also available to those who fall well outside its biological limits (which are fluid in any case). For the producers and distributors of media products such as youth television and popular music, “youth” possesses a symbolic significance that may be linked as much to fantasy identities as to material possibilities—a phenomenon that serves to widen the audience and thus enhance its market value.

While some boundaries are becoming blurred, others are becoming more strongly defined. With young people's increased access to media technology, they no longer have to watch or read what their parents choose. As the youth niche market grows in importance, young people are increasingly able to confine themselves to media that are produced specifically for them. The new, postmodern cultural forms that characterize contemporary youth culture are in many respects highly exclusive of adults; they require particular cultural competencies and a prior knowledge of specific media texts (or in other words, a form of media literacy) only available to the young. While youth around the world are increasingly sharing a global media culture with one another, they appear to be sharing less and less with their own parents.

The ambiguity characterizing these developments reflects broader ambiguities in the social status of young people. They are becoming empowered both as citizens and as consumers, yet their own expressions of their needs are largely confined to the services or products adults can provide. In debates about the changing nature of schooling, leisure provision or the media, their voices are still rarely heard. Meanwhile, young people's leisure activities are steadily becoming more privatized and commercialized. More of their time is spent in unsupervised activity of some kind, and the cultural goods and services they consume increasingly have to be paid for in hard cash. One inevitable consequence of this is a rise in inequality between young people in both the social and media contexts. The polarization between rich and poor is positively reinforced by the commercialization of the media and the decline in public sector provision. Young people living in disadvantaged economic circumstances simply have less access to media goods and services; they live not only in different social worlds, but in different media worlds as well. One scholar has noted that "if globalization is a process of accelerated flow of media content, to most African cultures and children, it is also a process of accelerated exclusion".¹⁰

Overall, however, it may be concluded that many opportunities for creative development and expression and for social integration and democratization have evolved out of the advances made in this field; particularly important is the potential they offer for young people to become media producers in their own right. New technologies bring hitherto inaccessible means of cultural expression and communication within the reach of young people and enable them to disseminate their views and perspectives much more widely. Far from contributing to social polarization, the media can be a means of enabling young people to communicate across their differences. However, these developments will not take place automatically, or simply because the appropriate equipment is available. As a few selected case studies show, concerted and creative interventions will be needed at the level of social and cultural policy if young people's rights and capabilities as producers and consumers of electronic media are to be more fully realized.

MEDIA PROVISION: MUSIC VIDEO, NEWS AND ONLINE CULTURE

Media provision through music video

Music video, which is often hailed as an essentially youthful media form, can be seen as emblematic of several of the changes outlined in the first part of this chapter. Music video was among the first media genres to explore the potential of new technological developments such as digital editing and image manipulation. Economically, it typifies the global multimedia synergy that characterizes modern media industries. Textually, it is often seen to reflect a distinctively postmodern aesthetic characterized by allusion, pastiche and play. In addition, it has increasingly reflected the fragmentation of contemporary media audiences into specialized "taste communities".

Popular music never has been just about the music; today, it is part of a global commercial enterprise that integrates a wide range of media forms, including not only CDs and live events, but also radio, television, movies and magazines, as well as extensive secondary merchandising. In this context, every text effectively becomes a potential advertisement for other texts.

Music video emerged as an important marketing tool during the 1980s (see box 5.1), though the use of visual imagery in popular music originated much earlier, dating back at least to the visual jukeboxes of the 1940s (Shuker, 2001). There is also a tradition of

Box 5.1

THE MTV GENERATION

Music television entered a new era with the advent of the cable channel MTV in 1981. Owned by the media giant Viacom, based in the United States, MTV quickly became a leading force in the music industry.^a During the 1990s, it began to export its programming globally via channels such as MTV Europe and MTV Asia, and while these channels observed set quotas for local performers, there was some resistance to the pan-continental approach. MTV Europe has since fragmented into a series of national channels that have local presenters and more targeted local programming, pointing to some of the potential limits to globalization, at least in the realm of music. In 2004, Viacom acquired a controlling interest in VIVA Media AG, its German equivalent, making Viacom the largest music television provider in the European heartland. In November of that year, MTV announced that it would begin broadcasting in Africa, which would allow it to reach the world's last major populated area not previously served by this network.

MTV has worked closely with major recording labels, not just selecting material to be aired but also influencing some of the content. Commercially, it has succeeded by targeting a valuable youth and young adult demographic that is more difficult for advertisers to reach through mainstream television. The network's early business model was premised on the fact that recording companies were paying for the programming (since the videos were effectively advertisements for their products).

The growth of MTV has not been without its problems. Competition from other music channels in the late 1980s compelled the network to retrench and diversify. Claiming that the music video format had grown stale, MTV began producing other types of programming, including "news", documentaries, animation, and dating game shows. With the emergence of more specialized music channels for the older, more mainstream market, MTV has also established subsidiary channels broadly covering dance, urban and alternative genres.

Initial academic responses to MTV celebrated its apparent blurring of the boundaries between image and reality, its reliance on intertextuality and pastiche, its disruption of conventional narrative norms, and its construction of a "decentred" or "fragmented" spectator.^b Perhaps paradoxically, some of these observations coincided with those of more conservative critics, who saw MTV as the embodiment of an apolitical, amoral universe in which traditional humanist values and forms of rationality had effectively been abandoned.

More recent criticism reflects a significant tempering of these arguments.^c A close look at today's music videos reveals that a large majority contain familiar settings, moods and themes, and fall within a limited range of predictable genres. Aside from performance-based pieces, most are concerned with conventional themes such as sexual relationships, growing up, fantasy and, to a limited extent, social issues. Furthermore, the apparent heterogeneity and incoherence of the imagery is often "anchored" or contained by the more conventional form of the music; the music makes sense of the images, pulling them back towards traditional forms of narrative or argument.

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to underestimate the potential for innovation and experimentation in music video, or its influence on a wide range of other media forms. To some degree, music video requires, and is possibly helping to cultivate, a new form of media literacy that poses new cognitive and emotional challenges. It presupposes the ability of consumers to process images and sounds at considerable speed, to tolerate ambiguity, and to interpret visual symbolism—which is qualitatively different from the media orientation of older generations.

^a J. Banks, *Monopoly Television: MTV's Quest to Control the Music* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1996).

^b E.A. Kaplan, *Rocking Around the Clock: Music Television, Postmodernism, and Consumer Culture* (London: Methuen, 1987).

^c A. Goodwin, *Dancing in the Distraction Factory: Music Television and Popular Culture* (London: Routledge, 1992).

movie musicals, dance movies and soundtracks, and many of the most successful contemporary films have music video spin-offs. Mainstream television has had a more ambiguous relationship with popular music. While the television industry has always been comfortable with family-friendly entertainment, it has often sought to tame or steer clear of the potentially “dangerous” aspects of popular music—such as implicit sexuality, rebelliousness and violence—that are central to its appeal for youth audiences. Mainstream television has also found it difficult to cater to the more specialized and diverse tastes that have become increasingly important in popular music over the past two decades.

Music video provides a symptomatic indication of several broader tendencies within contemporary youth media. Its success clearly reflects the increasing importance of media, especially visual media, in youth culture. However, it also raises the question of who “owns” youth culture. To what extent is youth culture produced by young people themselves or merely produced for them by the multinational media industries? Large conglomerates have acted as gatekeepers, playing a powerful role in determining the kinds of music distributed, yet in an increasingly competitive environment their capacity to control the market is quite limited. Although music industry profits are substantial, a large majority of what is produced fails to generate sufficient revenues to cover costs. One of the key commodities in youth culture is authenticity, and much of the criticism of popular music among fans and commentators is directed against material seen to be too commercial or “fake”. The music industry works hard to manage commercial risk, but the behaviour of consumers is far from predictable. In this area, as in other areas of youth culture, there is an ongoing struggle between the imperatives of capital and the needs and desires of audiences.

Media provision through news

Young people’s interest in news media varies greatly around the world. In some countries, a substantial number of young people are attracted by the largely political fare of international public radio networks such as the British Broadcasting Corporation, Voice of America, Deutsche Welle, and Radio France Internationale. Survey findings indicate that in 2003, 16 per cent of young people between the ages of 15 and 19 listened to international radio in Albania; the corresponding proportions were 12 per cent in Bangladesh, 21 per cent in Nigeria, and 26 per cent in urban areas of Haiti (Gigli, 2004). In other countries, such as the United States, there has been a steep decline among youth in the readership of broadsheet newspapers and the viewership of flagship television news programmes, and the effects of these trends are compounded by what some critics see as the growing interest of young people in tabloid news, a genre frequently condemned for its preoccupation with sensationalism and its lack of serious political information (Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press, 1990). Similar trends have been noted in South Africa and the United Kingdom, where young people’s interest in news media is minimal, particularly when it comes to media coverage of political affairs.¹¹

While these findings may be seen as symptomatic of young people’s broader cynicism about politics, they also highlight one of the largest problems with regard to media rights for youth, namely the lack of coverage of children and young people in the news. It has been noted that what little coverage there is of young people is very often characterized by sensationalism, highlighting child abuse, exploitation and violence, with scant



opportunity for young people to speak for themselves. Young people tend to feel excluded from or disserved by the media when they are portrayed simplistically as superficial, apathetic, poverty stricken, victimized or delinquent (Gigli, 2004).

Some critics suggest that young people are actively excluded from the domain of politics, and from the major public forums of political discourse, including the news media. They argue that mainstream news journalism has failed to keep pace with the changing cultural competencies of young people, that youth have a very different orientation towards information from that of older generations, and that they prefer the more informal and ironic style of digital media to the monotonously reassuring voice of conventional news journalism (Katz, 1993). From this perspective, it is the failure of the established news media to connect with the forms of everyday politics most important for this generation that accounts for the loss of younger audiences.

An analysis of news programmes produced specifically for young people in the United States and the United Kingdom revealed much about the critical responses of this group to television programming (Buckingham, 2000). The study examined two types of news programmes directed at youth. One type was very similar to the mainstream news in terms of style and presentation format but was aimed at making news accessible to a younger audience. This entailed some departures from the conventions of mainstream news, including adjustments in the balance between “foreground” and “background”, the kind of language used, and the manner of presentation. To some extent this might be regarded as superficial window dressing, though some of the programmes also used young people as interviewers (albeit in a rather limited way) and included a viewers' access slot.

The programmes examined within this first category introduced some innovations but did not significantly challenge the status quo or what was seen to count as news. By contrast, the other types of programmes examined in the study departed more radically from the conventions of the genre. These were essentially news magazines and covered issues featured in the mainstream news and debated within the formal political domain. However, they offered a distinctly different conception of what might count as news and what form it might take. These programmes were characterized by a unique visual style and, at a more substantive level, reflected young people's own perspectives and concerns, not least because youth were recruited to write and present their own items.

The young people interviewed for the study preferred the more innovative and informal approach of the second type of programming. They found it important that these programmes did not talk down to their audiences. Young viewers also applauded the fact that the preferred programmes presented new information rather than just simplified versions of the mainstream news. There was considerable importance attached to graphics, camera work and editing, as well as to the focus on ordinary young people and attempts to present a young person's point of view (Buckingham, 2000).

Young people are very sensitive to age differences and are scathing in their criticism of programmes that appear to underestimate them. They also want programmes relevant to their everyday concerns, which are largely marginalized in the mainstream news. There is a real need for innovation if news is to reawaken the interest not only of younger audiences but of a large majority of other viewers as well. This is partly a



matter of developing new formal strategies, but it also requires a more fundamental rethinking of what is seen to count as news in the first place. The deferential stance that is invited and encouraged by mainstream news formats needs to be abandoned in favour of an approach that invites scepticism and active engagement. Much greater effort must be made not only to explain the causes and contexts of news events, but also to enable viewers to perceive the relevance of these events to their own everyday lives. News providers can no longer afford to confine their coverage to the words and actions of the powerful, or to the narrow and exclusive discourses that currently dominate the public sphere of social and political debate.

The avoidance of entertainment in favour of a narrow insistence on seriousness and formality in the dominant forms of news production systematically alienates younger audiences. Addressing this issue involves more than simply sugar-coating the pill, however. News providers could learn a great deal from the genres that are most successful in engaging younger audiences, perhaps taking some cues from MTV. Obviously, some of the more modern approaches can be a recipe for superficiality, but they can also offer news providers creative new ways to fulfil their mission to educate and inform-areas in which they have lost their edge, particularly among young people.

Media provision through online culture

The debate over the role of the Internet in young people's lives is often sharply polarized. Many regard this new medium primarily in terms of the potential risks. There is a high level of public anxiety about the accessibility of pornography on the Internet, and about the dangers of young people being seduced by online paedophiles or political extremists. There is also growing concern about the practice of online marketing to young people both through direct selling and through the gathering of market research data (Montgomery, 1997; Seiter, 2004). However, as mentioned in an earlier section within the context of two-directional socialization, the Internet can also be seen as a means of liberation and expression for young people. Chat groups, electronic mail and web pages represent avenues of autonomous creative expression and offer arenas in which, arguably, children and young people are no longer constrained by the limitations of their parents' cultures (Tapscott, 1997).

To what extent are such claims regarding the creativity and creative potential of online culture justified? As previously noted, much of the data presented here are fragmentary and anecdotal; leaving aside those using e-mail and instant messaging, the number of young people who could reasonably be regarded as active participants in online culture is relatively small. Much of the research in the field, including, for example, that on electronic fanzines (Leonard, 1998) or multi-user domains (Turkle, 1995), actually relates to young adults (those over the age of 18). Such research is almost bound to focus on unrepresentative cases; some of it appears unduly preoccupied with the more avant-garde manifestations of cyberculture. A crucial task for researchers at this stage is to consider how representative the early adopters might be, and to examine and analyse the more banal, everyday uses of these media.

Another important consideration is that researchers in this area are dealing with forms and aspects of the youth culture to which it is very difficult to gain access—and which, in many respects, seem almost deliberately designed to exclude them. Serious ethical dilemmas inevitably arise in this kind of research, particularly given the ease with which one can eavesdrop on apparently private communications, and these may be particularly acute in relation to young people.

Nevertheless, some researchers have provided illuminating case studies that are suggestive of some of the broader issues at stake. Home pages produced by young people on the World Wide Web, for example, have been interpreted in analyses as instances of “identity construction” analogous to the decoration of bedroom walls (Chandler and Roberts-Young, 1998). The home page is seen here as a hybrid form that combines aspects of public communication (such as broadcasting or publishing) and private communication (such as a personal diary or letter), and to some extent crosses the boundary between them. This hybridity is reflected particularly in the combination of written, verbal and visual forms of communication and expression that characterize these new media (Abbott, 1998). For some, the constant changes being made to the home pages of children and young people are symptomatic of a postmodern fluidity of identity; others have argued that the Internet is a place where young people feel they can be “truly themselves” (Tobin, 1998).

A related theme in this context is that of pedagogy. Some scholars argue that online communication produces “learning communities” that cross the boundaries of age and geography, and that are more democratic and collaborative than those of traditional educational institutions (Tobin, 1998). The relatively recent phenomenon of blogs (web logs) is seen to have particularly strong potential for promoting student-centred learning (Oravec, 2003) and providing opportunities for political activism among young people (Cushion, 2004; Kahn and Kellner, 2004). As in more general assertions about online communities, such arguments tend to neglect the occasionally undemocratic and exclusionary nature of some online communication. Nonetheless, the opportunities these media present for group interaction in comparison with equivalent older technologies such as the telephone are far superior.

The interactive and pedagogical aspects are particularly apparent in analyses of online fan cultures. Engaging in a unique form of “textual poaching” (Jenkins, 1992), fans of religious media texts explore and extend the pleasure they derive from them by reworking the texts through writing, song, artwork and other means (Flench, 1999). There is often an effort made to honour the original text by remaining as true to it as possible; for example, the fine details of the appearance or behaviour of a character may be replicated. In some cases, however, the original text is dramatically altered or adapted to reflect the particular interests of fans or fan groups. Fan sites and “web rings” often develop an informal pedagogy by, for example, offering tips and hints to writers or artists or using “beta readers” to comment on work as it develops. Such online practices challenge existing power relations between media producers and consumers and hold out the possibility of “a more democratic, responsive and diverse style of popular culture”—though the political consequences of such activity should not be overstated (Jenkins, 2003).

CONCLUSION: IMPLICATIONS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S MEDIA RIGHTS

The developments described in this chapter almost certainly necessitate a broader rethinking of cultural and educational policy. The traditional protectionist stance is no longer either desirable or realistic; however, it may be equally ineffective to adopt a liberationist approach, which simply asserts young people's freedom to choose. There is a need for "privatized" solutions that place a certain amount of responsibility in the hands of young people themselves, but there is also a need for more explicitly political responses in the activities of social and cultural institutions.

The notion of children's rights offers a useful reference point for thinking through some of these issues. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child provides a number of general indicators: article 13 asserts children's right to freedom of expression; article 17 proclaims their rights of access to a range of media; and article 31 identifies broader rights to leisure and to participation in cultural life. However, like many such instruments, the Convention seems to leave it to parents or other adults to decide what is in the best interests of children and young people.

A brief sketch of what the media rights of youth might involve is presented below in four subsections reflecting the three well-established categories of protection, provision and participation, as well as a fourth category— that of education.

Protection of young people's media rights

Certainly the most familiar assertion in the present context is that young people need to be protected from harm. Young people, like adults, should not be exposed to material they have not knowingly chosen to be exposed to, or that might prove "injurious to (their) well-being".¹² In many countries there are laws against child pornography, indecent displays, and incitement to racial hatred, as well as strict codes of practice concerning false claims in advertising, the invasion of privacy, and depictions of sex and violence.

Arguments about young people's vulnerability tend to be used as a justification for denying them access to knowledge and power. There is considerable room for debate about what should be regarded as "harmful" or "unsuitable". A more protectionist approach might well deny young people access to much of what they are exposed to in everyday life, whether through various media or within their own environment. New distribution technologies significantly undermine the possibility of regulation either by the Government or within the home. On both philosophical and pragmatic grounds, it may be necessary to work towards the development of a system that supports self-regulation by young people themselves.

The issues raised above are particularly complex in relation to the Internet. Again, the solution may not be stricter centralized control or a technical fix such as blocking software. Young people who are determined to find hard-core pornography or racist propaganda will be able to do so irrespective of whether technological constraints have been imposed. There is a need for the more effective provision of information—both negative (in the form of warnings) and positive (listings of valuable sites, for example). A sustained form of education is needed as well. Young people, like adults, need to be able to protect

themselves on the Internet, and to be discriminating about the information they disclose, not least to commercial companies. They also need to learn to better evaluate the information they find. Traditional questions about the ownership and control of information, and about bias and persuasion, are just as relevant to these new media as to the more established traditional media.

Provision and young people's media rights

With the rapid technological and economic changes occurring in the media field, new questions have been raised about the adequacy of media provision for young people. The sheer quantity of broadcast material available – at least for those with access to cable or satellite services – has increased enormously. However, quantity does not necessarily imply quality or variety. Continued regulation of both public and commercial providers is needed to ensure the availability of an adequate range of material specifically designed for young people in all their diversity. There is an ongoing need to finance the production and distribution of material whose commercial potential may not be immediately apparent in order to encourage innovation and counterbalance the dominance of a few select producers in the world market. Material produced by young people themselves should also be financed and made available via these new channels.

Inequalities in media access have increased significantly with the trend towards broadcasting privatization. These inequalities are especially apparent in relation to media for which provision is wholly or largely subject to the market, including films, books, and now computers. It is vital to insist on universal access, and to ensure that programmes for young people are broadcast on free-to-air channels in regular slots when young people are available to watch them.

Schools, libraries and other State-funded cultural institutions are increasingly being called upon to provide access to new media at the neighbourhood and community levels. However, access is not only about the right technology and hardware; it is also about the cultural and educational capital needed to use it creatively and effectively. Investing in technology infrastructure development by wiring schools, for example, is a merely symbolic gesture if it is not accompanied by investments in specialist staff and in training.

Finally, much greater consideration must be given to young people's own perspectives. Arguments about their cultural and psychological needs are frequently used as a justification for protecting the vested interests of adults and as a defence against change. In broadcasting, as in other areas of cultural policy, a dialogue must be created in which young people's voices will be heard, and cultural producers must be made more accountable to the audiences they claim to serve.

Participation and young people's media rights

The focus has thus far been on young people's "passive" rights of adequate media protection and provision; attention now shifts to their "active" rights in relation to media participation. Two broad types of participation are relevant in the present context: participation in production itself and participation in the formation of media policy.

The proliferation of new means and channels of distribution offers significant opportunities for the democratization of media production. This is most obvious in relation to the Internet, though there is no reason why it should not also apply to cable and digital broadcasting. What is needed is a forced incentive that makes the granting of licences contingent upon providing public access to production. Past attempts at providing such access to young people tended to be somewhat tokenistic; however, there has been some notable recent progress in this area with the distribution of excellent, innovative material produced by young people.¹⁵

Production opportunities for young people in other media will need to be made available in different ways. Media corporations could be encouraged, perhaps through offers of specific tax breaks, to sponsor and invest in community access facilities. In the light of prevailing inequalities in media access, such projects should be targeted primarily at low-income areas. Access to distribution channels such as community websites, publications and exhibition spaces should also be provided.

Participation also involves the assumption of a certain amount of responsibility and accountability for the functioning of media institutions. There have always been pressure groups that claim to speak on behalf of youth, but steps need to be taken to enable young people themselves to speak more directly and collectively to producers and policymakers. Regular regional conferences, preceded by web-based debates and linked to the media education curriculum of schools, would give young people an opportunity to make well-prepared contributions to the media policy debate on a more consistent basis. Likewise, resources could be made available for the creation of forums such as webzines or chat rooms on the Internet to facilitate dialogue between young people on critical policy issues.

Young people will only develop the competence to produce meaningful statements in the media, or to make their views known, if they are given sustained and well-supported opportunities to do so. Here, again, opportunities for participation need to be seen as part of a wider set of educational initiatives.

Education and young people's media rights

In the ICT/media realm, as in many other contexts, education is key. Educational institutions and providers—broadly defined—can play a vital role in equalizing young people's access both to media technologies and to the cultural capital needed to use them most productively. They can provide the means and the necessary support for the types of media participation identified above. They can also help young people develop the ability to protect themselves from—or more positively, to understand and to deal effectively with—the potential dangers of the broader media environment.

In many settings, media education has been relegated to the margins of formal education. It seems quite extraordinary that school curricula should continue to neglect the forms of culture and communication that have so thoroughly dominated the past several decades. A number of countries are working to develop or have already created a rigorous and coherent model of media education (Buckingham, 2003). A comprehensive media education is not confined to analysing the media or to some rationalistic notion of providing critical viewing skills; rather, it seeks to encourage young people's critical participation as cultural producers in their own right.



Media education is a very important dimension of contemporary citizenship-building and should therefore be seen as a basic entitlement for all school students. The nature and pace of technological change is such that different forms of media education that extend beyond the traditional classroom will become increasingly necessary. These will involve new types of dialogue between media producers, policymakers and young audiences. They may involve the creation of new public sphere institutions that provide all segments of the population with increased access to and opportunities for participation in the full range of old and new media. These and other such changes collectively represent a broader form of education about culture and communication than is currently envisaged by most educational policymakers.

Ultimately, media and cultural rights cannot be dissociated from the broader social and political status of young people. The call for cultural rights inevitably implies a call for political rights as well. In addressing the issues raised here within this wider context, important questions about power and access—about who owns the means of production, who has the right to speak, and whose voices can and should be heard—must remain at the top of the policy agenda. ●

¹ According to Giddens (1994), the past loses its power and influence as tradition grows thinner.

² Socialization is a concept that bridges the gap between sociology and psychology. Theories of socialization have focused on children's and young people's cognitive development (Piaget, Vygotsky), the psychodynamic development of personal identity in the structure of family relationships (Freud), the problem of social identity, the self concept (G.H. Mead), internalizing the group's moral values and categories (Durkheim) or perhaps multiple communicative interaction skills. Often a conceptual distinction is made between primary and secondary socialization, according to which primary socialization is limited mostly to childhood. Media in industrial and post-industrial societies is related to secondary socialization. (See Jary and Jary, 2000, p. 596).

³ See, for example, Livingstone's perspective (Livingstone and Bovill, 1999); also see <http://www.informatik.umu.se/nrg/nlr.html> (accessed 6 April 2004).

⁴ The socializing influence of civic organizations did indeed begin much earlier, before the beginning of the twentieth century at least.

⁵ This raises an interesting question concerning the quality of communal experiences on the Internet: Can there be peer groups without face to face interaction?

⁶ See, for example, Stewart and LeSueur (1991) or the *Online Journal of Space Communication* (2002).

⁷ See, for example, *Parents, Media and Public Policy: A Kaiser Family Foundation Survey* (Princeton Survey Research Associates, 2004).

⁸ Some examples of these contemporary youth-orientated cartoons include *Beavis and Butthead*, *South Park*, *Daria* and *The Simpsons*, to name a few.

⁹ The Columbine High School massacre occurred on 20 April 1999 at the Columbine High School in Colorado, United States. Two teenage students shot and killed twelve fellow students and a teacher before committing suicide.

¹⁰ Dr. Francis B. Nyamnjoh, University of Botswana, as quoted in the report of the Fourth World Summit on Media for Children and Adolescents (Gigli, 2004).

¹¹ See, for example, the figures reported in "The youth vote" (Political Information and Monitoring Service of South Africa, 2004).

¹² Article 17 (e) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

¹² Some examples include Radio Arte in Mexico, an all-youth-produced bilingual community radio station that trains and encourages youth to develop self-expression through the broadcast medium (see <http://radioarte.org>); the South African show *Youth Network Television (YNTV)*, created in 1995 by Ubuntu Television; Blast, a British Broadcasting Corporation initiative encouraging 13- to 19-year olds throughout the United Kingdom to get involved in media production, and *Chat the Planet*, a television show and Internet community that connects groups of young Americans aged 15 to 25 years with their peers around the world, via satellite, for honest dialogue (see <http://www.chattheplanet.com>).



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Chapter 6

GLOBAL
&
MEDIA CULTURE

YOUNG PEOPLE'S
ACTIVE ROLE
IN SOCIETY



The emergence of a global media-driven youth culture is affecting the way young people engage in active citizenship within their societies. Social and political activism is one of the means by which young people respond to change, though their participation in activism is far from pervasive in demographic terms. For example, while televised coverage shows mostly young faces at anti-globalization protests, it is clear that most young people do not participate in such demonstrations. Nonetheless, there is some evidence suggesting that more young people around the world are aware of and engaged in global or transnational issues than in the past; that ICT and youth-oriented media have both facilitated this awareness and engagement and helped enable an expansion of the types of socially and politically oriented activities that are considered “activist” by young people, which include but are not defined by participation in protest events; and that ICT is part of a new culture of engagement in activism that may have particular appeal to youth.

This chapter examines how the global media-driven youth culture is changing the lives of young people as active citizens and becoming a core component of their activism. An overview of young people as political actors is followed by an explanation of what constitutes activism (and what distinguishes it from other forms of civic engagement) and a description of the various kinds of transnational activism in which some young people are engaged. The chapter then highlights the ways in which technology and media are used by young people in various forms of activism, and how media itself becomes an object of youth activist concern. This is presented principally in terms of how young people are represented in mediated public spheres and how they can gain access to these spheres in order to speak for themselves.¹

YOUNG PEOPLE AS POLITICAL ACTORS

The concerns that arise in societies with regard to young people as political actors generally relate to the kinds of citizens young people are right now, the kinds of citizens they will become in the future, and the kinds of things that need to be done to prepare them to become “good” citizens someday. Young people receive this kind of attention in part because they are presumed to be “incomplete” and not yet capable of fully responsible action and rational judgement. These concerns extend beyond the dividing line between the legal ages of minority and majority, which may vary within and between societies depending on whether the arena is voting, compulsory schooling, culpability for and jurisdiction over criminal acts, or overall personal responsibility and accountability. Even when young people reach a legally established age of majority, their formation as political actors is often regarded as incomplete unless and until they assume the normative status of an adult citizen by, for example, establishing an independent family household and maintaining full-time employment. The boundaries defining childhood, youth and adulthood may also vary greatly according to the context. In South Africa, the Youth Care Act defines a child as a male or female aged 0 to 18 years, while the National Youth Policy targets individuals between the ages of 14 and 35 to ensure that adequate support is provided for those who may face challenges and threats unique to this particular social group (South Africa, 1997). According to a recent survey in the United States, most Americans believe



that grown-up status is not achieved until the age of 26, on average, and they see the attributes of education, employment, financial autonomy and family formation as key to being fully adult (*Reuters*, 2003). In Thailand, the Juvenile and Family Procedures Act defines youth as individuals between the ages of 14 and 18, while the Youth Development Plan identifies those aged 15-25 years as young people (Suktawee and Madkhao, no date).

There is a fair amount of research on young people as political actors; some work has concentrated on the present, some on the future, and some on the relationship between the two.² In Western countries, attention has principally been focused on voting behaviour, volunteerism, and the sources and effects of political socialization, especially civic education in schools. Much less is known about young people's participation in social movements and other efforts to change the policies or behaviour of powerful institutions. The study of social movements took off at the height of young people's political mobilization in the 1960s, which was characterized by anti-war, civil rights and anti-capitalist activism in the developed world, and anti-colonial, nationalist and anti-capitalist protests in the developing world. However, social science research on political activism in general and on young people's politics and civic engagement has tended to move along parallel rather than intersecting tracks. It should be noted that activism that is more publicly demonstrative and sometimes of a violent nature tends to gain far more attention than youth participation in non-violent movements or other forms of public advocacy.³

The activities and problems of young people have become popular subjects in a number of contexts, including social policy, public discourse and the media, and in line with this trend have also been subject to increased scholarly attention and analysis. These developments make sense from a demographic perspective, as youth have come to constitute an increasingly large proportion of the overall population in many developing countries, while they comprise a declining share of the total in many industrialized nations. In the developing world, many policymakers have been compelled by the growing "youthfulness" of their societies to place young people at the centre of the policy agenda.⁴ In areas in which the age pyramid is reversed, such as Western Europe, concerns about young people are linked to issues such as immigration, given the relative youth of so many migrants looking for, and only occasionally finding, employment. Certain iconic events and well-publicized trends have also fuelled interest in youth in different parts of the world, among them high school killings, suicide bombings, the use of child soldiers, and protests by young people opposing liberalization policies around the globe. Certain issues of real or perceived significance have tended to dominate public attention and discussion, including the disaffection of young people from mainstream democratic politics (as measured by low voter turnout in elections), youth unemployment and child labour abuses, youth gangs and criminality, drug use, crises in public education, child sexual abuse, and access to "adult" content on the Internet, to name just a few.

Research is still catching up with both the myths and the realities of the contemporary lives of young people and with the broader implications of their ideas and actions for their present and future status as citizens. For a generation or more, research on young people in general primarily comprised social or developmental psychology studies of adolescence as a stage in the life course, or studies on youth culture and subcultures. Research in these areas is currently being augmented by work on a range of

other youth-related issues that, while certainly not absent in the past, have gained momentum as discrete fields of study and/or focal points for cross-disciplinary collaboration and debate. Many of these topics are related to “politics” in its various dimensions and manifestations, with broad areas of concentration including the effect of policies and political and legal institutions on young people’s lives; the ways in which “youth” is defined and used as a topic or category in public and policy discourse; and the ideas, values and practices young people bring to the public sphere. Specific issues addressed within this context might include youth employment and working conditions; poverty and homelessness; young people’s political, civil, and economic rights; or the plight of young soldiers taking part in civil conflicts throughout the world.

Four core approaches to the intersection of youth and politics are presented below as a prelude to the section on youth participation and activism. These approaches may be characterized by the different terms they use to refer to young people, namely “generations”, “adolescents”, “youth” and “children”. In different ways, they each contribute to a better understanding of young people’s political ideas and behaviour and various dimensions of their political discourse, in terms of both how these factors influence the political trajectories of communities and societies and how they are affected by social and economic structures, various political, legal and media institutions, and diverse cultural contexts.

Youth in generational terms

One of the principal approaches to youth and politics derives not from a concern with “youth” per se, but rather from “the problem of generations”.⁵ This area of focus took on a relatively short-lived sense of urgency in the wake of the student uprisings around the world in the late 1960s and the emergence of the notion of a generation gap. The “problem” of generations has also been invoked at times in connection with nationalist and radical movements in developing countries as a framework or reference point for analysing resistance to colonialism or tensions between older and younger generations in newly independent nations. Discussions of Generation X in the 1990s tended to associate younger generations with political apathy. This approach lends itself to the study of major events and large-scale social changes and revolutions in which cohorts of young people play an important part.

What are the essential components of the generational perspective, especially as it applies to youth? Broadly speaking, it tends to focus on large-scale historical changes in generational politics across time in which “age sets”, or cohorts, are a key element in explaining political transformations and continuities (Braungart, 1993). This does not imply that members of a specific generation possess a single political orientation or that consensus reigns among members of an age cohort. What is important is the notion that coming of age in a particular historical context imprints unique political concerns on generational members, who then respond to these concerns in a variety of ways.

In practice, the young people who receive the most attention within the realm of generational politics tend to be public intellectuals or catalysts of social movements—those who enter the public sphere to voice their concerns and sometimes claim to represent “their” generation and its interests. Very often, these “youth” are “students” from middle- to upper-class backgrounds who have the requisite cultural capital and social network connections to enter the public sphere as generational spokespersons or activists.

Overall, the “problem” characterizing this perspective relates to the ways in which new generations contribute to the political reproduction or transformation of their societies and the conditions under which this takes place. There is some attention given in this context to the intergenerational and intragenerational differences in political and other values that contribute to the emergence of generational political responses and activities.

Youth in terms of adolescent political development

A second approach to youth and politics, applied much more widely than the generational perspective, relates to the political development of young people and the nature and extent of their civic and political engagement. One telltale feature of this approach— not surprising given its connection to developmental psychology— is the use of the word “adolescent” in reference to a specific developmental category.

It is difficult to make any generalizations about this approach, though some broad tendencies can be identified. As with the generational perspective, adolescent political development is concerned with political outcomes, though far greater emphasis is placed on the quality of specific kinds of political systems (especially democracies) than on dramatic changes in political systems themselves. A good deal of work in this area is motivated by concerns that the quality of democracy is suboptimal and that this has a great deal to do with the political socialization, orientation and practices of young people. Individual processes of development and identity formation throughout the life course are seen as key to understanding the qualities of political processes. Adolescence is identified as a discrete social category in this context, especially in developmental terms, as it is one of those critical stages in life during which key values and ideas are acquired, with far-reaching implications at both the individual and collective levels. With this approach, youth/adolescents are principally regarded as “adults in the making”; the emphasis is on “becoming” rather than “being”. For the most part, the adolescent political development approach is concerned with the kinds of “political adults” and citizens young people will eventually become based on their values, knowledge and experiences. It is therefore often linked to public interventions designed to influence young people’s political formation within formal educational institutions (through civic education) and outside of them (see Sherrod, Flanagan and Youniss, 2002).

An important “extended” application of this approach, relevant to the subject of activism, involves assessing the extent to which youthful political experiences might influence adult citizenship and political activity. Researchers have conducted longitudinal studies and collected life histories in order to construct political biographies of young people, and especially of young political activists, to provide a better understanding this process.⁶

In comparison with the generational approach, youth political development is less organized around particular events or the broad social contexts or conditions under which political development and socialization take place. While these factors are considered important, they are not given the same priority as the development of individual qualities through family relations, education, peer learning, and experience.

Youth in terms of studies, cultures, and politics

Social context is the point of origin for approaches concerned with youth identities and cultures, though there is much variation within this perspective in terms of which contexts are most relevant. Although some early work was done on transformations in the notion of childhood in Europe (Ariès, 1962), youth cultural studies took off in the 1970s with research conducted in the fields of sociology and anthropology. The initial focus of this work was very political in that efforts were made to understand how young people made sense of and acted in a world characterized by socio-economic inequalities and racial and gender biases, with much made of the constraints they faced in this context;⁷ over time, however, this field of research has evolved in many different directions, with only a few areas of study explicitly concerned with youth politics. Nonetheless, most youth studies are now united by a broader definition of “politics” than that used in more mainstream approaches. There is significant emphasis on either resistance or acquiescence to power structures, manifested in a range of cultural expressions and practices—such as popular music, style, drugs and criminality—that may not be considered “political” in the traditional sense. The young people who tend to constitute the focus of this perspective, including ethnic and racial minorities, the working class, or girls and young women, are often marginalized and stigmatized within the public sphere and at the formal institutional level.

Certain dimensions of the youth studies approach distinguish it from other approaches. It challenges the definition of “youth” as a stage in life and the notion of young people as primarily “adults in the making”; the preference for the term “youth” rather than “adolescent” is to some extent an implied criticism of the tendency to focus on what youth may “become” rather than on what they may currently “be”. “Adolescence” is also criticized as being a largely Western notion not applicable to other parts of the world. The youth studies perspective is less concerned than other perspectives with issues of political socialization, and tends not to focus as explicitly on young people’s attitudes towards democracy or on their political practices (if defined as activity within or oriented towards formal political institutions).

Another important dimension of this perspective relates to the ways in which the State and other powerful institutions such as media, schools, social workers and commercial enterprises contribute to youth identity formation through their portrayal of young people as either social problems or apathetic consumers.⁸ This process, apparent in a wide range of public discourses and social practices—including curricular content, juvenile justice systems, the development of government youth agencies and programmes, and media representations—is rightly seen as an inherently political one. However, the connection between these external sources of youth identity-shaping and young people’s political ideas and actions is generally not pursued in this approach. Its most immediate reference point is the emphasis on young people’s “agency” in the face of the structural constraints governing their lives.

“Agency” is perhaps the principal focus of the youth studies approach in its present form and applies to a wide range of social practices and contexts, especially in the area of cultural forms and expressions. As mentioned above, many of these forms and



expressions are interpreted as having an inherently political content, particularly when they are seen to represent an implicit critique of or resistance to prevailing power structures. However, with the perspective currently under review, this kind of agency is rarely related to explicit engagements of young people in the public sphere through more conventionally defined political action or participation in social movements.

Youth in terms of children's rights, participation and citizenship

The fourth perspective on young people's politics relates to children's rights and citizenship. This is a more recent approach than the others—one that evolved directly from normative agendas and advocacy concerns (which are clearly present in, but do not constitute the central focus of, adolescent political development or youth studies).⁹ The children's rights approach focuses on various local, national and international legal instruments and regimes as they apply to the lives of children and young people, their status as citizens, and their participatory practices in different arenas including local councils, national parliaments, schools, and social service agencies, with a lesser focus on their involvement in relatively autonomous peer groups and youth organizations.

This normative agenda, with its emphasis on the rights of children and young people—particularly their rights, interests and participation within a political context—both led to the development of, and is now inspired by, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.¹⁰ The operative term within this perspective is thus “children” rather than youth, adolescent, or younger generation. The approach employs a legal definition of childhood (typically the period extending up to the age of 18) as its focus. This juridical differentiation between children/youth and adults is then used to argue for the need to “empower” children and young people in the political arena by both supporting protective legislation and promoting their participation; in the latter case, formal efforts might include lowering the voting age or guaranteeing young people's representation in public bodies, while more informal endeavours might involve facilitating different and more creative types of interaction (see van Bueren, forthcoming).

Like the adolescent political development approach, the children's rights approach focuses on young people's political participation. In the latter case, however, the key to such participation is generally viewed less in terms of political socialization than in terms of the rights young people possess or are entitled to. In this sense, the children's rights perspective is similar to the youth studies perspective in that both reject the idea that young people are adults-in-the-making and therefore not yet full citizens. It is unlike the youth studies approach, however, in that the identity of children and youth is seen as biologically defined rather than socially constructed, and the members of this group are seen to have their own sets of interests that require an enabling legal, political and cultural environment. The children's rights and youth studies approaches both place strong emphasis on the agency of young people, but in the former context this agency is regarded principally as potential or latent until an enabling environment is available, whereas in the latter context young people's agency is seen as an inherent part of their engagement with the social and political world.

Analysis of the four approaches

Careful consideration of each of the approaches outlined above contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of young people's politics. Two key lessons emerge from an overall assessment based on the application of these perspectives (which, it must be noted, serve as useful but individually incomplete analytical tools).

First, as is the case with other sources of social identity (including race, gender, social class and ethnicity), the category of "youth" is a heterogeneous one. Generalizations about young people are basically unwise given the diversity of their ideas and experiences across different geographical regions and within societies across the lines of class, education, gender, race and ethnicity. That said, special note should be taken of those instances—usually brief and episodic but often consequential and sometimes momentous—when significant numbers of young people develop and express a consciousness of themselves as "youth" and act upon this consciousness across various lines of division. This is where perspectives, approaches and examples relating to generational activism are especially helpful, both in understanding how this happens and why it is relatively rare. Media may certainly be critical in this context, as popular culture and ICT can serve as shared languages and channels of communication between members of an age cohort. As already mentioned in reference to bidirectional socialization, ICT represents an important aspect of the cultural differences between generations; its relevance in this context relates to the cognitive capacities and organizational strategies required for the use of media in political activism and other citizenship-related activity.

Second, young people are in a state of both "being" and "becoming". It is necessary to acknowledge their status as social and political actors in the present as well as their status as adults-in-the-making. The overwhelming tendency to view these two perspectives as dichotomous has limited research and activities in the field of youth and inhibited the development of new and productive ways of thinking about youth politics.¹¹ Cultural and developmental perspectives on youth have also been presented as either/or choices. On the one hand, a comparative perspective requires formal recognition and understanding of the ways in which the age groups identified as "youth" and the characteristics that divide this category from that of adulthood are socially constructed and vary from place to place. On the other hand, certain dimensions of age—including human capacities, the need for protection, legal and citizenship rights and responsibilities, and rites of passage—are ubiquitous. In other words, while the exact ages at which certain kinds of rights are extended, statuses are attained, and dependence and protection are superseded by autonomy will vary across time and space (and certainly between genders), these processes are universal.

It is worth examining how the media are perceived in relation to youth politics within the different approaches. Media receive by far the most attention in the youth studies approach, given its focus on both popular culture and the ways in which young people are publicly represented. Media, especially television, are also given consideration in developmental approaches, but largely as an obstacle to engagement and political development.¹² Until recently, generational approaches tended not to focus much on how the common experiences of an age cohort are shaped and shared (but see Edmunds and Turner, 2002). Clearly, wide use is made of the media in children's rights activism, but they do not constitute a central element of the analytical framework of this approach, which concentrates on legislation and empowerment.

One particularly relevant factor in assessing the role of the media in relation to local and transnational activism is whether young people are seen as citizens in the present or citizens-in-the-making. If the emphasis is on the latter, media may be considered instrumental in promoting habits that contribute to more responsible and informed citizenship (such as reading newspapers), but also somewhat problematic in that youth are seen as impressionable and easily manipulated. In this view, young people need to be protected from influences that might interfere with their formation as citizens. Society might even need to be protected from “misuses” of media by young people who are not completely aware of or responsible for their actions, or who show poor judgement (computer hacking is one example). Alternatively, approaches in which young people are perceived more as citizens in the present might focus on their ability to use media for activist purposes or, as will be explored later, as a distinctive means of engaging in activism. Regardless of which perspective is adopted, media education represents an important dimension of contemporary citizenship. It is critical that young people develop the ability to protect themselves from, or more positively, to understand and deal effectively with, the potential dangers of the broader media environment; it is equally important that they develop the capacity to take advantage of the growing opportunities within this environment.

LINKING THE GLOBAL MEDIA-DRIVEN CULTURE TO YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND ACTIVISM

Activism is a difficult term to define with any precision, as it is used in many different ways by a wide range of political actors as well as by practitioners concerned with the civic engagement of others. It is important to emphasize the “active” aspect of this concept in its application to young people’s politics. For the purposes of this chapter, a working definition of activism is participation in any or all of the following:

- Protest events and direct actions (violent or non-violent);
- Ongoing advocacy campaigns to change the policies and behaviour of powerful institutions, including Governments, transnational corporations and international institutions;
- Consumer boycotts and other uses of market power to effect change;
- Information gathering and dissemination intended to attract media attention and raise the public consciousness with regard to issues of concern.

As suggested by this definition, activism is just one form of youth participation or civic engagement – and not one that is particularly common in relative terms. Other activities relating to youth politics and citizenship, such as voting, civic education, participation in debate clubs and informal discussion among peers, voluntary work, and service provision, may go together with or lead to activism, but quite often do not. Activism implies action that reflects expressions of dissent, attempts to effect change, or efforts to place issues on the political agenda. The definition applied in the present context is similar to



that used by Oxfam's International Youth Parliament in its recent report, which states that activism "can be broadly defined as efforts to create changes in the behaviour of institutions or organizations through action strategies such as lobbying, advocacy, negotiation, protest, campaigning and raising awareness" (Koffel, 2003).

The approaches outlined in the previous section reflect very different perspectives with regard to youth activism. The definition of youth activism used here is perhaps most consistent with the generational approach, given its focus on events and social movements. Adolescent political development would likely place these kinds of activities under the broader heading of civic engagement, but they are less central to its core concerns. Activism also plays a role in the children's rights approach, most directly in promoting the rights themselves. This category of political activity among young people may be of some interest in the youth studies approach, largely from the perspective of the cultural symbols and discourses deployed for political purposes.

As mentioned above, activism is not particularly widespread among young people (or the rest of the population) – at least most of the time. Even in comparison with voting, which typically draws a smaller percentage of youth than other age groups, activism is a relatively rare phenomenon. However, its importance cannot be measured by participation rates alone. The major protests and demonstrations that have taken place, including those connected with the "anti-globalization" movement in recent years, offer clear evidence that activism has an impact, even if the results are not always those for which the activists might hope. Activism may also have peer effects; even if it does not bring in new supporters for a particular cause, it is likely to raise young people's awareness of issues and expand their perceptions of what may be achieved through political participation.

One other issue worth considering is whether activism is, by definition, a good thing for the individual and for society. It may be virtually impossible to answer this question in the abstract; views will vary depending on the extent to which people's political goals and ideologies coincide with the objectives and activities of particular groups of activists. Activism must encompass a broad range of normative or ideological orientations if it is to be a useful concept for understanding young people's politics. From this perspective, youth activism covers right-wing anti-immigrant skinhead movements as well as anti-sweatshop campaigns, and the aims and practices of religiously inspired extremist groups as well as the activities aimed at social change among the younger members of mainstream religious organizations. In a sense, youth activism comprises a complex array of institutions and activities that are part and parcel of a functioning civil society and that are representative of its complexities and contradictions (United Nations, 2001). The term "activism" has largely been appropriated by those with "progressive" agendas centred around human rights and social justice issues, and most of the kinds of transnational activism reviewed below fall within that rubric. However, it is important to remember that much "non-progressive" activism occurs among young people who feel marginalized or threatened and seek to change the policies and behaviour of powerful institutions, and that the media and ICT are clearly critical strategic components of their efforts (see, for example, Wright, 2004).

THE LINK BETWEEN TRANSNATIONAL YOUTH CULTURE AND TRANSNATIONAL ACTIVISM

Transnational activism encompasses a wide range of internationally oriented and organized political activities and networks in which young people may be involved. While there are no relevant detailed data with which to compare developments over time, it is likely that transnational activism, and especially young people's involvement in it, has grown dramatically in recent years.¹³ There are several different forms transnational activism can take.

On one level, transnational activism may centre around issues or events that are outside the native country of the activist (an example being the human rights situation in another country), or that are global in scope (the implementation or strengthening of internationally recognized child labour laws is one example). Such activity might involve students from one country protesting against sweatshops in another country or refusing to buy the products of companies using sweatshop labour.

A second area of transnational activism encompasses the efforts of local activists to address problems originating from or caused by (or perceived as having originated from or having been caused by) forces outside their own countries. An example might be a Latin American youth taking part in an organization promoting debt relief or fair trade, or a Nigerian youth protesting the environmental practices of a transnational oil company.

A third aspect of transnational activism relates not to a specific issue, but to the networks and alliances that form between activists based in different parts of the world. Such arrangements may evolve in some instances, especially when the issue in question is considered global in scope, but not necessarily in others. This process requires a certain level of communication and even coordination across borders.¹⁴

There is a subset of issues in transnational activism with direct relevance to society's younger members; many young people engage in activism for the express purpose of improving their own lives and/or those of other youth. A range of global and transnational forces and institutions shape young people's livelihoods, life chances, transitions to adulthood, and effectiveness as citizens, either directly or through their impact on national and local policies and social outcomes; under certain circumstances these forces and institutions may become the focus of activism, including transnational youth activism. Activities in this area might include efforts aimed at halting the use of child soldiers or child labour, promoting youth employment creation, ensuring the extension of political and other rights to young people, protecting the legal status of youth in relation to juvenile justice and incarceration, reversing practices seen as discriminatory to young people (particularly when gender or race is also a factor), and providing wider access to education or health care.

Central to transnational activism is the linking of issues to particular institutions seen as being responsible for local or global problems or as having failed to address these problems. Media images of what has been dubbed the anti-globalization movement often portray various groups and their alliances as incoherent, at best, or nihilist, at worst, but in truth, most have quite explicit targets and audiences whose practices or opinions they want to influence, with attention often focused on the following:

- Transnational corporations, targeted because of their labour practices, investment strategies that exacerbate inequalities, influence on trade policies, and lack of social responsibility;
- Powerful countries and regions, targeted for their trade policies and agricultural subsidies (free trade for others but protectionism at home), domination of global cultural product markets and, most recently, military action around the world;
- International financial institutions, targeted for their structural adjustment policies, support of free but not fair trade, tendency to push for reductions in social services, and lack of participation in agenda setting and decision-making;
- Intergovernmental organizations, NGOs and humanitarian agencies, targeted for setting agendas independently from the countries in which they operate, using resources inappropriately, and displacing public sector providers;
- The media, targeted for stereotyping young people as apathetic or obsessed with consumption or violence, and for limiting youth access as producers of media content.

Underlying much of young people's involvement in transnational activism is the question of institutional accountability. Powerful institutions—many of which, in a local or national context, are considered “external” or global—are seen as having enormous influence over people's lives and young people's futures. However, these institutions are not accountable to those whose lives they shape, in the sense that the classic mechanisms of representative democratic government are not applied in a manner that forces them to assume direct responsibility for their actions. Transnational corporations, formally accountable only to owners and shareholders, are seen as even more powerful in an era that venerates the market and private sector, particularly since their identity is no longer bound up with, or their practices regulated by, individual States. Many young people around the world perceive this as a trend that will only grow with time, and they are concerned about how the probable widening of the accountability gap might affect their future and that of other youth. Most of the young people involved in the so-called anti-globalization movement are not opposed to globalization per se. Rather, they appear to be promoting a more accountable globalization, acknowledging the benefits of world interconnectedness (including economic relations) but arguing that such benefits are unequally distributed and do not offset the high environmental and other societal costs.

Clearly, not all youth respond to such issues by engaging in activism or other kinds of civic activity. However, research on activist organizations, ICT and “political consumerism” indicates that those young people who do seek a way to voice their concerns tend to eschew formal political institutions such as parties in favour of the kinds of activities that fall under the rubric of activism. In many cases, the cynicism about formal institutions and politics is linked to an idealism that compels young people to address issues of social justice and accountability more directly.

Engagement in transnational activism may be examined and perhaps better understood in the light of young people's civic and political involvement at the local and national levels. The way young people make (or do not make) connections between local issues that concern them (such as poverty or prison reform at home) and international issues (such as poverty or juvenile justice worldwide) may be especially revealing. It would be interesting to explore whether active young people in different social categories tend to focus on national or transnational issues. Are university students more likely to address transnational concerns? Do "active" marginalized youth concentrate more on issues of local concern for which local solutions are pursued (even if global causes of local problems are apparent)? These are some key areas for future research.

It is essential to gain a better grasp of what motivates young people to participate in various kinds of political activity (including transnational activism) and of the conditions under which different kinds of activism emerge, because the issues that resonate so strongly with many young people – such as justice, accountability, war and peace – are not likely to go away. What opportunities must exist or be provided for young people, and by whom, to encourage different types of activism? How are young people affected by their participation in social movements and by the success or failure of those movements? Is there a generational component in the rejection of formal institutional structures in favour of more informal processes (and to what extent does technology contribute to reliance on the latter)? Finally, does youth activism represent an embrace of the activist past of the parents and grandparents of young people today, the move away from which might be seen to reflect the hypocrisy and/or complacency of those generations in the present?¹⁵

TRANSNATIONAL YOUTH ACTIVISM, THE MEDIA, AND INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The rise of transnational youth activism and the explosive proliferation of new ICT occurred simultaneously in the 1990s. The relationship between the two phenomena is not easy to define; however, with what is known about the respective connections between ICT and activism and between young people and new media (especially the Internet), it may be inferred that the availability of new media technologies has helped shape young people's activism at a general level and has influenced the multiple and diverse forms it has taken. ICT has been central to global activism, clear evidence of which may be found in the documented activity surrounding the "Battle of Seattle", World Social Forum meetings, and a range of other global protests.¹⁶ That young people are early and competent adopters of ICT and thus more likely to incorporate new technologies into their political and cultural activities is considered conventional wisdom among some scholars, not to mention many companies seeking to market new media technologies (see Suoronta, 2004).

Youth activism and new media technologies intersect in a multitude of ways. ICT is used for communication and coordination within activist movements and also helps to foster a sense of (virtual) solidarity among individuals and groups with different agendas and motives. Contemporary media have also facilitated the development of shared

reference points for the world's youth. Young activists often incorporate globally recognized images and symbols from popular culture and commercial capitalism into their activism as elements of political protest and satire, expressed through political theatre, art, music, or dress.

The media are themselves a strategic target and platform for young activists, as illustrated by the following:

- The mainstream media are monitored for misrepresentations of young people in general and of activists in particular.
- Activists use the media to gain exposure for their causes and shape public opinion on issues of concern.
- Media access is a political issue viewed in terms of rights or justice; young activists often demand universal access to media and the right to become involved as producers as well as consumers of content.

Transnational activism is not a new phenomenon; abolitionists mobilized networks across various countries and continents in their struggle against slavery well over 100 years ago, and transnational networking was critical to the anti-apartheid movement in the 1970s and 1980s (see Keck, Sikkink and Klotz, 1995). However, the nature of such activism has changed dramatically with the advances in ICT. Contemporary global activism is in many ways defined by two key factors. First, young people now have immediate access to timely information on issues, problems and crises all over the globe, including detailed explanations of underlying causes and analyses of possible implications. Radio, television and the Internet bring these issues to people in ways that often provoke a visceral response, and offer a vast array of potential causes to fight for and villains to fight against. Second, faxes, cell phones, and the Internet allow wider and more immediate communication among activists once they have committed themselves to a cause; protest events, advocacy campaigns and consumer boycotts can be more easily coordinated, and bonds of solidarity may be established between people who may never meet face to face.

An interesting chicken-and-egg question is whether young people are drawn to transnational activism because of the use of ICT and the kinds of organizational forms that go with it or whether transnational activism is more high-tech because young people motivated to become involved for other reasons have pursued new media options to promote their causes. Whatever the case, the evidence is quite clear that those young people involved in transnational activism deploy ICT frequently and often effectively. Since the 1990s, in a range of protest activities centred around world trade and the global economy, “global justice activists have employed computer networks to organize direct actions, share information and resources, and coordinate campaigns through communication at-a-distance in real-time” (Juris, 2004). Mailing list servers, temporary and long-term websites, collective online writing and editing of documents, and online petitions are common features of transnational activism (Juris, 2004). Blogging has become a valuable mechanism for “technoactivists favouring not only democratic self-expression and networking, but also global media critique and journalistic sociopolitical intervention” (Kahn and Kellner, 2004). Even more individualized forms of political protest, such as decisions to boycott the products of a particular company, can occasionally assume a more collective character; for



example, ICT can be used for “culture jamming”, in which the public image of companies and their websites are targeted through Internet-based forms of protest and petition (see Micheletti and Stolle, 2005). Whether or not the political focus of transnational activists is interpreted as “anti-globalization” (a label most participants would object to), it is clear that they are using the core components of the global technological infrastructure to challenge what they see as the injustices of the global system.

As touched upon earlier, popular culture and the familiar symbols associated with companies and other institutions viewed by activists as unaccountable provide a rich collection of images from which transnational activists draw, often in ways that are satirical and entertaining. The global pervasiveness of these symbols and images makes them instantly recognizable to target audiences, whether they are watching protests on television or visiting the websites of activist groups. Using sarcasm and other such devices, creative activists can manipulate symbols such as logos or trademarks in ways that call attention to the hypocrisy of the institutions that propagate them to reap profits and instil brand loyalty. An example of such activism is highlighted in the following:

The Canadian anti-sweatshop network, Maquila Solidarity Network, even distributes a Sweatshop Fashion Show toolkit, which has been used by young people across the country to raise awareness about sweatshop abuses in a fun and educational way. ... These tools help young people plan alternative shows whose purpose is the creation of public spectacles by questioning the politics of fashion products. Because of their alternative nature, these activities are often picked up by the media in various countries. (Micheletti and Stolle, 2005)

Popular music associated with different youth subcultures, including punk and hip hop, has fans and producers all over the world and is sometimes mobilized for activist purposes (see Ginwright, 2005; and Quintero, 2005). Alternative rock, played over independent or pirate radio, was central to the youth revolt in several of the former socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe.¹⁷

The protest tactics outlined above, which involve co-opting commercial symbols for rebellious purposes, may be seen as an inversion of the tendency of corporate capitalists to appropriate the symbols of rebellion (such as rock music) for commercial purposes.¹⁸ Analysts exploring this phenomenon from another perspective might emphasize that the very need of activists to use these symbols shows how pervasive they are.

Not surprisingly, transnational activists have established alternative media forms and outlets such as the Independent Media Center network to promote their views and communicate outside the circles of mainstream institutions. Interestingly, the mainstream media are being increasingly monitored and evaluated by youth activists, who are paying close attention to the way young people, especially those from poor communities, are represented in newspapers, on television and online. Negative stereotypes of youth, once unchallenged, are now more likely to elicit responses from organizations such as the Youth Media Council in California, which in 2002 published a report entitled *Speaking for Ourselves: A Youth Assessment of Local News Coverage*. In assessing the work of this organization and similar youth groups that oppose what they regard as the tendency to

portray poor and migrant youth as criminals, analysts found that the “larger reason that (youth media activists) fight for media justice ... is that they believe that social justice is impossible without it since in their view ... media representations set the terms and conditions for a larger set of social issues” (Klinenberg, forthcoming).

Youth activists regard access to media, in the sense of being able to produce media content for broader audiences, as a dimension of social justice. Many youth are not content to remain passive consumers (another stereotype of young people) and see media access as an end in itself as well as a precondition for improving the lives of young people in other ways (see Kinkade and Macy, 2003). Though hard evidence is still fairly sparse, it can be surmised that activists, and especially young activists, see political struggles and media issues as inseparable and intertwined.

CONCLUSION: NEW FORMS OF YOUTH ACTIVISM

The information and observations presented in this chapter raise important questions about the precise nature of the relationship between the emergence of a global media culture and the new ways young people are engaging in activism. It has been argued that today's global activism “reflect(s) important degrees of organization via communication systems— as opposed to communication merely reflecting or amplifying political organization” (Bennett, 2003). There is much debate about whether this trend is positive or negative, whether it is a sign of the strength or weakness of activist communities, and whether it is likely to help or hinder organized activist groups in achieving their goals. These points of contention notwithstanding, most observers share the sense that something new and different is going on in the ways activists organize, especially transnationally, and that new media and ICT are enabling and perhaps encouraging and empowering contemporary activism— though it is not yet clear whether a radical transformation has taken place.

It is worthwhile to identify those features that purportedly make present-day transnational activism different, and to explore the reasons for the apparent affinity between the newer modes of activism and young people. Transnational activism has been characterized as operating primarily through networks and loose alliances, a departure from the top-down organizational structures typical of earlier political movements. Members of transnational activist groups seem to view the participatory, consensual form of interaction and decision-making as a virtuous end in itself, and it is also presumed (correctly or not) that internal democracy makes the achievement of the ultimate goal of social justice more likely and sustainable.

It has been suggested that the newer style of transnational activism is characterized by the following: “(1) building horizontal ties and connections among diverse, autonomous elements; (2) the free and open circulation of information; (3) collaboration through decentralized coordination and directly democratic decision-making; and (4) self-directed or self-managed networking” (Juris, 2004). ICT functions as both an enabler and a metaphor in this type of activism; the Open Source Initiative represents a model for sharing information and the tools to make it available, but there is also a creative and occasionally mischievous and illegal model of hacking in which ICT is used to advance the political agendas of “hacktivists”.

It is useful to consider how the four principles or properties listed above might influence young people's interest or engagement in transnational activism. It is not hard to imagine why a preference for horizontal ties, decentralized coordination, and direct democracy (the first and third items) might be especially attractive to today's youth. It is widely recognized around the world that young people are frustrated with and alienated from formal, hierarchical institutions—not only those held directly responsible for injustices, but also those involved in political mobilization (parties and other such entities within civil society are often seen as overly bureaucratized and therefore not internally democratic themselves). A connection is often made between these perceptions and low voter turnout among young people in many democracies. Only a relatively small percentage of youth make the leap into activism, but among those who are so inclined, transnational activism represents an appealing option because it is organized and conducted in such a way that it offers greater potential for consensus on broad goals and specific actions without the need to enforce narrow orthodoxies or establish rigid sets of priorities. On a normative level, transnational activism is more open to participation in that most members feel they are part of the decision-making process. Strategically, it allows flexible responses (in interactive, non-hierarchical networks there is no head to cut off) and the opportunity to move from one group and cause to another. It would be interesting to investigate how these organizational forms and features might appeal to young people in the context of their ambiguous status as not-yet-full citizens. Do they allow types of participation, agency and self-efficacy not available through more formal institutions? Are the features and tendencies associated with transnational activism—the informal structure, the idealistic goals linked to issues of justice, the sometimes uncompromising stances and penchant for risk-taking, the space for shifting loyalties and easy entry into new groups (and the associated process of identity redefinition)—somehow connected with “youthfulness”?

Self-management and autonomy (the fourth item in the list of principles and properties) might also be seen as bound up with youth, as this is the stage at which individuals begin to challenge parental authority and assert their independence. With the wide variety of causes available and the broad range of practices that may be considered “activist”, participants in transnational activism can be part of a broader movement without giving up their priorities or control of their agendas. Is young people's involvement in such activism, with the autonomy it offers and the peer relationships that develop within it, at all akin to what those in the youth studies field would call a youth “subculture”—in this case a political subculture oriented outward towards changing the world rather than providing a haven from it?

Lastly, the emphasis on free and open information in transnational activism may tie in with the ICT-related interests and competencies of many young people and with the idea that information (in its multiple and diverse forms) is a public good and should therefore be available to all—a view that may be inconsistent with the protection of intellectual property rights. Young activists and non-activists alike appear to value open access to information, as exemplified by the activities of the Open Source Initiative and the widespread (but often unauthorized) downloading of music files from the Internet. If young people possess a generational advantage in understanding and using ICT, then new forms of activism allow them not only to participate but to excel and assume leadership. If access

to information is highly valued among young people, they may be particularly motivated to develop creative networking strategies using ICT and are perhaps more likely to see both the production and the consumption of knowledge as part of the social justice agenda.

This conditional framing of the connections between youth, transnational activism, and new media and ICT has not been accidental. The understanding of this intersection and the accompanying dynamics lags woefully behind the reality of young people's use of media and ICT in the service of transnational activism. Even less clear is what kind of effect all this will have on the civic and activist qualities of currently active youth later in life. What is evident from the involvement of youth in media-driven transnational activism—not as members of a “youth social movement” but as cross-generational partners with adults and sometimes leaders—is that at least some young people are asserting their (global) citizenship in the present not only by *becoming* but by actually *being* political actors. ●



¹ This alludes to the title of a report by the Youth Media Council (2002).

² For a useful overview of some of these issues, see Sherrod, Flanagan and Youniss (2002).

³ For an exception, see Mische (1996). The involvement of South African youth in the anti-apartheid struggle, which fluctuated between violent and non-violent activity, is examined in Marks (2001). For an account of youth social protest in the former Yugoslavia focusing directly on media and popular culture, see Collin (2000).

⁴ For a rich analysis, see Fussell and Greene (2002) and United Nations (2004).

⁵ This phrase derives from the title of the influential essay by Karl Mannheim (1952), unquestionably the key reference in thinking about generational formation and its impact on political change.

⁶ Perhaps best known here is Doug McAdam (1988); also see McAdam (1999).

⁷ The still influential study is entitled *Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs* (Willis, 1981).

⁸ For an interesting discussion of these issues, see Mizzen (2002).

⁹ Indeed, for some in youth studies, children's rights advocacy has itself become an object of research (see, for example, Stephens, 1995).

¹⁰ For an excellent analysis that finds mixed messages in the Convention on the Rights of the Child regarding rights to participation, see Lee (1999).

¹¹ For a recent discussion from the perspective of political philosophy, see Arneil (2002).

¹² For an overview, see McLeod (2000). The virtual demonizing of the effect of television is noted in Putnam (2000).

¹³ The number of academic publications, journalistic accounts, and participant treatises and memoirs regarding mobilization related to global issues has grown voluminous over the past five years and shows no signs of abating. One of the few accounts focusing directly on young people's involvement is “Youth activism and global engagement” (Aaron, no date); also see “Using and disputing privilege: U.S. youth and Palestinians wielding “international privilege” to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict nonviolently” (Pollock, in preparation). Youth activists in the United States have themselves recently published *Future 500: Youth Organizing and Activism in the United States* (Kim and others, 2002).

¹⁴ See the influential book by Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink entitled *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (1998).

¹⁵ Recently examined in the United States context in Lassiter (2004).

¹⁶ For recent overviews, see Surman and Reilly (2003) and McCaughey and Ayers (2003).

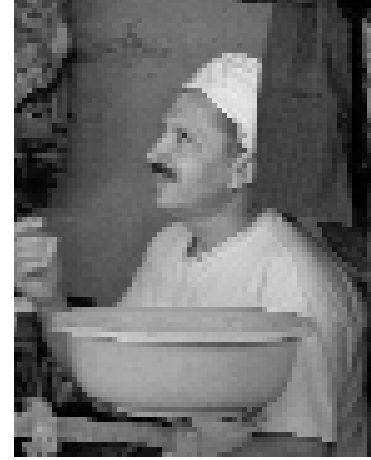
¹⁷ For Serbia, see Collin (2002); for Mexico, see O'Connor (2003).

¹⁸ See the subsection on changing economics in chapter 5 of the present publication



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