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Modeling Democracy: Is Youth “Participation” enough?

Dana Fusco and Michael Heathfield***

Abstract: This article reviews a range of models that have emerged to conceptualize youth work from 1978 to the present in Europe, Australia and the United States. Each, within their own culture, context and methodology presents a delineation and analysis of youth work practice, non-formal education, and the place of youth “participation” as an admirable political and social construct and endeavor. Participation, and its transatlantic sister “engagement,” is located within the contexts of post-modern social democracies. The models are critiqued, noting a common focus on a linear transfer of power from adults to young people. Youth participation is a concept in need of a cause and current democracies fall short in this regard. In a specific youth work mode, emancipatory practice encompasses an expressed object of change that targets deep social structures through which the levers of social justice can be engaged. The authors suggest that despite this myriad of categorizations and contexts, youth work practice must maintain a focus on social justice and that the purposes and boundaries of participative youth work must be explicitly interrogated to ensure youth voice, choice and action contribute to increasing human rights, improved wellbeing and expanded opportunities for all.

Keywords: youth work, youth participation, youth engagement, social justice

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Introduction

If one believes, and we do, that democracy as a form of governance offers a reasonable chance towards creating anti-oppressive and even peaceful conditions for human co-existence, then ensuring it flourishes should be a main priority for its people (Heathfield & Fusco, forthcoming). Indeed, the ideal is not yet realized as the exclusion of specific groups of people in fundamental decision-making processes, young people among them, still accompanies dialogues of democracy. Embedded within democracy is the operation and ownership of power, and the tensions between power, freedom and civil liberties. Whose civil liberties count and get enacted when contrary liberties present themselves among the citizenry? How does pluralism reside comfortably within the context of democracy? Here representation, voice and engagement become key indicators of the pulse of healthy democracies. Moreover, how conflicts get negotiated and resolved e.g., whether through open debate and representative dialogues on the one hand, or silencing, oppression and violence, on the other, is another indicator of society's well being.

While the right to vote has been the key benchmark of social progress for disenfranchised groups, a myriad of institutional and associational decisions are made beyond the intermittent act of casting a vote in government elections at the local or national level. The participation of young people in these democratic processes has increasingly become a noted bellwether of inclusiveness for social democracies. In the groundbreaking initial election of Barack Obama as U.S. president, young people were the much-noted grassroots and groundswell supporters. As the recent Harvard poll noted, they are also the group with increasing disillusionment with the formal political process (Harvard IOP, 2014). Rightly so, as a recent policy study just dubbed the U.S. an oligarchy controlled by the 'economic elites,' not a democracy controlled by the interests of its people (Gilens & Page, 2014).

The interconnectedness in the U.S. between democracy and capitalism is an important entanglement in understanding representation and ultimately, the well being of its people. As recent data indicate, wealth is not the best measure for predicting the well being of societies' youth (UNICEF, 2013). This conclusion is consistent with other recent research which has revealed that negative social outcomes such as violence, drug abuse, and mental illness are most likely to occur not in poor countries but

in less-equal ones: in societies with the largest gaps in equality (Pickett & Wilkinson, 2011). Today we live in a time when income disparity is the greatest it has ever been: the poor are significantly poorer and the wealthy are significantly wealthier (Saez, 2013). This coupled with the fact that more part time than full time jobs are being created, college graduates cannot find gainful employment, and Americans hold on to an ideology that the rich should continue to get richer, and it seems that the United States is destined for complete collapse of the democratic ideals portrayed in its own Declaration of Independence.

The progressive social democracy on which we write (not one that we currently live in) is one in which the right to vote confirms, rather than replaces, the prerequisite power for voice, choice and action, and where the hard fought vote is not only about individual power, but the breadth, depth and definitional boundaries of that power. Who gets to define, shift and redefine these contours are the crucial actors that identify social justice as an outcome of continuously improving social progress.

There are many arcs of social justice - some with lengthy histories of struggle and change, others initiated more recently in differentiated public consciousness, creating the local or global political movements and policy imperatives they inspire. These can never be separated from their context or the contours of the communities in which justice is sought, fought for, or denied. Globally, the power of young people to impact change on the social order of their nation state has taken many forms and provides a recent reminder to powerful adults that en masse young people can provide the energetic catalyst for change (Herrera, 2014; Laiq, 2013; Taft & Gordon, 2013). Students in Hong Kong, under the Occupy Central banner, are still engaged in street action to try to secure the promised democratic reality of 'one person one vote' excluding senior political system appointees from mainland China, while their older leaders are now just asking for a seat at the table (Buckley & Wong, 2014). Yet, the direction of change has multiple destinations. In the 2014 Scottish referendum on independence from the United Kingdom the voting age was lowered to sixteen, from the more usual eighteen, and 71% of these young people resoundingly rejected this significant change in an historic status quo (Lord Ashcroft Polls, 2014).

As Hanan Morsy, lead economist of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development noted in a recent speech, "youth are the engine of growth for the future" in many countries while also being hugely more impacted by economic crises and thrown into "the vicious cycle of

poverty and social exclusion” in others (Morsy, 2014). Where, how, and within what constraints young people are specifically included in social democratic processes has long been contested space. True, in most social arrangements where young people are found; youth work is no different.

As Fusco (2012) found, notions of youth participation vary greatly across (and even within) youth work contexts and are related, not always intentionally, with particular theoretical frameworks upon which ideas of youth and youthhood are based. Participation might be seen as a necessary prerequisite for youth development (Bartko & Eccles, 2003; Casey, Ripke, & Huston, 2005), a strategy for community development (Christens & Speer, 2011; Egretta Sutton, 2007), a democratic ideal for grooming young citizenry (Hall, 2006), or a political act for challenging hegemonic and oppressive structures (Ginwright, 2010; Herrera, 2014). Yet, in one of the most pervasive youth program quality models in the U.S. – the Youth Program Quality Assessment, “engagement” while placed at the top of the “quality” pyramid (Forum for Youth Investment, 2012) speaks nothing of wider social issues that impact all young people beyond the provision of safe spaces for positive youth development and learning.

Recently, the Council of Europe defined youth work as a practice “guided and governed by principles of participation and empowerment, values of human rights and democracy, and anti-discrimination and tolerance” (2010, p. 2). This encouraging statement has the potential to impact future policy initiatives pertaining to youth work, not just in Europe but also as a model for the world. Thus, while we are not after a singular understanding of youth participation, perhaps we can minimally detangle the relationships between democracy, youth participation, voice, youth work, and more broadly, education. Doing so might at least freshen our outlook and provide a clear understanding of the multiple pathways in front of us.

Our purpose here is to contribute to a narrative of youth participation in which the exposition of power and agency are intrinsically interwoven so that the challenge of democracy can be sustained as the transnational forces of capitalism continue to solidify increasing decision making power in fewer and fewer hands. Since our concern lies with increasing social justice and the role that young people play in this, it is perhaps appropriate that we begin in the 1960s and provide a grounding framework using Arnstein’s (1969) classic article about citizen power - written within the U.S. context of urban planning and development (see Table 1).

We use Arnstein’s ladder as one understanding of participation because it specifically frames participation within democratic terms: partnership, delegated power and citizen control. We then map, if you will, youth work models that have appeared in the literature since 1978 alongside ‘participation.’ The youth work models reviewed are those from Anglophone countries; namely, England, Ireland, Australia, and the United States.

Table 1. Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizen Participation

Rung 8	Citizen Control	>
Rung 7	Delegated Power	> Citizen Power
Rung 6	Partnership	>
Rung 5	Placation	>
Rung 4	Consultation	> Tokenism
Rung 3	Informing	>
Rung 2	Therapy	>
Rung 1	Manipulation	> Nonparticipation

Whereas others have attempted to evaluate the strength of such models (e.g., Cooper, 2012), we make no such attempt. Butters and Newell’s model has perhaps received the strongest critique as a theoretical exercise ungrounded in actual youth work practice (Smith, 1988). Rather, we are eager to learn how the field of youth work has expressed its imperatives with young people, including ones that resonate within postmodern and global struggles for democracies and democratic spaces. We draw upon seven conceptualizations of youth work approaches that appear in the literature in the past forty years (Butters and Newell, 1978, England; Smith, 1988, England; Hurley and Treacy, 1993, Ireland; Cooper and White, 1994, Australia; LISTEN Inc., 2000, United States; Sullivan and Saito, 2008, United States; and Sallah, 2014, England).

We attempt to compare the models side-by-side in order to address the overarching questions for this paper (see Table 2, Appendix): In what ways is youth work consistent with an understanding of youth participation as engaging young people in broader streams of public, social and democratic life (of citizen power)? Conversely, in which youth work taxonomies is the context of young people’s power bounded, ascribed and limited by those who work with and for them?

Understanding Youth Participation in the Context of Youth Work

Character building (Rungs 1 and 2)

According to Butters and Newell (1978), character building is one of the longest standing youth work practices. Emerging as a distinct social action as early as the mid 1800s, the aim of character building was to integrate working class young people into the dominant social order through physical exercise and discipline, restraints on sexuality, encouragement of individual interests, and preparation for responsibility. Character building was a direct response to the times: the Industrial Revolution, urbanization, Romanticism and the resulting emergence of leisure time, all framed the perceived problems of working class young people who had no particular allegiance and commitment to the imposing social and moral order of Britain's ruling class. A Christian set of values was to be instilled in 'vulnerable' child subjects so that they could be protected from straying towards sin. For girls, the concerns were about immoral behavior and adequate preparation for marriage and motherhood; for boys, it was about hooliganism and the perceived threats to social order. Adult workers were volunteers, often middle-class educated white women who saw their work as a "calling". In its time, this 'do-good' work was considered a radical response to poverty.

Cooper and White (1994) consider character building a practice of "treatment," whereby young peoples' needs are transposed into how the problems of youth are socially identified. Youth play no role in deciding their needs nor are they aware of how the adults in their lives framed those needs for them. Concerned adults, on behalf of society, transmit the ideas and values held within this tradition to young people as a mechanism of social integration or cohesion (Cooper, 2012). Then, character building, as practiced in this way, falls within the nonparticipation approach as it is most aligned to the lowest two rungs of citizen participation: manipulation and therapy.

Many organizations today such as, the YMCA, Settlement Houses, and Boys and Girls Clubs began within this tradition. Today we would characterize this form of practice as 'youth services,' which is rendered the lowest level of the youth engagement continuum (LISTEN, Inc., 2000). As early as 1950, concerns about youth services emerged as doing something 'for' not 'with' young people. Such concerns were expressed particularly within communities of color who were growingly concerned with the racial divide between those served and those serving (Gibbons, 1950). Youth

work, and education more broadly, were criticized as colonized by concerns for dominant social order which did not account for diverse local needs that at times ran counter to hegemonic concerns. It is important to note that others engaged in 'character building' work, while also being deeply committed to partnering with young people to build community, e.g., Jane Addams and the work of Hull House – a point to which we later return.

Social education repertoire (Rungs 3, 4, and 5)

A second approach, or set of approaches, to youth work emerged during the period 1930 to 1970 and was dubbed the Social Education Repertoire (SER) (Butters & Newell, 1978). We do not aim to cover SER in depth but rather to highlight how within this framework youth work's goal was complementary to the work of formal education. As a strategy within the progressive education movement, youth work was to help young people become healthy adults by providing nonformal learning opportunities, which facilitated successful accomplishment of life-stage tasks. In England and Wales, this approach was later legitimized by the watershed Albermarle Report of 1960. The report laid a set of policy recommendations rooted as well in the epistemological framing of American developmental psychologists such as, Erik Erikson.

This fact is noteworthy because as Butters and Newell rightly note, Erikson's theory emerged during a time of anti-socialist sentiment where democracies gave birth to non-restrictive opportunities to pursue individual freedom. Helping young people move along a normative trajectory went unexamined as a valid and worthy course of action. Equally unexamined was any need to engage young people in questioning and changing social structures. The focus on the personal development of the individual also reshaped the communal and associative nature of youth work before then (see 'leisure provision' below) (Smith & Doyle, 2002).

This SER approach is akin to early 'youth development' in the United States. Grounded in developmental theories and research, youth development approaches are designed to ensure that youth grow socially and emotionally, not just academically or cognitively. "Development" presumed a holistic treatment of the young person through provision of the right conditions for growth (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2002). Like character building, this progressive/liberal approach is grounded in adult-defined youth needs and provisions. At best, youth are

placated (Rung 5) with youth councils or consulted on projects (Rung 4), e.g. through advisory boards and endless surveys, but with bounded decision-making power.

Like youth services, youth development approaches in this typography do not engage youth in addressing the socioeconomic and sociopolitical systems in which youth development is situated (LISTEN, Inc., 2000). Perhaps, most importantly, is the individuation deeply embedded within this approach. Some approaches within the social education repertoire aim to engage young people in mobilizing for reform with adults as partners who share decision making. This could easily fit within partnerships of Rung Six and might be conceived of as 'civic engagement' (LISTEN, Inc., 2000) in order to help young people develop the skills to actively shape democratic spaces. Democratic learning is possible here at a micro (programmatic/local) level.

What all three SER approaches have in common is that they are justified in terms of helping people. Youth work is a form of social intervention beyond character building and can be seen as serving the broader role of socialization. The youth worker is the confidante, the supporter, the counselor (Hurley & Treacy, 1993). Learning happens not just through programs and curricula but also through social arrangements and participation in group relationships (sports have teams; educational projects have cooperative learning; youth work has experiential learning in groups). In the States, the socialization function for youth work has been loudly advocated of recent.

Today, we hear of the 'habits of mind' needed for the 21st century (Costa & Kallick, 2000). In this formulation the role of nonformal education has identified a unique place within the mission of education more broadly. It supplements formal education. Then, only formal education and nonformal education, together, can accomplish this holistic aim with the latter being charged with overseeing 'dispositions' or 'habits of mind' or 'social and emotional learning' or the 'grit' needed for success defined by the normative social order.

Leisure provision (Rung 6)

Butters and Newell (1978) talk of the 'critical break' that is needed for more emancipatory modes of youth work to take root. We believe this 'break' begins to occur at Rung 6 where decision-making begins to be shared with young people. Biesta (2009) talks of the subjectification

function of education as the opposite of the socialization function. Subjectification "is not about the insertion of 'newcomers' into existing orders, but about ways of being that hint at independence from such orders [...] (it is) about the ways in which education makes a contribution to human freedom" (p. 9). We believe leisure provision, which actually dates back to times of character building, is the first true participatory mode of youth work. Such provision can also be seen within youth organizations that engaged in character building thus the categories might not be as rigid as the models render them, a point we pick up on again at the end of this article.

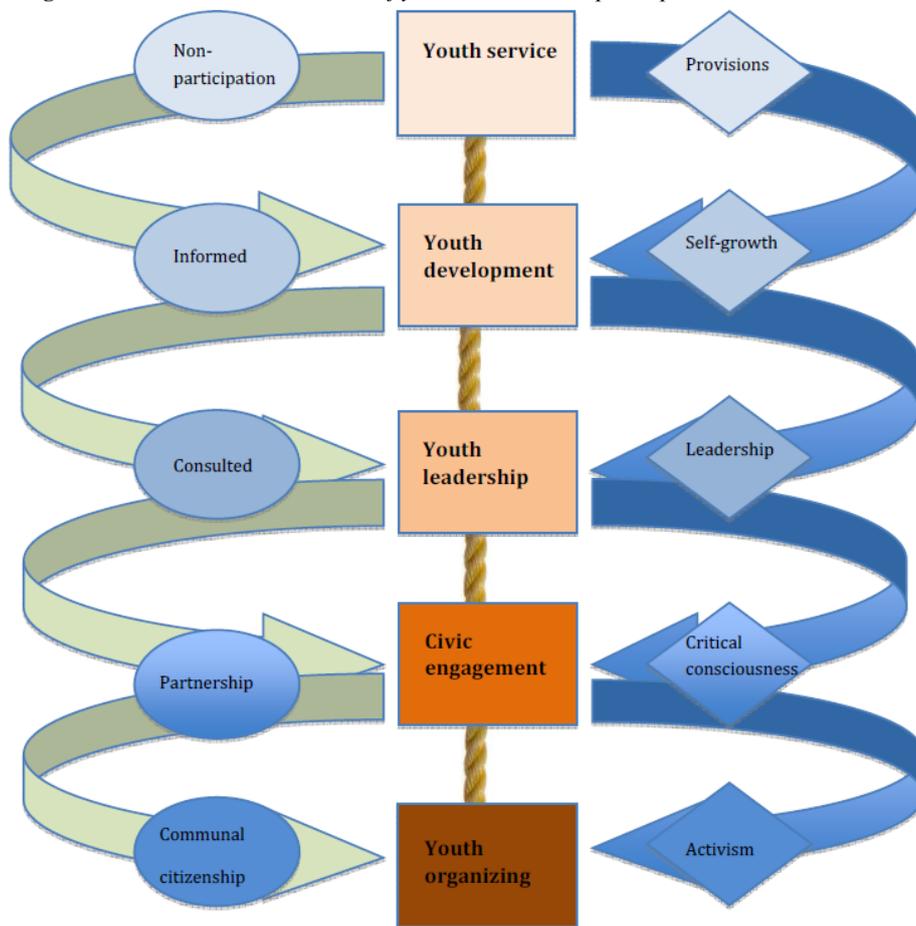
With roots as far back as character building, and with some overlapping functions, the provision of structured activities during leisure time is a mainstay of youth work practice. Character building, though aimed at provision of leisure time, is not to be confused with the leisure provision that Smith (1988) characterizes as 'organic' youth work: or that "not steeped in professionalized training".

Organic youth work is taken up by people with and for other people (often younger people) in order to join in the co-creation of new, non-marginalizing social organizations. Here leisure provision presumes a new social power dynamic between adults and youth. Youth workers who work within this leisure provision context often talk about youth work in language that includes atmosphere, friendship, and relationship. It is the "valuing of participation running alongside a celebration of community" (Smith, 1988). These dynamics can be seen as fundamental to associational life within groups and communities. Associational life, meaning group or communal organization that is primarily voluntary and devoid of institutional imperatives, has historically been a significant marker of the functioning of American democracy (McKnight, 2013).

In the context of the youth work arrangement, young people have the right to identify options/choices; to self determination; to confidentiality in their relationship with youth workers; to develop their own values and attitudes; to develop the capacity to analyze critically the world around them and to take action in response; to challenge the youth worker and to be challenged; to be treated as equals (Hurley & Treacy, 1993). In the U.S., this approach is closest to what is called 'youth leadership,' which helps young people understand their relationship to a collective group, organization or community and have meaningful roles within these social arrangements (LISTEN, Inc., 2000). At this level of participation, it would

not be uncommon for the approach to shift towards civic engagement or even youth organizing in part because the youth workers are responsive to what young people want to do in the here and now. Such flow across categories will lead us to the development of a different organizational scheme (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. The interconnected nature of youth work models, participation and outcomes



Radical paradigm (Rungs 7 and 8)

The final category of youth work, *the radical paradigm*, is situated in understanding that youth workers are bound to 'agency purposes, rules and hierarchies,' which in the end do little to remove structural disadvantages (Davies, 1976, cites in Butters and Newell, 1978). The radical paradigm breaks youth work from social integration (sociology of regulation) and moves towards a sociology of change (Hurley & Treacy, 1993). In practice this emphasizes learning in informal contexts that specifically challenges ageism, sexism, racism, and homophobia (Batsleer & Davies, 2010); also known as youth work as border pedagogy (Coburn, 2010). Youth participation action research or YPAR is also an example of this practice (see Ozer & Wright, 2012 for a recent example). Practitioners must find ways of negotiating the terrain between conforming to the political priorities of the day while challenging a status quo that discriminates against young people. Youth work's goal is to enlighten individuals, or to help them achieve true consciousness that is otherwise masked by participation in dominant social structures. In the tradition of Freire's popular education, it places youth work within the class of pedagogy as liberation or emancipation.

More recently, liberation has been deeply connected with issues of globalization. Global youth work (GYW) was first coined in 1995 by Bourn and McCollum of the Development Education Association, and has been most widely accepted in the UK (see: Sallah, 2014 for a description of the history). Unlike Development Education, GYW focuses not just on new knowledge (or consciousness raising) but on the application of knowledge at a community level and through global experiences. Like youth organizing (LISTEN Inc., 2000) and collective action (Sullivan & Saito, 2008), GYW begins from the lived experiences of the young people themselves who then co-create the agenda for action (Sallah, 2014). Change begins in the personal but can and should move towards local, national and global understandings. Sallah is also explicit in his desire to see global youth work as rooted in a social justice that reverses domination and exploitation of the South from the North/West powers; then, the content of participation is inextricably linked to the pedagogy of participation as well as the decolonization of education. That is, the depth of participation lands one from the personal to the global realm as one moves toward greater democracy and citizenship.

Recent examples of youth activism and organizing provide strong cases for this. In these forms, restrictions normally placed by geography and nationhood can be transcended rapidly and thus present more challenges to dominant social orders and hegemonic control. LISTEN Inc. (2000) defines youth organizing as a combination of community organizing and youth development. It is "a method of engagement based in respect for the intelligence, leadership abilities, and passion of young people" (LISTEN, Inc., 2000, p. 2). While grounded in the traditions of community organizing, the ideas of Saul Alinsky, and theoretical principles of positive youth development, the model also builds from transformations of such ideas and practices that emerged within communities of color, e.g., a new emphasis on analyzing issues of race, class and gender. Through youth organizing, young people themselves define issues and then design, implement and evaluate change efforts. The LISTEN Inc. continuum of youth engagement illustrates that models of youth work hold within them a commitment to ways of thinking about adult-youth relations, youth's capacity to impact social changes, and ultimately power, in a language developed by practitioners for practitioners. In these formulations of emancipatory or radical practice, the express object of change can be considerably different from other less radical forms of practice. European youth participation models seek to develop the capacities of young people through the instruments of civic engagement and in the practice of democracy. These forms of practice have a long pedigree and still offer high relevance today. However, they can also pose challenges and risks in the operation of social democracies. Youth work with a radical or emancipatory interest is more likely to view democratic processes, and their key actors, as targets for action and thus intended social change at a range of levels (see Table 2, Appendix).

Reflections on Modeling Democracy

In sum, to say that youth work is a democratic practice is to state the ideal. Youth work in reality has taken on many forms over the years, not all of which were democratic in intent. We attempted to take "participation" as one foundational principle of democracy in order to examine the strength of youth work as a democratic practice. As shown in Fusco (2012) and again here, within the wide array of practices known broadly as youth work, exist

a diverse and contradictory range of meanings and practices for youth participation. Such conceptualizations of youth work can be typologically aligned to Arnstein's (1969) rungs of citizen participation. As a theoretical exercise, such a mapping suggests important considerations for how youth work frames adult-youth relationships in relation to youth voice and significant decision-making processes. Then, only *some* types of youth work are modeling democratic practices. Before discussing how democracy might be more consistently modeled within the practices of youth work, we find it necessary to reconsider the categorizations of youth work so far conceived.

We have found much value in reviewing the youth work models covered in this article as they offer a broad-base comparative understanding of the field and its underlying and differential values, purposes, and principles with clear imperatives for practice. Yet, our review has also led us to believe that these conceptualizations of youth work are ontologically insecure when one considers that within the intentions and practice of workers, complexity and contradiction coexist. While practices across rungs of participation can be quite distinct, they do not necessarily occur or need to occur in isolation from each other. In fact, research recently revealed that youth organizations often engage across multiple approaches of youth work simultaneously (Matloff-Nieves, Fusco, Connolly, & Maulik, forthcoming); the approaches don't 'expel' each other as Butters and Newell (1978) suggest. Then we might reconsider the relation between youth participation and youth work as less discrete and categorical, especially since it appears that on-the-ground, approaches are more interconnected than might initially seem possible or desirable flowing in and through and between categories in more fluid ways (see Figure 1). In this way, youth services might promote a participatory approach and youth organizing might engage in tokenism, and both might occur within the same organization that is funded for providing services as well as engaging youth in leadership opportunities.

In the end, we are talking not about youth work as a program of content but as a process of relationship. In this schematic, it becomes less relevant what young people are doing: building their character, swimming, doing homework, working on community gardens, or campaigning. Rather, what is most relevant is how they came to be engaged in such content (whose voice/s was privileged), who was at the 'table' of engagement (representation and inclusivity), and on whose behalf engagement was

designed? These are all critical indicators of democratic practice. Then, we must define our conception of democracy.

One way to view democratic participation is in the social, communal being: for young people to participate alongside others in the community, not with equal roles and responsibilities but with equal purpose and trust from one's elders that relative contributions towards the whole are valued and valid. Thus, character could be developed in this way (a Deweyian perspective), not as an add-on to a defective personhood but as a matter of everyday communal practice. In this way too one contributes voice and product; has control and power but within a distributive power and space with others. Democracy as a process means inclusivity, diversity and difference are celebrated and utilized for mutually agreed purposes. Expertise and experience are valued for their unique contributions to communal progress and role rather than their location within externally imposed and prejudicial categorizations. This is our valued conception and meaning of the word.

As an interconnected space for diverse fields of youth work practice, participation is an important strand in the complex democratic weave but is not enough for modeling democracy. Needed also are diverse voices and opportunities to impact social and socially-constructed spaces. That is, participation as it currently exists within the range of youth work practices does not guarantee representation or that diverse voices are accounted for. Nor is it explicit in the purpose of representation and the boundaries over which power is exerted. A pluralistic democratic practice would seem to require not just that youth are participating, but that a representative and inclusive group of young people (and adults, and children) are participating, or living as a group of informed and caring citizens who are engaged in local, national and/or international decisions and actions. It requires us to conscientiously ask: whose voice is being excluded here and why? In a world managed by outcomes and outputs, it becomes exceptionally important to consistently ask, "who is not at this table?" Youth may actively participate without being inclusive/representative. From this angle, youth activism then might not be more inclusive or representative at all; in fact, it might at times even be polarizing.

Further, participation that is accountable to inclusive and representative groups requires not only a shift in power but also a shift in the location of policy decisions. A common practice in democracies that enact a concern for youth voice is to establish sequences of youth representatives in various

decision-making and policy forums in elongated hierarchies of power. It can also be common to establish parallel youth structures of representation that mirror those of their adult world. Youth councils and youth parliaments mirror adult iterations of representative democracy in action. The problem with both these strategies is that they inherently introduce distance and dilution to the agency of significant groups of young people. They remove the immediacy of change for social justice and replace it with long-haul temporal arrangements that hinder communal power impact, and sustained engagement.

If the voice of young people is to be heard, respected and acted upon, then it will require institutions of power and policy to move closer to communities and cultures. Closeness and connection are very important aspects of youth work practice and the more young people are embedded within the significant decision-making processes of their neighborhoods, communities and states the more their energy is tapped, the more communities become responsive and respectful of their capabilities, desires and needs as active citizens. The more young people can become key actors in community change for social justice, the more democracy is enabled. Conversely, when young people are segregated, siloed and serviced, especially by professionals who have been trained to maintain "distance," the more they are disenfranchised, disrespected and enticed to be objects to be acted upon by others. For youth work to fully model democracy, diverse groups of young people must participate alongside adults as partners with shared vision and purpose, and power to impact change. In this arrangement it is conceivable that citizens building communal space might decide that traits of fortitude, patience, persistence, and non-violence are needed to advance their cause; or equally, skills in financial literacy or parenting. These are content. And content is nothing more than the manifestation of values to be pursued in the form of products and capital that advance a vision. In the U.S. the current debate on whether after-school youth programs should promote academic outcomes or social-emotional competencies is an adult-contrived debate; if young people were participating, sometimes they would choose the former and sometimes the later and more often, the two would be embedded in real work. Likely also, they may choose a leisure space to call their own free from adult imperatives, rules and structures.

Conclusion

A democracy by definition gives people the right to decide how to be governed, to write the laws they choose to live by, and to ultimately amend those laws in relation to their changing views, needs, and desires. Character ensures self-governance; citizens who rule themselves according to social norms. To the extent that those rights are not extended to all citizens, or that people are excluded from practicing their rights, then it becomes necessary to shift power, often from the 'ruling elite.' True democracy demands equal representation and voice among all citizens across age, gender, race, class, sexual preference, religion, and political affiliation. It does not presume equality but rather assumes that there is dominant power that has no interest in shifting the status quo. Democracy's role then is to antagonize such power relations in order to ensure decision-making remains representative. Youth work is natural terrain as a teacher of democracy. Power is shifted towards young people in order to create new social arrangements and pedagogical environments; ultimately ones that lead towards new paths of good citizenship founded on social justice and equality.

It is, of course, arbitrary to separate industrial competency from capacity in good citizenship. But the latter term may be used to indicate a number of qualifications which are vaguer than vocational ability. These traits run from whatever make an individual a more agreeable companion to citizenship in the political sense: it denotes ability to judge men and measure wisely and to take a determining part in making as well as obeying laws. The aim of civic efficiency has at least the merit of protecting us from the notion of a training of mental power at large. It calls attention to the fact that power must be relative to doing something, and to the fact that the things which most need to be done are things which involve one's relationships with others (Dewey, 1938).

As a form of informal education, youth work can be part of a broader educational platform that seeks justice over the status quo, freedom over oppression, and participation over manipulation. We hope that youth work always seeks to create a style of community life that is supportive of young people's voice, and is respectful of their rights as citizens here and now. We hope too that it draws upon authentic intergenerational relationships to

sustain that community life, in order to do ‘the things which most need to be done.’ For many young people, this will mean confronting an ascribed narrative of their lives that was never written with their interests at heart. And thus, youth “participation” can never be enough, unless it is consistently framed within the critical delineating questions of: “Participation in what?” and “Participation for what purpose?” Definitions of youth participation must be inclusive of fundamental challenges to injustice and the deeply embedded forces committed to maintaining the status quo. The 1960s French student poster that accompanies the most pervasive form of Arnstein’s original article still resonates today: “Je participe, tu participes, il participe, nous participons, vous participez, ils profitent (I participate, you participate, he participates, we participate, you participate, they profit)”. Modeling democracy in youth work practice means changing the outcome by changing the process of engagement.

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Appendix: Table 2. Aligning degrees of "participation" with conceptualizations of youth work

Citizen participation	Conceptualization of Youth Work						
Arnstein, 1969	Butters & Newell, 1978	Smith, 1988	Hurley & Treacy, 1993	Cooper & White, 1994	LISTEN, Inc., 2000	Sullivan & Saito, 2008	Sallah, 2014
Rung 1: Manipulation Rung 2: Therapy	Character building	Welfaring	Functionalism: Social regulation	Treatment; social cohesion	Youth services	Participation	Oppression
Rung 3: Informing Rung 4: Consultation Rung 5: Placation	Social Education Repertoire	Personal and social development	Interpretivism	Reform	Youth development	Passion	Development or international education
	Cultural pluralism and adjustment			Advocacy (non- radical)			
	Structural functionalism and community development			Advocacy (radical)			
	Interest-group conflict theory and institutional reform						
Rung 6: Partnership		Leisure provision			Youth leadership	Power	
Rung 7: Delegated power	Radical paradigm		Conflict theory: societies are formed out of class struggle	Empowerment (non-radical)	Civic engagement	Collective action	Global youth work
Rung 8: Citizen Control				Empowerment (radical)	Youth organizing		