

Youth studies, citizenship and transitions:

Towards a new research agenda

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ABSTRACT

A key goal in youth studies is to gain holistic understandings of what it means to be young. However, a significant impediment to achieving this has been the tendency of youth studies to develop along siloed and stratified subfields. In keeping with the goal of creating more productive dialogue between subfields in youth studies, this paper examines the intersections between research in youth citizenship and youth transitions to consider the fresh insights and cross fertilisations that such an analysis may yield. This examination reveals a sense of dissatisfaction in both subfields with traditional normative and linear models of citizenship and transitions which rely on step-wise and sequential notions of time. In response, the paper advances a new research agenda which posits more temporally, spatially and relationally-sensitive understandings of youth citizenship and transition. Drawing on Ingold (2007), this agenda proposes the use of three alternative metaphors – genealogical, wayfaring and threads – which could hold the potential to unsettle the normativity and linearity of previous youth transitions and citizenship frameworks, and thus provide deeper insights into what it means to *live* and to *be* young citizens in times of transition.

Keywords: youth studies, citizenship, transitions, time, space, metaphor

Introduction

A key goal in youth studies is to gain holistic understandings of what it means to be young. However, a significant impediment to achieving this has been the tendency of youth studies to develop along siloed and stratified subfields. Furlong, Woodman and Wyn (2011) argue that this stratification has been damaging and has at times ‘diverted attention away from the most crucial sociological questions’ (p. 356). The most common stratification in youth studies has been the two dominant poles or ‘twin tracks’ of ‘cultural’ and ‘transitions’ perspectives (Woodman and Bennett 2015b; Cohen 2003). The division between these two has historically been characterised by ‘mutual disinterest or distrust’ (Cohen and Ainley 2000, 91) which has at times led to omissions, exaggerations or conflation of social change (White and Wyn 1998; Furlong, Woodman, and Wyn 2011), and led to the possibility of orthodoxies emerging (Cuervo and Wyn 2014; Furlong, Woodman, and Wyn 2011; Wyn, Lantz, and Harris 2012).

In recent years, the goal of creating more productive dialogue between these traditions in youth studies has resulted in a number of generative discussions that have sought to bridge the gap between ‘cultural’ and ‘transitions’ perspectives (see, for examples, Cohen and Ainley 2000; Furlong, Woodman, and Wyn 2011; Cuervo and Wyn 2014; Furlong and Woodman 2015; Woodman and Bennett 2015b). However, these discussions have rarely extended to other subfields of youth studies (cf. Harris 2015). It is my interest therefore in this paper to expand these discussions to include the subfield of citizenship which has operated with a curious separateness from many debates and themes in youth studies. This is despite the seminal research by Jones and Wallace (1992), who, more than twenty years ago, proposed a longitudinal or ‘life-course’ approach to youth studies using citizenship as an integrating framework. They argued that ‘the concept of

citizenship seems to us to offer an opportunity to re-define and re-structure the concept of youth' (p. 18). More recently, Harris (2015) has similarly argued that citizenship thinking prompts (such as participation, belonging and recognition) provide a way to bridge 'transitions' and 'cultural' perspectives of youth studies. Beyond this and a handful of other studies (see for examples, Hall, Coffey, and Lashua 2009; Hall, Williamson, and Coffey 1998; Smith et al. 2005; Harris 2009), there has been little integration between citizenship and transition perspectives in youth studies. This has rendered rather thin understandings of youth that fail to capture the significance of temporal and relational experiences of both citizenship and transition at the intersection of public and private spheres (Jones and Wallace 1992).

In responding to this issue of separatist developments in youth studies, this paper has two goals. First, the paper considers the potential for closer interaction and flows of ideas between youth transitions and citizenship research by exploring their historical and contemporary traditions, arguing that the separation between these traditions has reduced opportunities for enriched and holistic understandings of youth. Second, as a result of this analysis, the paper seeks to recalibrate the normative frameworks and binaries in youth studies which centre on static and linear notions of time by proposing more temporally, spatially and relationally-sensitive notions of youth citizenship and transitions. Both of these goals work to address some of the problems that separatist thinking has encouraged in both fields, as described in the following section.

The Problem

In many ways my quest to explore points of convergence and synergy between youth transition and citizenship literature is part of a broader imperative to develop thinking tools

in youth studies which avoid excesses and enable an holistic picture of youth. Almost twenty years ago, White and Wyn (1998, 3) pointed out:

In our view, youth studies research frequently suffers from either problems of omission, in which the politically repressive aspects of certain types of analysis are not adequately acknowledged, or problems of conflation, in which, for example, a theoretical model premised upon 'free' agency is fused with a political view which sees young people as far more powerful as social actors than they really are.

These two problems (inflated agency or over-determination) seem to me to be closely caught up with the siloed approach within youth citizenship and youth transitions research. From a youth citizenship research perspective, citizenship identities change over the life course and are forged at the intersection of economic, social, political and lifecourse events and encounters. However, there has been a tendency in citizenship studies to overinflate youth 'agency' through a focus on examples of singular events or moments as a result of their focus on the *present*, often at the expense of a more sustained understanding of citizenship changes through time and space (i.e. the citizen-in-transition). As Bartos (2015) puts it, a focus on children's 'becomings' as opposed to their 'being' is 'less fashionable at the moment' (p.125). This stance, exemplified through the work of the 'social studies of children', has been in response to earlier tendencies to ignore children and young people's agency and view them as not-yet-citizens (James, Jenks, and Prout 1998). While this focus undertaken has done much to illuminate young people's agency and current abilities as citizens, it has at times overlooked the contingent, fluid and dynamic positions of diverse young citizens who, at different points, think, feel and act 'more' of a citizen and 'less' of a citizen (Smith et al. 2005). The absence of temporal and transitional dimensions to the citizenship experience can give an over-inflated emphasis on either agency or structure without a wider picture of time, place or historical context.

In contrast, there has been a tendency in traditional youth transitions research to adopt a teleological and *futuristic* focus on ‘becoming’ which overlooks the significance of young people’s present and current experiences of ‘being’, which has led to understandings of youth which fail to acknowledge continuity and which are prone to ‘overdetermination’ (Cohen 2003, 42). This perpetuates rather limited agentic qualities of young people, overlooking the significance of the everyday interrelationships within time and space – an area which has been much more developed within citizenship studies. I suggest that these tendencies in both subfields have been generated in part by weak considerations of other youth subfields and that this has in turn limited opportunities to enhance debates about young people which centre on structure and agency, being/becoming and how we understand continuity and change.

In order to present this argument more fully, the paper begins by reviewing traditional assumptions relating to time and social change in both youth transitions and citizenship research, and examines how critiques in the last two decades have provided us with opportunities to ‘open up new insights and illuminate the synergies between different traditions of thought’ (Cuervo and Wyn 2014, 912). This then leads the proposition of a new research agenda in the second half of the paper which seeks to explore the relationship between citizenship and transitions in ways which are more temporally, spatially and relationally sensitive. I conclude by suggesting that a closer integration of these subfields could serve to provide deeper insights into what it means to *live* and to *be* a young citizen in times of flux and change, rupture as well as continuity (Hall, Coffey, and Lashua 2009).

Traditions in Youth Transition and Citizenship Research

Understandings in youth transitions and youth citizenship have historically both been underpinned by the notion of successful attainment of normative markers for young

person who moves through a series of steps and pathways into economically-independent adulthood and full citizenship (Ball, Maguire, and Macrae 2000). Underpinning this is a conception of adulthood that defines youth as a status of incompleteness and adulthood as 'arrived' (Wyn and White 1997) and an (often unstated) sentiment that those who fail to achieve these markers or who do not follow expected pathways are held responsible and blamed for their own failure (Furlong and Cartmel 2007; Hayes & Skattebol, 2015; Nairn and Higgins 2007; te Riele 2004). However, as I outline below, youth studies in both transitions and citizenship have become dissatisfied with these approaches and conceptualisations which now allows fresh opportunities to examine their intersecting domains.

Traditional approaches to studying transitions in youth studies have been underpinned by a linear trajectory from childhood to adulthood (Wyn, Lantz, and Harris 2012; Cuervo and Wyn 2014). This focus on youth-as-transition and measures of key markers of progress (such as entry into full-time employment, etc.) is an entrenched orthodoxy in youth studies with much early work in this area focusing on how young people can make 'smooth' transitions in order to become independent and successful adults. Such positions and constructions are rooted in psychological and human development models which position childhood and youth as stages during which responsibility, control and independence are developed through socialising practices (Evans 2008; James, Jenks, and Prout 1998). Furthermore, such positions are wedded to a futuristic notion which views children and young people not as complete individuals now, but as future adults, citizens and workers.

In the past two decades, this linear transition metaphor has been heavily critiqued for giving a 'false impression of order, and being too linear, instrumental and

individualistic' (te Riele 2004, 245), thus failing to recognise the fluidity and complexity of young people's lives. Furthermore, as Cohen and Ainley (2000) point out, the youth-as-transition approach implies a linear, teleological model of universal psychosocial development that is also premised on the availability of waged labour and an accessible housing market – both of which are not assured for young people today. Traditional trajectories are further challenged by evidence which shows that for many young people, the youth transition phase has been lengthened and extended during the twentieth century – accelerating during the last decades – thus delaying key markers of adulthood. Heinz (2009, 3) explains some of the implications of these changes:

Today, individual biography timetables do not follow socially expected and culturally transmitted norms. The borders between all phases of life course have become fuzzy, the timing and duration of transitions between childhood, adolescence, youth, adulthood, and old age are less age-dependent and demand individual decisions.

These changes are the result of a number of economic, social and educational factors which mean young people remain in formal education for longer, thus delaying, or making more complex, the entry into full time employment, marriage, parenthood and other statuses associated with independence and adulthood (Buckingham and Kehily, 2014; Furlong 2015; Thomson et al. 2004; Serracant 2012). While the *extent* and pace of these changes remains the subject of debate (Aaltonen, 2013; Arnett 2000; Bynner 2001; Valentine, 2003), their impact can broadly be understood to have produced a blurring of the boundaries between childhood, youth and adulthood.

Such changes have led Furlong et al. (2011, 361) to suggest that the notion of transition in late modernity has become 'relatively meaningless as a conceptual tool because of the increasing lack of synchrony of transitions across life domains'. The loss of

the normative force of predictable life trajectories, key social markers and continuous, structured identities has led a number of authors to argue that we need new ways of thinking about transitions (Furlong and Cartmel 2007; Heinz 2009; Harris 2015). This has led to a number of recent studies (described by Harris (2015), as a *new transitions framework*) that focus less on step-wise transitions towards independence as the final end product, and more on the wide and complex range of interconnected transitions and ongoing interdependencies which young people negotiate (Aaltonen 2013; Evans 2008; Heinz 2009; Jones 2008; Wyn and Dwyer 1999).

In a similar way, the study of youth citizenship traditionally has been underpinned by the concept that young people, as non-adults, cannot attain the full status of citizens, and therefore are regarded as ‘not-yet-citizens’, ‘semi citizens’ (Jones and Wallace 1992) or ‘citizens-in-waiting’ (Weller 2007). The prevailing focus of this traditional citizenship research has encompassed normative discussions about the status, rights and responsibilities of members of communities in relation to the state (Marshall 1950). Within this definition, children and young people were excluded from the status of citizenship due to their lack of status, rights and ability to contribute financially to society. A vein of normative policies and research within this traditional approach has been on how young people can be socialised into the ‘right’ kind of citizens in the *future* through civic education, youth participation and community engagement programmes – not unlike much previous ‘smooth’ transition research.

However, in the last twenty years, the concept of citizenship has been critiqued for failing to capture the citizen experiences of diverse young people and a reliance on narrow definitions of citizenship. Researchers argue that adult-centric notions of politics and participation fail to recognise what children and young people actually *do* as competent

social actors (James, Jenks, and Prout 1998) and therefore more expansive, inclusive and youth-centred definitions of what it means to be a young citizen are required (Marsh, O'Toole, and Jones 2007; Smith et al. 2005; Lister 2003). This includes a broader recognition of the alternative spaces for young people's participation in society, such as online and digital environments (Buckingham and Kehily, 2014; Vromen, Xenos, and Loader 2014; Harris 2008), as well as more everyday expressions of ordinary young people that demonstrate their citizenship belonging and participation (Harris, Wyn, and Younes 2010; Harris and Roose 2014; Harris 2013; Wood 2015; 2016b). In keeping with the critique on transition research, this complicates the binary thinking about young people and citizenship and challenges assumptions of young people as only future citizens and workers.

The significance of a more globalised world has also necessitated a shift in thinking about time and space and young people's citizenship and transitions. Globalising processes not only contribute to the loss or weakening of distinct boundaries of markets and states, but also on the lifeworlds of different people (Beck 2007; Bauman 2016). Increased global flows of both ideas and people, and the 'fluidity of membership' (Bauman 2016, 23) that characterises many of the world's largest urban centres, casts doubt upon the traditional bonds between identity, citizenship and place. This has destabilised territorial understandings of citizenship which were predicated on static notions of space, territoriality and boundary making associated with the nation-state (Youkhana 2015; Wood and Black in print), and also loosened young people's traditional citizenship ties and mobility and employment options (Harris 2009). Such shifts provide opportunities for new, non-territorial ways of thinking about citizenship, such as forms of cosmopolitan and multi-dimensional citizenship that operates simultaneously at local, regional, nation-state, and global levels (Yuval-Davis 2006; Isin and Turner 2007; Wood and Black in print).

It is evident from the analysis above that there has been a general dissatisfaction in *both* fields with the idea of transition and citizenship as they have traditionally been proposed. Therefore a key message that integrates *both* bodies of literature is that narrow, linear notions of citizenship and transition fixed on age, or markers of ‘adulthood’ inadequately capture the complexity and heterogeneity of what it means to be young today. The static and normative nature of such frameworks also serve to exclude some young people who don’t ‘fit’, rendering them less ‘legitimate’ than others (Kennelly and Dillabough 2008). Research in both fields has found that traditional concepts of transitions and citizenship no longer match the life patterns of young people, nor their affiliations and practices as a result of changing economic, social and global processes. There a great deal more in common between these two fields than researchers have traditionally given account to. As Harris (2015, 86) argues, ‘the transitions model is deeply linked to ideas about the sequential development of citizenship capacity and entitlement’ and therefore rather than seeing them as two separate framings, *they are telling the same story with different emphases* (Harris 2016, my emphasis).

Yet, despite these commonalities, transitions and citizenship has largely been operating along ‘twin tracks’ with only rare forays into each other’s camps. The separation between the subfields has reduced opportunities for more thorough and theoretical discussions, on what it means, for example, to be a ‘citizen-in-transition’, or to consider continuity and change in transitions and the implications of this for young people. As the above review has shown, young people’s sense of citizenship will be dynamically affected by their practices and experiences of transition. For example, protracted transitions into employment mean that the attainment of adulthood and full citizenship status is indefinitely postponed, or remains in ‘suspended animation’ (Willis 1984, cited in Hall, Williamson, and Coffey 1998), until young people secure full employment and full rights

of citizenship held by independent adults (Valentine 2003, 47; Jones and Wallace 1992). This means that ‘work on transitions is increasingly obliged to grapple with questions of citizenship’ (Harris 2015, 87). Similarly, the work on citizenship is required more than ever to consider how young people today achieve recognition, belonging and participation in the absence of conventional markers of adulthood (Harris 2015).

This sets the scene for new analytical frameworks which can respond to more flexible understandings of both citizenship and transition that recognise the contingent, and fluid identities young people hold that are continually negotiated, not only in youth but throughout the life-course (Smith et al. 2005, 440). In the following section I outline a ‘new’ approach for youth studies that considers a much more connected and integrated approach to studying both youth citizenship and transitions. I argue that a closer integration of these subfields could take us beyond a reliance on age, transitional events or stages as measures of ‘adulthood’, and allow for a more flexible notion of youth as a ‘process of definition and redefinition, a negotiation enacted between young people and their families, their peers, and institutions in the wider society’ (Jones and Wallace 1992, 4). This requires a critique of the ways we think about time, as well as closely associated notions of space – or space/time in Massey’s (1992) words, and how these constrain our conceptualisations of youth. I begin by outlining the case for alternative understandings of time drawing on Ingold’s (2007) work on the history of lines.

Towards a new Research Agenda

As the above review reveals, a significant obstacle to how we understand youth transitions and citizenship is the fixation in western society with linear and sequential notions of time. Linear developmental time operates as the fundamental ontological and epistemological category for understanding youth, and provides the basis for normative

judgements about youth development in relation to developmental milestones (Farrugia and Wood, 2017). Ingold's (2007) examination of the metaphoric use of the 'line' as an organising principle in western society is useful here. He suggests that the rational scientific thought associated with the Enlightenment has led to circumscribed thinking about time. This has led to cultural practices which view all lines as straight and linear rather than meandering, tangled, mesh or web-like: straightness has come to epitomise rational thought. In addition, lines have frequently been thought of as a series of dots or moments rather than connections or threads. It is important to note that this has particularly influenced understandings of time in western societies and is not universal (Levine 1997). However, for these societies, the ability to think in terms, for example, of entangled threads, traces, ruptures and creases and ghostly lines of borders, constellations or dreamtime is greatly reduced as a result. Such notions of time prohibit movement, wayfaring and growth that occur at the intersection with the biographies of those who move alongside. Such thinking about time also wraps people's lives into temporal moments, and in a similar way, fixes place statically to spatial locations (Ingold 2007).

These ideas of time have strongly infused work on youth transitions and citizenship and have led to a prevailing framework – an orthodoxy – of linear and sequential time (Hall, Coffey, and Lashua 2009). Such notions of time are fundamentally normative ones in which young people pass through stages, steps, sequences or episodes in order to achieve another state or growth. Generally, this new state is perceived to be more independent, holding greater status or stability, to be more adult-like and holding the responsibility and recognition of an adult. Time is understood in this sense as a linear, stepwise progression and young people are understood to be in a process of becoming through 'a succession of instants in which nothing moves or grows' (Ingold, 2007, 3).

Whilst sociological youth studies often seek to provide an alternative framework to psychological human development theory which posits the child in a state of continual and unrelenting ‘development’ until ‘adulthood’, it often has been hamstrung by few alternative and less linear frameworks to draw upon. This means that youth transitions and citizenship research are underpinned by normative ideals of the ‘good’ citizen and young person. These metaphoric understandings of linear and progressive straight-time perpetuate binary positions between structure versus agency, being versus becoming, and continuity versus change. Disrupting these is near impossible because of how time and progression so tightly frame understandings of children and young people (Uprichard 2008). However, in order to attain frameworks which adequately apply to young people’s complex lives today, we need much more temporally-sensitive vocabularies of citizenship and transitions.

Whilst I acknowledge that we can never dismiss linear notions of time, in the following I attempt to illustrate how we might arrive at more flexible and dynamic understandings of citizenship and transition. Rather than propose a fixed framework which, while useful, is by definition limiting (Ball 2006), I suggest the use of three alternative metaphors as thinking tools to disrupt sequential time and deepen connections and relationships between time, space, youth citizenship and transitions. These metaphors are derived from Ingold (2007) and include ‘genealogy’, ‘wayfaring’ and ‘threads’.

Genealogical connections – longer dimensions of time: Traditional approaches to citizenship and transitions have tended to emphasise steps and stages but ignored the processes in between these steps (Cuervo and Wyn forthcoming 2017; Hall, Coffey, and Lashua 2009) and their connectedness to the past. Ingold (2007) makes a similar point when he states that life is not confined to points, but proceeds along connected lines similar to a braided river that swells, overlaps and retreats in perpetual formation. A ‘genealogical’ line (Ingold, 2007) traces a much more explicit line of kinship and descent as a feature of

current life which recognises that life is not a series of disconnected points, but occurs along lines of transmission with deep connections to the past. Ingold's point is that the past is *with* us as we press into the future. A genealogical understanding of time requires a much closer engagement with historical and contemporary factors which young people encounter during the life course. Yet, there has often been a curious absence of historical analysis in youth work. As Dillabough (2008) argues, youth studies have seemed largely oblivious to history, concentrating instead on the present as 'an isolated, temporal period – or what Ricoeur calls the "amnesia of the now"'.

My own awareness of this was sharpened when I was exploring the citizenship imaginations and actions of a group of marginalised young people at a 'failing' school in New Zealand (Wood 2016a). Despite my attempts to honour and celebrate these young people's voices and contributions to their community, the participatory community project fell flat. I reflected that my 'presentist' understandings of these young citizens overlooked links to their 'sedimented past' (Dillabough and Kennelly 2010) which was integrally linked to the cultural, geographic and historical conditions which had perpetuated their citizenship exclusion today (Wood 2016a). Failing to understand these historic legacies which were woven into the social, economic and geographic fabric of this working class community led to rather limited understandings of these young citizens and their potential for agency.

These experiences fuelled my dissatisfaction of viewing youth within a static moment in time and instead, the value of seeing a young person to hold deep resonances with the 'earlier symbolic forms from past time' (Dillabough and Kennelly 2010, 41). This approach leads to a much more contingent and dynamic understanding of a young person's citizenship and transitions in the lifecourse which are much more sensitive to their deep

resonance within socio-historical times and places. Dillabough and Kennelly (2010, 52-53) describe how taking this approach led them to

position the young person not as fixed or essentialized but instead as only a partial draft of the person who must necessarily unfold in the face of time and place in the present (Ricoeur, 1981). In this case, we can see the young people's actions can be understood intersubjectively through regulatory webs of social relations and constrained historical narratives in a deeply material sense.

More historically-attuned understandings of citizenship and transition therefore necessarily take into greater account the historical, social, political and economic changes which have marked a generation or a place. Locating contemporary young lives within a longer history also reduces the potential to cast young people into the polarising extremes of autonomous agents of change or dupes of institutions (Hall, Coffey, and Lashua 2009) and to develop more processual understandings of citizenship and transition. As Smith et al. (2005, 441) propose:

Therefore, rather than there being a categorical and meaningful difference between young people's and adults' citizenship, we should regard citizenship as a fluid identity, one that will be subject to periods of intense change yet remains continuous and seamless.

A much longer and genealogical sense of time could historicise the concept and practices of citizenship and the otherness of citizenship (Isin 2001). This would enhance both youth citizenship and transitions studies and reconcile the tendency in both fields to overlook continuity and recognise that many young people (as a result of less linear pathways to traditional adult status) are 'living simultaneously youthful and adult lives' (Harris 2009, 303).

Wayfaring – the ordinariness of change: Research in youth transition studies and citizenship has tended to focus on the spectacular examples, rapid and abrupt changes, ‘favouring by revolution over evolution, sudden over creeping change’ (Schwanen, Hardill, and Lucas 2012, 1293). Such approaches fail to recognise gradual and continual change and the non-linear, round-about and discontinuous way decisions are made and actions taken. In the spirit of ‘wayfaring’ (Ingold, 2007), an alternative stance is to focus on the practices of walking which reflect the contours of the land and various textured surfaces which come into and pass out of sight. Such contours affect the rhythm of movement and life (Lefebvre 1974), and time itself is reconfigured as a process rather than a destination through a focus on ‘the act of passing by’ (de Certeau 1984, 97). A wayfaring approach provides opportunities to analyse ruptures, critical moments and turning points, not so much as isolated events, but rather as part of broader processes and courses of events which also carry with them a great deal of *continuity* and not just change (Aaltonen 2013; Thomson et al. 2004; Hall, Coffey, and Lashua 2009). In addition, wayfaring draws our attention to the ordinariness and everydayness of change.

The highlighting of continuity over disruption and discontinuity is illustrated thorough Hall et al. (2009) analysis of youth transitions in the town of Ebbw Vale, South Wales at a time of significant economic restructuring and change. The authors argue that ‘apparent moments of step-change, seeming ruptures in the life of places, often remain (for young people at least) embedded within *continuities* of community, association and place’ (p. 554). They argue that every ‘critical moment’ is also one of continuity as well as change. This draws into question how we view transitions and place change which Hall et al. propose are both underpinned by models of change that are sequential, episodic and discontinuous. Such models overlook the ‘ordinariness of change’ (p. 560) that goes on between events and happenings – in place and biography – and that creeping changes of

places and lives keep continuity in and through transition. Rather than juxtaposing continuity versus rupture, we need to recalibrate the relationship between these two positions and to see how everyday practices of maintenance refocus our gaze on both continuity and change (Hall, Coffey, and Lashua 2009).

A focus on the ordinary and everyday has been a feature of some recent research in children and young people's citizenship (Wood 2014, 2016b; Harris and Roose 2014). Drawing largely on the work of feminist sociologists and geographers, this research has highlighted the traditional preoccupation with public/formal/mainstream expressions of citizenship (such as such as voting, political representation and political processes) thus overlooking domestic, informal, private spaces of participation which are frequented by women children and young people (Lister 2007, 2003). One significant way feminist citizenship researchers have subverted this traditional gaze this is by highlighting the embodied and everyday nature of expressions and experiences of citizenship – or in Lister's (2007) words, 'lived citizenship'. If we see everyday life as a lived process within which citizenship acts are practised and accumulate, and through which transition events are embedded, this situates a focus on the ways in which places and lives keep continuity through transition (Hall, Coffey, and Lashua 2009), embedded within the daily and wayfaring roots and routes of living.

Threads – spatial and relational networks in the lifecourse: One further way to enhance our understandings of young people's citizenship and transitions today is to develop far more complex and networked notions of life centred on interrelationships in space/time. Ingold's (2007, 41) idea of a thread, a 'filament of some kind which may be entangled with other threads or suspended between points in three-dimensional space' is a useful metaphor to employ in order to develop a much more connected and interwoven

sense of time and change. This requires deeper spatial and relational engagements with time and space in which we come to understand the tangled nature of transitions and citizenship within social webs of interactions (Worth, 2015). Space is therefore socially constituted and created out of the interlocking and non-interlocking networks of relations at every scale (Massey, 1992), with implicit implications for the socially and relationally-connected nature of both citizenship and transitions.

Rather than seeing either transitions or citizenship a static moment in time, we need to recognise an individual's expressions as a reflection of the co-existence of dynamic social relations in space/time. Not only does this mean allowing for longer notions of time as outlined above, but also much more temporal and spatial approaches to youth transitions (Hörschelmann 2011; Horton and Kraftl 2008; Hopkins and Pain 2007). Crucial to this has been the work of lifecourse and biographical researchers who have considered how critical moments in a young person's biography (as a result both 'fate' and 'choice') have a significant impact on their identities, subjectivities, and subsequent transitions (Thomson et al. 2002; Aaltonen 2013). Studying transitions as part of the 'processes and courses of events' (Aaltonen 2013, 377) within the lifecourse is therefore a fruitful way to shed insights into youth agency and citizenship in the context of social landscapes in time and space. Rather than 'developmentalist' approaches, Horschelmann (2011, 378) sees transitions as necessarily spatial and temporal, 'where geographies are constitutive and participative of life transitions'. Similarly, studies which focus much more closely on the lifecourse and everyday and informal contexts reveal that citizenship is a process that is situated, that is relational and that is uniquely linked to young people's individual life-trajectories (Biesta, Lawy, and Kelly 2009; Jones and Wallace 1992).

Conclusion

In this paper, I have argued that a closer examination of citizenship and transitions perspectives *together* could serve to bridge some of the divide that currently exists between studies and thus contribute to more ‘joined up thinking’ in youth studies. In keeping with Harris (2015), I have suggested that these subfields hold more in common than previous agendas have explored, and which warrant further attention if we are to gain holistic understandings of youth. For example, changing patterns of young people’s life trajectories have meant that the period of youth is extended beyond that of previous generations, with clear implications for the status, recognition, participation and sense of belonging in society. Moreover, evidence of increasingly individualised patterns and globalised connections for young people has destabilised static and territorial conceptions of citizenship and require more hybrid, dynamic and flexible notions of the citizen. Examining the interconnections of youth citizenship and transitions together presents a richer and more dynamic picture of youth today.

I have suggested that dissatisfaction with traditional frames of examining both youth transitions and citizenship have centred on linear, normative and teleological conceptions of time. Critical research in both fields has led to a moment where a new research agenda which explores the convergences and synergies between youth transition and citizenship research becomes not only a possibility but also a necessity. My response has been to articulate a more flexible and temporally-sensitive framework of analysis which centres on understandings of *genealogy* – longer and deeper dimensions of time; *wayfaring* – the ordinariness of change, and, *threads* – the entangled and integrated nature of young people’s lives, caught up within spatial and relational interactions.

Together these alternative metaphors position both youth transitions and citizenship in a more dynamic and contingent way – understood as a state that is woven from countless threads that reflect the tangled webs of relationships in which young people are enmeshed (Ingold 2007). This state is combined with much more flexible notions space/time in which the spatial is inseparable from the temporal, or as Massey (1992, 77) puts it ‘space and time are inextricably interwoven’. It is not that we do away with time completely, nor dismiss the ‘growing up’ frameworks which youth studies are embedded within. But instead, ‘linear representations of lifecourses as trajectories or pathways are traded for more complex, topological understandings of spacetime and provisionality and uncertainty can be articulated’ (Schwanen, Hardill, and Lucas 2012, 1294).

This proposed research agenda provides an opportunity to address and reconcile some of the key tensions in youth studies which are centred on binaries caught up in structure and agency, continuity and change which have tended to overlook the complexity and multidimensionality of young people lives. A more temporally, spatially and relationally-sensitive vocabulary of citizenship and transitions could also recognise the simultaneity of ‘being, and also *becoming*’ (Bartos 2015, 125), and the living of both ‘youthful and adult lives’ (Harris, 2009, 303) that are part of what it means to be young today.

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