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Psychological Sense of Community : Adolescents' Response to Exclusion

Sharon J. Van Der Graaf
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Psychological Sense of Community:

Adolescents' Response to Exclusion

Sharon J. Van Der Graaf

A Report Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the

Requirements for the Award of

Bachelor of Arts (Psychology) Honours

Faculty of Community Studies, Education and Social Sciences

Edith Cowan University

29 October 2001

Declaration

I declare that this written assignment is my own work and does not include:

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Psychological Sense of Community: Adolescents' Response to Exclusion

Abstract

Since modernisation in western society, a number of changes have had a strong influence on the life of Adolescents'. This review examines adolescent development, particularly social role and identity formation, in relation to a changing social environment. A brief historical overview is outlined to highlight how economic, political, and social changes have impacted on the development of the life phase, adolescence. The gap between childhood and adulthood is then defined to conceptualise adolescence as a social construction resulting from social changes. Social role and identity formation, and adolescent well-being are then addressed in response to social change. Factors including puberty, cognitive development, shifts in education, and social integration are discussed in relation to their impact on role and identity development. The paper then focuses on adolescent support networks, firstly with adults in the family, then within the school context, and finally within peer groups. The literature suggests that as a result of changes in the family context, increased attendance at school, and poor relationships with teachers, adolescents are experiencing social separation with many significant adults. As a response to the separation, it was proposed that adolescent peer groups might be operating as relational communities with shared narratives, facilitating a social identity and functional social role. Consequently, the literature on social identities, shared narratives, and psychological sense of community was reviewed. Finally directions for future research are discussed, highlighting the need for research into the positive effects of peer groups on adolescent development.

Author: Sharon J Van Der Graaf

Supervisor: Dr. Christopher Sonn

Submitted: 29th October 2001

Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate, without acknowledgement, any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

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Date: 15th February 2002

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¹ This paper was prepared in accordance with the *Instructions for Authors* for the journal, *Community, Work & Family*. For additional details see Appendix H.

Psychological Sense of Community: Adolescents' Response to Exclusion

Research on adolescence has seen a dramatic growth in the last 40 years (Steinberg & Sheffield-Morris, 2001). Many researchers have proposed that adolescence is a critical point of transition between the dependence of childhood and the independence of adulthood (Cunningham & Spencer, 2000). During this time of transition, it is widely held that the developmental changes that occur are greatly influenced by an array of internal and external factors (Bronfenbrenner, 1972a; Cunningham & Spencer, 2000; Steinberg & Sheffield-Morris, 2001). Early research into adolescence pointed towards internal factors such as biology and hormones to address developmental changes and their impact on adolescent well-being (Jacobson & Rowe, 1999; Petersen & Taylor, 1980). More recently however, research has incorporated an ecocultural framework, which enables researchers to study adolescence within a socio-cultural context. From this perspective, Segall, Dasen, Berry, and Poortinga, (1999) proposed that both the social and the cultural issues that can impact on an individual's development and well-being, can be addressed. Within this framework, theories that enable researchers to study human development, particularly from an ecological perspective have been developed. One such theory is that proposed by Urie Bronfenbrenner in the 1970's. Bronfenbrenner, (1972) proposed a systemic approach to human development entitled the ecological systems theory.

Bronfenbrenner's (1972) theory provides insight into the social environments of an individual and the elements that may alter under conditions of social change. Within this framework, adolescent development takes place not in a vacuum of internal factors, but rather in combination with the immediate social context of everyday life, such as family, school, and peers (Crockett & Silbereisen, 2000a). The relationships within these "microsystems" form the daily interactions between the adolescent and the social environment and, which over time, act to shape the development of the

individual within larger macrosystems, containing social and cultural beliefs (Crockett & Silbereisen, 2000a). Transformation to any aspect of the macrosystems, such as economic, political, cultural or social changes, will ultimately result in changes in context for individuals within their own microsystems. As a result, individuals will be forced to alter how they respond to situations, groups and individuals and may also be forced to redefine aspects of themselves to adapt and aid integration into their changing social environment (Steinberg & Sheffield-Morris, 2001).

Research with adults has found that much of our psychological health and feelings of well-being are strongly linked to our integration into our social networks and positive social supports (Jones, 1990; Meehan, Durlak, & Bryant, 1993). A lack of integration and absence of social support can result in strong negative social and psychological effects (Leary, 1990). Researchers have found that failed integration can often result because of exclusion (Leary, 1990). Exclusion, defined here as deliberate or perceived alienation of a person from a group, (Lloyd & O'Regan, 1999; Stanley & Arora, 1998) has been found to equate with many emotional and behavioural problems. Evidence suggests that exclusion results in low self-esteem, and this has been strongly linked with many social issues (e.g., unsafe sex, aggression, criminal behaviour and abuse of alcohol and drugs) (Leary, 1990; Leary, Schreindorfer, & Haupt, 1995). Alternatively, inclusion has been found to have a protective function and provides a wealth of social, material, psychological, and physical benefits (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Hill, 1987).

Review Outline

This review will examine some of the issues surrounding social development of adolescents in western society. A brief historical overview will be discussed to highlight how economic, political, and social changes have impacted on the development of the life phase, adolescence. The gap between childhood and adulthood

is defined to conceptualise the phase adolescence, in terms of a social constructionist perspective. Adolescent development and its impact on social roles, identity formation and well-being will be addressed in response to social change and the effects of the increasing gap between childhood and adulthood. Factors such as biological and cognitive development, shifts in education and occupation, social integration and subsequent identity and role conflict are discussed.

The review will also discuss adolescent support networks, looking firstly at adult and adolescent relationships, primarily in the family, then in the school context. The support networks of peers will then be discussed, pointing towards peers as relational communities with shared group identities and narratives. Using theoretical support from the psychological sense of community literature, peer groups will be discussed as possible ways adolescents alleviate feelings of isolation, social exclusion and identity and role confusion in the presence of social change.

Adolescence will be defined in this review as a social and political construction. As a result, the focus will be aimed at adolescent social development, primarily how adolescents are seen to respond to inclusion and exclusion resulting from social change. Within this context adolescent identity and role formation and the development of support networks used to aid integration and promote sense of well-being will be addressed. The paper will conclude with a brief discussion of future research directions, highlighting the benefits of qualitative methodology in relation to the study of adolescents and their social development.

Historical overview

Historically, human development has undergone a number of changes. These changes, in particular the emergence of the phase of the life span, adolescence, have been strongly affected by a number of important events in history. Adolescence can be historically traced back to around the second half of the 19th century (Hurrelmann,

1996). Prior to industrialisation in the 18th century, the young and old occupied the same residence and out of necessity performed many of the same tasks and shared similar responsibilities on a daily basis (Hurrelmann, 1996). The child and the young person were seen as miniature versions of adults. With the industrial revolution and modernisation came an onslaught of social changes, affecting the economic, political and social structures of western society (Blakers, 1990; Hurrelmann, 1996).

Industrialisation brought the rapid application of technology and industry, generating factories and beginning the process of urbanisation (Blakers, 1990). Seen as a major turning point in socialisation, the roles individuals played began to change dramatically. Work outside the family became more the norm, resulting in adults building social relationships within the workplace and thus separating children and adults during daily life (Hurrelmann, 1996). Children were no longer considered “miniature adults” but rather unique individuals in a different stage of human development. By the second half of the 19th century, the common school system was established and implemented. Established primarily for the preparation of future occupational demands brought on by industrialisation, education assisted in socially separating the generations (White, 1990).

Children of wealthy middle class families were the first to find independence from working by attending school (Hurrelmann, 1996). Historically classified as the first real adolescents, this group was wealthy enough to support children and youth for extended time periods as they prepared for careers. Considered a psychosocial moratorium toward maturity, these adolescents were protected from various burdens of adult life (Erikson, 1968). The first and second world wars, however, had a dramatic impact on the development of the adolescent phase in western society (Roberts, 1983). World War I resulted in a reduction of men to work in industry, forcing women and children to take up the positions to maintain the economy. The family structure was

was considered the norm (White, 1990). Attendance at school, now guaranteed a certain period of adolescence to all members of society, allowing the opportunity to extend their cognitive skills, whilst removing them from the burdens and responsibilities of adulthood. Young people were now entering the labour market even later, thereby increasing their dependence on family, whilst subsequently reducing their opportunities to participate in adult activities, and lowering levels of independence and responsibility.

The last 40 years in western society has seen a gradual rise in a culture specifically tied to the pursuits and activities of adolescents. Often labelled “youth culture”, western society has seen a steady emergence of leisure and entertainment facilities and a growing consumer market specifically targeting young people. The music, fashion, media and leisure industries can be viewed however, as two sided when discussing the impact they have on adolescents and their development. In one respect it has afforded young people a way of differentiating themselves almost entirely from other generations, enabling them to develop a unique social identity. Secondly however, it has worked to perpetuate many of the cultural beliefs and stereotypes that surround young people and that are maintained through the media. Adolescents are considered very much socially and economically dependent, are seen to have diminished responsibility for their actions, have an inability to make important decisions for themselves and their lives, and are a homogenous group who are all experiencing the same processes at the same time. The major social institutions can be seen as social and political means of perpetuating what can be considered from one perspective as social isolation and exclusion for this particular cohort (Irwin, 1999).

The Childhood to Adulthood Gap: Conceptualising Adolescence

Within the research, adolescence has been defined in a number of ways. Due to the complexity of the factors that are incorporated within this phase of the life span, many researchers have utilised different approaches to define adolescence. Some have conceptualised this phase of human development as part of an innate process that occurs to all individuals at a certain stage in their life (Crockett & Petersen, 1993). Others have used a social and political view to explain the construct adolescence (White, 1990). The innate or essentialist view bases the foundations of adolescence on biological, genetic and psychological factors inherent in adolescent development. Whereas a social constructionist view of adolescence highlights the social context in which the individual develops (Sercombe, Omaji, Drew, Cooper, & Love, 2000). This perspective focuses on factors including social, cultural, economic and political changes that reflect the cohort in which the individual develops (Trommsdorff, 2000).

Early developmental research primarily used the essentialist view to conceptualise adolescence (Petersen, 1988). Biologically, adolescence has been defined by the onset of puberty. Beginning approximately between the ages of 12 and 13 years for both boys and girls, puberty has been found to involve a set of biological events that produce changes throughout the body (Kalat, 1998; Millstein, Petersen, & Nightingale, 1993). Many researchers have clearly embraced the biological phenomenon as accounting for a great deal of the physiological and psychological changes that occur during adolescence (Dick, Rose, Viken, & Kaprio, 2000; Petersen, Silbereisen, & Sorensen, 1996; Wagner, 1996). Research has also suggested that by the age of 16 or 17, young people are biologically similar to that of adults and only minor biological developments occur after this point (Sercombe et al., 2000).

Adolescence has further been defined in relation to psychological development, particularly cognitive development. Based on the work by Jean Piaget (1972), research

has indicated a clear change in the quality and power of thought, particularly in the capacity for abstract reasoning (Bernstein, 1980; Keating & Clark, 1980). There is however, conflicting evidence regarding the timing of these changes for both the onset and the completion of development (Berzonsky, 1978; Melton, 1983; Sercombe et al., 2000; Tomlinson-Keasey, 1972).

In looking at adolescence from a social constructionist perspective, difficulty in defining the concept is evident. Sercombe et al., (2000) and others (e.g., White, 1990), argue that “youth is not a natural category but one that is socially defined and constructed” (p. 4) and is not consistent across all societies or cultures. However, Schlegel and Barry (1991, cited in Segall et al., 1999) disagree with this view, reporting that results from their holocultural study indicate that social adolescence occurs within all societies. They suggest that social adolescence is a response, to the gap between sexual reproductivity and full social maturity, which appears universal for boys and in the majority of societies for girls. However, they are strong to point out that in some societies it may only be for very short periods of time as opposed to the extended time seen in western society.

In adopting a social construction perspective to define adolescence, the issue of labelling becomes evident. Within western society, particularly in the Australian context, a number of labels are used and are applied to adolescents. Legal contexts refer to all individuals below 18 years of age as minors, thereby falling into either category of child or adolescent. Whereas as the label adult, is bestowed on any individual who is over the age of 18 years (White, 1990). In a broader context adolescence often falls under the label ‘youth’, which is defined by government departments and policy makers to incorporate all individuals who fall between the age range of 11 and 25 years of age (ArtsWA, 1997; Westrek, 2000). Finally, there is the public understanding and usage of the term adolescence. Here social and cultural

beliefs are held about young people to include individuals still in education institutions, who are not able to drive, drink alcohol, marry or vote, and who are economically dependent; have few adult responsibilities and are in need of being protected and controlled (Petersen et al., 1996; Sercombe et al., 2000).

Adolescence within this perspective and for the purpose of this paper will therefore be defined as a transitional period between childhood dependency and adulthood independence, where young people continue to develop biologically, psychologically and socially, within a defined social category that is created from social and cultural beliefs, that can be altered and affected by social change (Bynner, 2000; Crockett & Silbereisen, 2000a; Sercombe et al., 2000). The chronological age range within adolescence varies greatly and as a result the period between 15 and 17 years will be the primary focus for this discussion. This group is often classified as middle adolescence, due to the position of chronological age within this life phase. Further, this group are particularly relevant to this discussion, as many researchers have claimed that a large portion of this group have completed the developmental milestones that work to socially construct the group adolescents.

Adolescence: Individual Development and Social Change

Research on adolescence has seen an overwhelming increase in recent years sparking the appearance of a number of journals devoted specifically to the theoretical and empirical evidence on this age period (e.g., *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *Adolescence*, and *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*) (Steinberg & Sheffield-Morris, 2001). The early literature on adolescence, including that by Stanley Hall, a developmental psychologist, concluded that the process of growing up could be explained as a period of "storm and stress" (Arnett, 1999; Dornbusch, Petersen, & Hetherington, 1991; Segall et al., 1999). The storm and stress theory was proposed as a natural process that allowed all young people to establish individuality whilst breaking

away from the dependence of parental influences, and was attributed to biology and hormonal changes within the individual (Csikszentmihalyi & Schmidt, 1998; Segall et al., 1999).

More recent studies, however, have cast doubts on this theory, with the notion that stress at this stage of life is not inevitable and that many teenagers weather the challenges with very few problems (Hamburg, 1997; Steinberg & Sheffield-Morris, 2001). In a study of 6000 adolescents from 10 countries (i.e., Japan, Israel, Hungary, West Germany, Italy, Australia, Turkey, Bangladesh, Taiwan and the USA), Offer & Boxer (1991) found evidence to strongly refute the storm and stress theory, by reporting that approximately 80% of the teenagers in the sample did not experience any psychological disturbance or turbulence, and managed to develop well during this period. Some have suggested that one possible cause of the conflict between theories is found in the framework used to address many of the issues identified in adolescence (Csikszentmihalyi & Schmidt, 1998). Csikszentmihalyi and Schmidt (1998) proposed that to understand this phase of development, the individual or the external environmental influences cannot be viewed in isolation. The authors suggest that to explain and understand the conditions involved, researchers must take into account the interaction between the individual, the environment and the social and cultural issues within the context of changing social conditions (Csikszentmihalyi & Schmidt, 1998).

The ecocultural framework outlined by Segall et al. (1999) suggests that an individual's behavioural development is greatly affected through two processes, enculturation and socialisation. The processes of enculturation, the adaptation to one's culture and eventually assimilating its practices, customs and values (Reber, 1995) and socialisation, the process whereby an individual acquires the knowledge, values and social skills that enable them to integrate into society (Reber, 1995) are said to be linked to "culture, ecology and the socio-political contexts" (Segall et al., 1999, p. 58)

in which the individual develops. Segall et al. (1999) further suggest that two other processes can have a strong influence on the systems surrounding the individual namely acculturation and social change.

Social change has been found to impact on people's lives in a number of ways. Elder (1974, cited in Crockett & Silbereisen, 2000a) in his study on the great depression, found that social change can affect people differently on the basis of individual characteristics such as gender and age. Other researchers have found that social change can also have differential effects for distinct groups within the population, as found in the Inuit adolescents in the Central Canadian Arctic (Condon, 1990). In order to identify the processes linking social change to both individual and group development, an understanding of the socio-cultural context and how it has and is changing is required (Crockett & Silbereisen, 2000a).

The ecological perspective, proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1977), has been used to provide insight into the social and cultural environment and the elements that may alter under conditions of social change. Adolescence is a natural magnet for this perspective, enabling researchers to understand development by changes in context and including but not simply in, content (Steinberg & Sheffield-Morris, 2001).

Bronfenbrenner's theory proposes that the developing individual is embedded within a series of progressively more complex and interactive systems, which together produce development (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Kail & Cavanaugh, 1996).

Within this theory, four unique systems were identified and defined as "nested arrangements of structures, each contained within the next" (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 514). Bronfenbrenner firmly believed that development is strongly influenced by people and objects within an individual's social environment. The immediate social environment, called the microsystem, consists of the relationships between the developing adolescent and the people closest to them (e.g., parents, teachers and peers)

(Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Kail & Cavanaugh, 1996). The roles and relationships within these microsystems equate to the daily interactions between the adolescent and the social environment and which over time act to shape the individual's development (Crockett & Silbereisen, 2000a). Microsystems can change over the life span and each individual may have more than one microsystem at any one time, including family, school or workplace.

Environmental influences on development within the ecological perspective extend beyond the microsystem. The mesosystem, explained as the interrelations found among an individual's microsystems, suggests that events that occur in one setting can impact on behaviour and development in another (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Kail & Cavanaugh, 1996). For adolescents this can include the extent and the strength of the interactions between the family and the school, resulting in either positive or negative effects on school achievement and behaviour. The exosystem, Bronfenbrenner's third structure, is a social setting that is not experienced firsthand by the individual but can still have influence on the individuals development (Kail & Cavanaugh, 1996). Seen as an extension of the mesosystem, the exosystem contains many of societies major institutions that can act to influence, control, or delimit, what goes on in the other systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Examples include the community, the media, and government departments, suggesting that changes in social and institutional patterns can influence adolescent development in a variety of ways (Bo, 1996; Crockett & Silbereisen, 2000a).

Finally, the overarching environmental context within Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological perspective is the macrosystem. This final structure incorporates the patterns of the cultural or subcultural contexts in which the other three systems manifest. Systems such as the political, economic and social systems act as the carriers of a societies information and ideology, acting both implicitly and explicitly to set the

patterns for the structures social networks, roles as well as activities (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). An important aspect highlighted in Bronfenbrenner's definition of the macrosystem, is that it is a constantly changing system that evolves over time, and that each successive generation develops within a unique socio-cultural period (Kail & Cavanaugh, 1996).

Interestingly, there are number of individual changes that have taken place as a result of changing macrosystems. The individual changes demonstrate how changes at the very outer social system can impact on individual development. An understanding of these changes is advantageous when discussing how adolescents develop socially, allowing both content and context to be viewed simultaneously. The individual changes that present most interesting within adolescent development include puberty, cognitive development and identity formation.

Puberty: The Secular Trend

One of the many changes that young people experience during adolescence is physical development or puberty. Puberty involves a set of biological events that produce a number of changes throughout the body. The changes have been found to fall into two categories: hormonal and somatic (Crockett & Petersen, 1993). For both sexes there is an increase in the level of hormone production that leads to a more mature physical appearance. The physical changes that occur include: pubic hair growth, breast development and menarche in girls and development of genitals, pubic hair growth, voice changes and facial hair in boys. Both sexes show an increase in body height and weight (Coleman & Hendry, 1999; Crockett & Petersen, 1993).

Although a large variation in timing of these changes has been seen in individuals, the general age for these changes has also seen a change in timing. This change has been labelled the secular trend (Coleman & Hendry, 1999). The term secular trend has been used in many research papers to describe the biological fact that

over the past century the rate of physical development in adolescents has accelerated, resulting in somewhat faster and earlier maturation (Coleman & Hendry, 1999; Frisch & Revelle, 1970; Hopkins, 1983).

This change in rate of development has had many implications for adolescents. Investigators have reported on everything from increase in height and weight to early maturation of the reproductive systems. Frisch and Revelle (1970) analysed adolescent growth spurts by determining the height and weight of 181 girls. The researchers found that early and late maturing girls had menarche at the same mean weight, but late maturers were taller. They proposed that a critical body weight may trigger these adolescent events. Park, Shim, Kim, and Eun (1999) looked at the onset of menarche in Korean girls and found that age of menarche had decreased almost three years from 15.4 years to 12.5 years from mother to daughter. They suggested that as with developed western countries, environmental changes improved nutrition, and that improvement of social and economic factors might be responsible.

Within the literature it has been estimated that in average populations of western countries, there has been a downward trend, particularly in age of menarche of about four months per decade since the late 1850's (Coleman & Hendry, 1999). This would suggest a drop from about 17 years in 1850 to between 12 and 13 years in 1970 (Tanner, 1978, cited in Coleman & Hendry, 1999). The validity of the claim for a secular trend however, has not gone unquestioned. Two studies conducted in Australia in 1966 and 1973 (Marder, Harvey, & Russo, 1975) failed to find any significant differences in the age of onset of menarche in Sydney schoolgirls from 1927 to the early 1970's. Although the results from the Australian studies argue little support for a secular trend of menarche, the evidence is not strong enough to postulate an absence of a secular trend in general. However, further debate has surrounded a reason for the trend. As seen in the Park et al. (1999) study, and a number of others (e.g., Damon,

Damon, Reed, & Valadian, 1969; Graham, Larsen, & Xu, 1999; Hermann-Giddens, Slora, & Wasserman, 1997), it has been proposed that changes at the macrosystem level, particularly industrialisation and an improvement in social and economic factors, has resulted in better health care and improved nutrition (Hopkins, 1983)

These macro changes have a number of implications for adolescents in western society. The most notable is the impact of early development. As historically indicated earlier, before modernisation biological maturity came at a much later age than is currently experienced. Further, social maturity and the integration into adult activities were seen to arrive much earlier and were more clearly delineated (Csikszentmihalyi & Schmidt, 1998; Moffitt, 1993). Evidence of this is still vaguely evident in cultures where they are only recently experiencing the western influence (Condon, 1990). Consequently, for adolescents the gap between biological maturity and social maturity has widened.

In a study by Moffitt (1993) looking at the development of anti-social behaviour in adolescents, she proposed that the secular changes in health and the increased time in school delaying work placement, has worked to lengthen the duration of adolescence. This delay leaves adolescents in a 5 to 10 year role vacuum where they are made to delay many aspects of adult life although they feel biologically capable and compelled (Moffitt, 1993). Moffitt (1993) labelled this vacuum the "maturity gap" (p. 687), proposing that adolescents desperately want to establish themselves socially and because they feel excluded from adult activities, they look for ways to remedy this, often found in the form of anti-social and delinquent activities.

Further to this, Csikszentmihalyi and Schmidt (1998) and others (e.g., Caspi, Lynam, Moffitt, & Silva, 1993; Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986) have added that adolescents seek out situations that make them feel competent, in control, and fully functioning individuals in some form of social role. The authors further suggest that

because these opportunities are often created by teenagers, they are “by definition, outside the existing social norms” (Csikszentmihalyi & Schmidt, 1998, p. 6) and therefore generally seen as deviant by adults. Moffitt's (1993) maturity gap suggests that the lines between adolescence and adulthood have become increasingly blurred due to our changing social conditions. Consequently, the author suggests, that as a result, so too have young people's development of appropriate social roles.

Cognitive Development: Formal and Informal Education

Another area within the literature that has seen a flood of interest in past decades is the impact of cognitive development in adolescence. Many researchers have attempted to study the cognitive changes during adolescence, resulting in a number of different theories to account for the changes. These have included Piaget's theory of cognitive development (Piaget, 1972), Kohlberg's theory of moral reasoning (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977) and the Information Processing Theory (Kail & Cavanaugh, 1996). Undoubtedly the most widely accepted and most rigorously researched is Piaget's (1972) theory of cognitive development.

During adolescence, Piaget (1972) proposed a qualitative change in the nature of mental ability rather than just an increase in cognitive skill. Termed the formal operational stage and beginning at approximately 11 years, a number of important capabilities are said to become available to young people. These have included: the ability to think abstractly without concrete objects, ability to reason with hypotheses involving multiple variables, and the ability to conceptualise thinking of oneself and that of others (Coleman & Hendry, 1999; Coleman, 1974; Miles, 2000; Piaget, 1972). Some researchers have suggested that by 15 or 16 years of age the level of cognitive capacity is considered complete in the average person (Coleman, 1974; Melton, 1983; Sercombe et al., 2000). Others have disagreed, suggesting that only a minority of 16

year olds reach the advanced levels of formal thought (Berzonsky, 1978; Keating, 1990; Muuss, 1996).

Although rigorously researched, Piaget's (1972) theory has not escaped its critics. Some have questioned whether the stages of cognitive development actually exist as Piaget suggested (Sutherland, 1992). Others have noted that many of the studies conducted have been performed in artificial settings focusing on materials derived from science and mathematics whereby maximum performance may not always be obtained (Keating & Clark, 1980; Linn, 1983). Keating (1990) made the suggestion that the use of content related to social or interpersonal relationships may provide the opportunity for some individuals to demonstrate formal reasoning not previously assessed. Others such as Ward and Overton (1990) have argued a clear distinction between competence and performance in formal reasoning dependent on the context of the material being tested. By this they proposed that a person may be competent in formal reasoning, but may only perform to optimum level if the material being studied is relevant to the individual.

In addition, Cador (1982, cited in Segall et al., 1999) suggested that different cognitive functions arise under different educational experiences. The author proposed that knowledge attained during formal education provides the individual with the ability to reason theoretically and explain how something works. The apprentice on the other hand, who learns by experience, has cognitions that relate more to practice and therefore has the ability to extract from reality (Segall et al., 1999).

One of the main tenets of Piaget's (1972) theory was that changes in individuals' thinking occurred qualitatively, reflecting changes in both cognitive and social development. For Piaget the two developmental domains could not be separated (Kail & Cavanaugh, 1996). Formal schooling can therefore be viewed as just one method of attaining cognitive achievement. Other more social methods often referred

to as traditional or informal education are orientated towards cognitive achievement of a more practical and social knowledge. Evidence of this was highlighted in a study by Schvaneveldt and Adams (1983), where the researchers found that adolescents' decision-making effectiveness was greatly influenced when the participants were actively involved in society.

The current economic and social changes that have resulted in a more specialised and technical labour market have extended the time periods in schooling for the majority of adolescents. As a result, less time is being spent with parents and other adults within the community as is seen in more traditional cultures (Condon, 1990). These changes in activities for young people have reduced the opportunity for more practical cognitive achievement that is generally obtained through observation, imitation and social interaction with those who hold the social and cultural knowledge of a society (Segall et al., 1999). These changes in activities have been found to have implications for adolescent social role development and particularly identity formation.

Identity Formation: The Development of the Self

Within the literature, identity formation has been recognised by many as one of the most salient developmental tasks associated with adolescence (Swanson, Spencer, & Petersen, 1998). According to Erikson's (1968) theory of psychosocial development, the most important challenge facing adolescents is the development of a distinct identity. The processes associated with identity formation are said to occur during what Erikson (1968) termed the psychosocial moratorium. The psychosocial moratorium in western society can be described as the period of freedom from adult responsibilities, and a time when the individual is able to experiment with different selves, world views, social roles and occupations before committing themselves to just one (Condon, 1990; Csikszentmihalyi & Schmidt, 1998; Erikson, 1968). Research purports that identity is central to psychological functioning, whereby successful reconciliation of

conflicting roles, are experienced as positive psychosocial well-being (Crockett & Petersen, 1993; Meeus, 1996; Swanson et al., 1998).

Part of the progress towards achieving a distinct identity involves the understanding and conceptualisation of the 'self' (Coleman & Hendry, 1999). Much has been written on the development of the self and a great deal of the research on identity development has focused less on identity in the Eriksonian sense and more on the development of self-conceptions (Coleman & Hendry, 1999; Steinberg & Sheffield-Morris, 2001). Within this research many factors have been identified that can impact on and influence this development.

Puberty is one area that has received considerable attention in recent years, particularly relating to the psychological effects and the impact it can have on self-concepts. Although not found to be uniformly negative, many of the effects appear to be different for boys and girls, with researchers suggesting that much of this is related to cultural beliefs and stereotypes perpetuated in the media (Coleman & Hendry, 1999; Petersen et al., 1996).

Many studies that have analysed pubertal timing effects have revealed that for early maturing boys a number of social advantages were apparent. Early maturing boys have a more positive body image and higher self-esteem, and as a result, are more likely to be popular with peers and adults and do well at school (Simon & Blyth, 1987). Some have suggested however, that these results confound puberty status and age and that later developing boys have improved psychological adjustments as a result of increased maturity with age (Petersen & Crockett, 1985). In addition, others have found that early biological maturity may be an important determinant in adolescent delinquency (Moffitt, 1993). For girls the effects appear more complex due to the impact of the media, promoting images of beauty, thinness and success, that for most girls are unattainable (Coleman & Hendry, 1999). The majority of research has

shown that for early maturing girls in western culture, they are less popular with peers, have lower self-esteems and have a greater chance of developing eating disorders (Alasker, 1992; Brooks-Gunn, Attie, Burrows, Rosso, & Warren, 1989). The impact of the secular trend due to changing macrosystems suggests a strong impact of adolescents' self-concepts, self-esteem and ultimate identity formation.

Another factor that impacts on development of self and ultimately identity, is the increase in cognitive functioning during adolescence. The effects of cognitive changes have been found to equate with more complex conceptions of the self, greater capacity for self-reflections, and the ability to describe oneself more abstractly (Coleman & Hendry, 1999; Millstein et al., 1993). These changes in self-concept have been found to be essential in the development of the identity. Researchers have suggested that self-understanding should be fostered through social cognitive interventions, where adolescents learn to express personal points of view within a safe environment (Harter, 1990, cited in Millstein et al., 1993). Further, the literature suggests that adolescents also need the opportunity to feel competent and successful in order to facilitate feelings of self-worth, and increase self-esteem (Scales, 1990).

The development of cognitive abilities can also be stimulated by social change as well as age that can further impact on identity. Participation in schooling has been found to dramatically impact on adolescent identity and social role development. In a study on the Inuit Adolescence in the Central Canadian Arctic, Condon (1990) identified a number of positive and negative factors resulting from the social change. On the positive side, he identified increased opportunities for cognitive achievement and different employment opportunities from traditional roles. In contrast however, he reported that formal schooling has resulted in a reduction of adolescent and adult interactions during the transition to adulthood and subsequent identity and role confusion (Condon, 1990). The author further suggests a strong link between identity

and role confusion with much anti-social behaviour within this community (Condon, 1990).

It has now been well accepted within the literature that developmental processes such as puberty, cognitive development and particularly identity formation must also be viewed in relation to important social contexts rather than just individual content (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Personal identity and the self develops not in isolation but rather within the context of social relationships, and that psychological well-being is to some extent dependent on the recognition from others as well as significant institutions (Swanson et al., 1998). The following section of this paper will extend the focus to address adolescent development, not only within the context of a changing macrosystem, but also within the individual's unique microsystems. These microsystems include family, school and peer groups, which are embedded within the local community and the broader society. These contexts in which adolescents develop, therefore have important implications for psychological functioning and well-being.

Adolescents' and Their Social Support Networks

The advances in technology and the impact of many social changes over the past century have afforded many young people with better health and nutrition, greater material benefits, and an increase in opportunities (Hamburg, 1997). On the down side, these changes have also brought with them a number of stresses and risks into the experience of adolescence. Research has indicated that the life stresses accompanying social change appear to increase during adolescence, possibly as a result of developmental changes also occurring (Brooks-Gunn et al., 1989). For example increased rates of depression (Roberts, 1999), suicide (Vannatta, 1996), eating disorders (Brooks-Gunn et al., 1989), substance use (Carvajal, Clair, Nash, & Evans, 1998) and delinquent behaviours (Moffitt, 1993) have all been reported to increase

during this period of life. In addition, others have reported more contextual responses at the micro level as a result of social change, are also impacting on adolescent development, such as the effect on the family (e.g., high divorce rates, full-time outside work by both parents, and increase in single parent families) (Hamburg, 1997; Noack, Hofer, Kracke, & Klein-Allerman, 1994; Trommsdorff, 1994). Researchers have further proposed that these micro level problems have been exacerbated as a result of changing societies such as the erosion of the more traditional community support networks (Hamburg, 1997).

Yet despite this, many adolescents manage to navigate through this transition period without too many problems (Steinberg & Sheffield-Morris, 2001), which may be the result of positive and stable support networks. However, little research has been conducted on adolescent support networks that haven't focused on negative indices. Hundreds of studies on adults however, suggest that positive social supports, and integration into these support networks, enhance both physical and psychological well-being and promote the social health of the individual (Cauce, Mason, Gonzales, Hiraga, & Liu, 1996; Jones, 1990; Meehan et al., 1993). Social health has been defined within the literature as "adequate functioning within ones various social roles" (Perry, Kelder, & Komro, 1993, p. 73), with the suggestion that the development of effective healthy social roles is ultimately the goal of socialisation.

Adult-Adolescent Relationships

Many contextual studies conducted on adolescent development, highlight family relationships as one of the most widely addressed. The research on adolescent relationships within the family has tended to focus mainly on the parent-adolescent relationship. Much of the early research addressed the conflict during this time, suggesting an inevitable stormy process, resulting in detachment from parents (Petersen, 1988; Steinberg & Sheffield-Morris, 2001). More current studies however,

have emerged with largely contrasting views suggesting that many adolescents value their relationships with parents (Blyth, Hill, & Thiel, 1982) and continue to have feelings of closeness and respect (Montemayor, 1982) even during the strive for autonomy and individuation.

Issues relating to adolescent development and parental relationships have gained popularity in recent years, particularly that of parenting styles. Much of the current work within this area derives from the seminal work of Baumrind (1978). Baumrind (1978) proposed that children and adolescents with authoritative parents were more competent, had higher levels of psychosocial maturity and were less likely to engage in substance abuse, than their peers with parents who were authoritarian, permissive or indifferent (Baumrind, 1991). Authoritative parents have been described as combining fairness between control and caring, whilst encouraging discussion and providing an environment where young people can take on a number of mature responsibilities (Csikszentmihalyi & Schmidt, 1998; Kail & Cavanaugh, 1996). The majority of the studies conducted in this area have largely supported Baumrind's (1978) work, even whilst utilising different methodologies, measures and samples, researchers have found increased psychological and social advantages for adolescents of authoritative parents (Steinberg & Sheffield-Morris, 2001). The literature therefore suggests that the quality of the relationship between parents and adolescents is a strong determinant of positive psychosocial development and well-being. It has further been suggested that even authoritative parents need to provide sufficient quantity of time to maintain communication and intimacy within the relationship (Perry et al., 1993).

The current ecology of adolescents in western society however, is such that young people spend a great deal more of their time apart from their parents either alone or with age-segregated peers. Although developmentally this may be construed as part of the transition from childhood dependency to adulthood autonomy, changes in family

structures have worked to separate parents and other significant adults and adolescents for extended periods of time (Crockett & Petersen, 1993).

Family changes such as higher divorce rates (Rogers & Ryan, 1998), single parent families (Stipek & McCroskey, 1989) and full time work of both parents outside the home (Hoffman, 1989) have worked to separate and reduce the quantity of time young people spend with parents and significant adults. Subsequently these changes in family structure and economic and employment conditions have resulted in an increase in time that adolescents spend not only unsupervised by adults, but also alone or with peers (Perry et al., 1993). Research has suggested, that as a result, adolescents are provided with more opportunity to engage in behaviours that may not be socially acceptable by adults (e.g., use of alcohol, sexual intercourse, drug use and delinquency) (Csikszentmihalyi & Schmidt, 1998; Moffitt, 1993; Perry et al., 1993). Further these behaviours, which adolescents generally link to adulthood and maturity, work to provide the adolescents with a premature feeling of independence, which may also act to further disenfranchise young people from family supports. Alternatively, increased time spent in supportive environments with parents and other significant adults would work to produce more health benefits and increase positive socialisation.

Unfortunately within western society, the school system is currently considered the place where much of the socialisation of adolescents occurs. Historically, industrialisation and the introduction of schooling have worked to remove young people from parental care for the better part of the day, for a minimum of 10 years (Bronfenbrenner, 1972b; White, 1990). Consequently schools are expected to not only maintain the role of social and cultural reproduction, but also to structure most of the social development of children and adolescents (Perry et al., 1993; Segall et al., 1999). As a result, teachers are often the only other adults that many young people have sustained contact with. The literature further suggests that the majority of these

relationships between teachers and young people are not always satisfactory (Csikszentmihalyi & Schmidt, 1998). Rarely do students interact with teachers on a one to one basis and the relationships are generally considered obligatory and often constraining. Some have even suggested that the classroom and the school system in general, is less an adult-centred context but rather an integral part of the peer culture (Csikszentmihalyi & Schmidt, 1998).

As a response to the reported segregation from adults within the school context, recent studies have focused on understanding the school environment as a place where adolescents can develop social abilities and caring relationships that work to facilitate psychological well-being (Scales, 1996). In a study by Goodenow (1993), the author reports that students who feel socially isolated, especially from school adults, are likely to drop out of school due to a lack of acceptance, respect and membership. She further suggests that the feelings of membership are more than merely enrolments in the school but refer to the established social bonds between the individual and others, including adults within the school. And that this membership is achieved and maintained through "reciprocal social relations between the student" and others within the school (Goodenow, 1993, p. 81). Others such as Scales (2000) have reported that developing assets that work to protect youth from at risk behaviours and for promoting adolescent health and well-being are extremely important. Within his list of developmental assets Scales (2000) highlights the need for adolescents to have several adults other than parents who care about them, in which they can foster positive social relationships. Bowan and Chapman (1996) support this premise with the findings from their study similarly suggesting that supportive teachers and other adults play a very important part in promoting and maintaining the psychological well-being of those adolescents who may be considered at risk.

drinking, sex and drugs) may largely be an acceptance of adult values and norms and a strong need to engage in this behaviour, as opposed to delinquency (Coleman & Hendry, 1999; Moffitt, 1993). Others such as Newcomb (1996) have proposed that in order for adolescents to forge a solid identity, there must be available options and potential ways of being for teenagers to explore. And that what could be considered as normal development has been studied ad nauseum as problems or worse pathology. Newcomb (1996) goes on to suggest "optimal development cannot be sanitised social conformity" (p. 484), rather, adolescents to some extent, must break the rules in order to achieve their true identity. However, in our society, the idea of rule breaking or essential experimentation strikes fear in most adults, as they see this form of behavioural expression as threatening to the social order.

One possible explanation for the feelings of fear may be due to the media images of adolescents that have helped to exacerbate the perceptions of youth crime and the negative stereotypes of young people in general. White (1990) identified that the majority of our contemporary media stereotypes of young people can be confined to four main categories. 1) The 'ideal' young person (e.g., brilliant musicians, award winning students); 2) young people as a 'threat' (e.g., juvenile delinquents, budding criminals); 3) young people as 'victims' (e.g., youth suicide, homelessness); and 4) young people as 'parasites' (e.g., dole bludgers, time wasters) (White, 1990). White (1990) states that the later three categories are where the majority of attention is paid as these factors challenge and threaten the social and moral fabric of society, resulting in a need for policy changes and interventions.

With much of the public, government and research attention focusing on many of the negative aspects surrounding adolescent development and peer groups, little attention is being paid to the positive effects. Within the developmental and social psychology literature, many authors have strongly noted the absence of studies relating

to positive effects of peer support (e.g., Perry et al., 1993; Steinberg & Sheffield-Morris, 2001; Tate, 2001). The few that have been conducted have produced a number of findings consistent with those of adult support networks. For example, Brown, Clasen, and Eicher (1986) identified that peer influences are for the most part positive in high school students, where encouragement to engage in prosocial behaviours outweighs that for anti-social activities. Others have proposed that peer groups offer young people the opportunity of equal participation and feelings of empowerment which are not provided within the family or school context (Hurrelmann, 1996). Some have also argued that the uniqueness of peer relations provide adolescents with an environment that is marked by mutual reciprocity and cooperation, and where individuals can experiment with minimal risk to self-concepts (Laible, 2000).

Consequently, peer groups may be viewed as important mediating structures whereby adolescents can experience feelings of self-determination, empowerment, increased self-esteem and the facilitation of identity. Identity within the group context however, is not merely confined to the individual or personal identity that reflects the individual's self-knowledge, but it also extends to include the group or social identity.

Social Identity, Shared Narratives, and Sense of Community

Social identity has been defined within the literature by a number of authors (e.g., Mankowski & Rappaport, 1995; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). The social identity theory proposed by Tajfel and Turner (1986), hypothesised that as a means of enhancing self-esteem and a sense of belonging, individuals look to socially integrate with others like themselves (Coover & Murphy, 2000; Reber, 1995). Experiences within the group facilitate the development of a social identity, which in return categorises the individual as a group member (Coover & Murphy, 2000; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). By this, the authors are suggesting that individuals are not just in the groups, but also the groups and the social identities that are facilitated, are inside the

individual (Hopkins, 1994). The two processes act concurrently to form elements of the individual's self-concept and provide the individual with opportunities for development through new social roles.

In addition to social identity theory, Mankowski and Rappaport (1995) defined identity as the "self knowledge about the past, present and future and the relations among these types of knowledge" (p. 215). They proposed the conceptualisation of identity at a number of levels, specifically describing the individual as a personal identity, and the group or social identity being expressed as a sense of community (Mankowski & Rappaport, 1995; Sarason, 1974). Social identity, according to Mankowski and Rappaport (1995) is described as the knowledge that a group has about itself, which is "created, enacted and maintained" (p. 215) through shared narratives, facilitating a sense of community. The shared narratives express the self-concepts of the members, highlighting common themes about where people live, where they come from, who they feel they are, or who they strive to be (Rappaport, 2000). The narratives also have a powerful influence on the group members' behaviours, and vice versa (Mankowski & Rappaport, 1995). Shared narratives are therefore an important aspect of social identity that are necessary for facilitating a sense of community amongst group members.

Psychological Sense of Community

Originally introduced by Sarason (1974), psychological sense of community (SOC) reflects "the sense that one belongs in and is meaningfully part of a larger collectivity...the sense that there is a network of and a structure to the relationships..." (p. 41). Within this definition, Sarason (1974) is essentially arguing that people who are integrated into social networks and systems, have the opportunity to experience belonging, find meaningful relationships and social roles and ultimately have reduced feelings of alienation and loneliness (Sarason, 1974; Sonn, Bishop, & Drew, 1999).

Studies have supported that SOC reduces feelings of loneliness and alienation, also finding that SOC promotes well-being and facilitates a strong sense of identity (e.g., Brodsky & Marx, 2001; Mankowski & Rappaport, 1995; Pretty, Andrews, & Collett, 1994).

Ironically, SOC was originally presented and ultimately researched in response to Sarason (1974) identifying a large problem with a sense of isolation within modern society, postulating an erosion of SOC (Hill, 1996). Glynn (1981) in a review of the literature identified a number of possible explanations for the erosion of SOC. He identified them as the effects of industrialisation and social change on the decline of rural communities, thereby impacting on mobility, employment and family networks; and the development of centralised governments holding the majority of power, thereby reducing individuals' own sense of power to be affective (Glynn, 1981; Nasar & Julian, 1995; Sonn et al., 1999). In addition Sonn et al. (1999) assert, that outcomes of many cultural, social and or community changes can result in a feeling of rejection, oppression or social exclusion, and this can strongly impact on SOC and ultimately psychological well-being (Sonn & Fisher, 1996).

Psychological Sense of Community Framework

Many of the studies conducted within the community literature regarding SOC have used the psychological sense of community framework developed by McMillan and Chavis (1986). The framework was developed to facilitate investigations and understanding of sense of community among territorial and relational communities (Sonn et al., 1999). Within their framework, McMillan and Chavis (1986) defined SOC as "a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together" (p. 9). Conceptually SOC attempts to

encapsulate an individual's sense of identity and belongingness with a group, through his/her interaction with others in that group (Brodsky, O'Campo, & Aronson, 1999).

McMillan and Chavis' (1986) definition of SOC contained the following elements: membership, influence, integration and fulfilment of needs and a shared emotional connection. The first element membership is made up of five sub-elements, boundaries, emotional safety, sense of belonging and identification, personal investment and common symbol systems (McMillan & Chavis, 1986), and has been identified as a significant aspect of SOC by determining who is in the group and who is not (Brodsky & Marx, 2001). As Tajfel and Turner (1986) identified in the social identity theory, group membership is a significant contributor to an individual's self-concept and feelings of self-worth, that ultimately equate with being powerful determinants of an individual's behaviours and development (Hopkins, 1994). Although the SOC theory has been widely used in the study of individuals and their communities, some such as Wiesenfeld (1996) have criticised its "implicit notion of the community as a 'we' ...debating the homogenous quality a community" (p. 337). Wiesenfeld (1996) strongly argued that this idealised version of community, detracts from the within group diversity, and leads to the pursuit of homogeneity, thereby perpetuating the status quo as opposed to stimulating change.

Although McMillan and Chavis (1986) defined SOC to apply to both territorial and relational settings, a great deal of the early work has focused predominately on territorial communities including neighbourhoods (Brodsky et al., 1999), towns (Robinson & Wilkinson, 1995), and apartment blocks (Nasar & Julian, 1995). More recently however, researchers like Hill (1987) have strongly suggested the need for research to extend to a "variety of contexts" (p. 433). As a result of such suggestions, and in light of changing societies and increased mobility, the study of territorial

communities has all but ceased and the focus has turned to relational communities (e.g., Battistich, 1997; Pretty, 1990; Royal & Rossi, 1996; Sonn & Fisher, 1996).

A study by Sonn and Fisher (1996) looked at how SOC operated for a group of coloured South Africans in response to enforced categorisation. In this qualitative study the authors interviewed 23 coloured South Africans currently living in Australia, to investigate the basis of a community that was politically constructed (Sonn & Fisher, 1996). The findings from the study suggested that community as an experience was operating on two distinct levels. One level indicated the enforced categorisation of the apartheid regime, with the other level proposing a response to the oppression through adaptation (Sonn & Fisher, 1996). In light of the findings, the authors reported that the coloured community could be explained as a relational community that provided members with opportunities to experience acceptance, belonging, and well-being through social support networks facilitated by shared experiences of oppression and social alienation.

Many other studies that have been conducted using the SOC framework have identified that the integration into supportive networks is a way of facilitating well-being and providing members with a social identity and a functional social role (e.g., Brodsky & Marx, 2001; Chavis & Wandersman, 1990). However much of this research has been conducted on adults. Hill (1996) and others have suggested that there is a further need for information on SOC regarding other groups, such as adolescents. However questions of whether the SOC framework was applicable and transferable to young people have been proposed. As a response to suggested inadequacies, Chipuer et al. (1999) developed the Neighbourhood Youth Inventory, to quantitatively assess young people's perceptions of their neighbourhood.

Recently however, studies have been conducted addressing adolescents' sense of community utilising the SOC framework. Of these, some have looked at

adolescents' SOC in a territorial context (e.g., Cunningham, 1999; Pretty, Conroy, Dugay, Fowler, & Diane, 1996), however, there have been a small number of studies conducted looking particularly at adolescents and relational communities. Pretty et al. (1994) conducted a quantitative study exploring adolescents' SOC and its relationship to loneliness within the school setting as well as the neighbourhood. One hundred and sixty seven high school students completed two versions of the Sense of Community Index (SCI) (school version and neighbourhood version). Participants also completed inventories measuring social support (The Inventory of Socially Supportive Behaviours), and loneliness (The Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale). The four measures were used to assess the experiences of the larger community contexts as well as individual social supports. Firstly, the findings highlighted the benefits of using different measures to assess adolescents' experiences and perceptions, suggesting that SOC provided more in-depth information about the unique social settings, as opposed to just experiences with individuals. The authors further reported that in respect to loneliness, issues at the larger context were more significant, suggesting environments that facilitate SOC are more conducive to integration into supportive social networks. In addition length of residence in the neighbourhood was positively related to SOC but not attendance at school. Finally Pretty et al. (1994) concluded that SOC is applicable both to adolescents as well as the school environment.

Pretty et al.'s (1994) study provides empirical evidence to support a difference between social support networks at the individual and extra-individual levels. Others such as Felton and Shinn (1992) have also argued a conceptual difference suggesting that because social integration into social systems has been only rarely examined, social support is still strongly considered to be an individual level construct. However, the literature regarding SOC suggests that the integration into social support networks and the feelings that this involvement facilitates (such as togetherness and

connectedness) go beyond the individual-level (Sarason, 1974; Sonn et al., 1999). Heller (1989) proposes, and is supported within the literature (e.g., Brodsky & Marx, 2001; Sonn & Fisher, 1996), that mediating structures, such as voluntary organizations or peer groupings may be understood as relational communities. Relational communities, not bound by locations, provide members with "a vehicle for satisfaction of personal needs through group attachments" (Heller, 1989, p. 6). These attachments facilitate group membership, which provides belonging, emotional and social support, social roles and social identities (Cauce, 1986; Felton & Shinn, 1992; Heller, 1989; McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Sonn et al., 1999). Additionally these social supports may serve as a buffer from negative stress, thereby influencing quality of life and individual and group well-being (Cauce, 1986; Sonn et al., 1999).

Additional studies have also been conducted with adolescents, for example, Pretty et al. (1996) conducted interviews with 234 participants in informal settings with the aim of extending on their previous study in 1994. The quantitative study results indicated that SOC was higher with age and was also significantly related to reports of subjective well-being. As with the previous study, length of residence was related to neighbourhood SOC, but length of school attendance was not. Finally, Goodenow (1993) looked at young adolescents also within the school environment to measure psychological sense of school membership (belongingness). Using a quantitative scale (Psychological Sense of School Membership Scale, PSSM), the author identified that grade level and ethnicity were not positively related to PSSM. Goodenow's (1993) results also indicated that psychological membership may be an important factor in students effort, motivation, participation and achievement. The findings from the above quantitative studies on adolescents and SOC (and PSSM) indicate that SOC has potentially the same relevance for the well-being and ultimately the quality of life of adolescents, as it does for adults (Pretty et al., 1996). Further

evidence within different settings and utilising different methodologies however, would provide additional support that SOC impacts on the larger social networks that affect adolescents well-being, similarly to that of adults.

Conclusions and Future Research

The main focus of this review paper has been on adolescent development and the impact of social change. The knowledge presented suggests that research into adolescent development has significantly expanded the understanding of the biological, psychological and social aspects of development during adolescence within the last 40 years (Steinberg & Sheffield-Morris, 2001). The review examined literature from a number of significant areas that are relevant not only to adolescents' individual development, but also their social development. The significant areas addressed include: puberty, cognitive development, identity formation, adult-adolescent relationships, peer groups and psychological sense of community theory. These areas have been identified as being particularly salient during adolescence. Further, the impact of changing ecological systems was identified as having a strong impact particularly in relation to adolescents' social support networks and social integration.

Evidence from the literature suggests that during this time of transition from childhood dependency to adulthood autonomy, and as a result of social and cultural changes, adolescents are experiencing alienation and separation from many of societies' supports and institutions. These supports were found to include the family, particularly parents and significant adults; teachers and school, the media and the broader community. This lack of social integration seems to indicate a lack of social roles for adolescents and subsequently having a strain on identity formation.

Peer groups were identified as having a strong impact on adolescent development and the research indicated that competence in relating to peers was considered developmentally important. Unfortunately, much of the research on peer

groups has addressed negative indices and few studies have been undertaken in regard to the positive effects of peers. Further, as a result of compulsory schooling and age segregation, many young people spend the majority of their time in peer groups. It may therefore be reasonable to propose that as a response to perceptions of alienation and separation within the community, adolescents are finding the social support they need to develop within their age segregated peer groups. The psychological sense of community literature seems to strongly suggest that peer groups can be viewed as relational communities (Heller, 1989), that provide young people with a means of facilitating social integration, emotional support, social role and identity development and ultimately psychological well-being (Cauce, 1986; Sonn et al., 1999).

As Hill (1996) and others (e.g., Pretty et al., 1996) have suggested however, only a few studies have been conducted regarding adolescents' psychological sense of community. Those studies that have been conducted (e.g., Cunningham, 1999; Goodenow, 1993; Pretty et al., 1994; Pretty et al., 1996) have mainly focused on the school as a relational community or territorial communities such as the neighbourhood or block. In addition to this, the majority of the studies have been conducted in America and have utilised a quantitative methodology.

A small number of qualitative studies have been conducted and were found to provide a very rich source of data in regards to SOC (e.g., Brodsky & Marx, 2001). The study by Sonn and Fisher (1996) included in this review, illustrated how the use of qualitative methodology can produce insightful interpretations of the perceptions and experiences as they are lived by the individuals. In addition to these findings, Hill (1996) strongly proposed that the "diversity which underlies the very nature of SOC would suggest that much could be gained by using diverse methods to study it, including qualitative approaches" (p. 435).

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Running Head: ADOLESCENTS' RESPONSE TO EXCLUSION

Psychological Sense of Community:

Adolescents' Response to Exclusion

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Abstract

Early developmental research argued that adolescence was an inevitable period of storm and stress. More recent evidence challenges this theory, suggesting that most adolescents navigate the transition period with few psychosocial problems, and suggest integration into positive support networks may be responsible. However, the literature further suggests that as a result of economic, political and social changes, adolescents now spend less time with significant adults and more time with age segregated peers. As a result adolescents may be considered socially separated and alienated from many of our social structures. The present study investigated adolescents' perceptions and experiences of exclusion and the implications it may have for identity and social role development. Ten adolescents', three males and seven females, were interviewed about themselves, and their experiences within, and their perceptions of their social support networks and communities. A semi-structured interview schedule was developed to assess the participants' social support networks and psychological sense of community (SOC). The data was analysed thematically, using a question-ordered matrix to identify recurring themes. The psychological sense of community model was used to facilitate and organise the themes. The findings indicated that as a response to feelings and perceptions of social separation and exclusion from the majority of others within the community, adolescents find the social support they require to satisfy their emotional and social needs, within their peer groups. These groups have been identified as relational communities. Further analysis identified clear feelings of inbetweenness that were facilitated by an absence of social roles, disempowerment, and conflict with the dominant 'teenage' narrative. This study provided further support for the use of the SOC framework, and its application with adolescents. It is suggested that the SOC framework is a useful tool for investigating and understanding social support networks of adolescents'. However, it did not capture all the pertinent issues that are particularly relevant to this group of people. In addition this study also demonstrated the benefit of using a qualitative methodology in regards to adolescents. Future directions for research are also discussed.

Abstract

Early developmental research argued that adolescence was an inevitable period of storm and stress. More recent evidence challenges this theory, suggesting that most adolescents navigate the transition period with few psychosocial problems, and suggest integration into positive support networks may be responsible. However, the literature further suggests that as a result of economic, political and social changes, adolescents now spend less time with significant adults and more time with age segregated peers. As a result adolescents may be considered socially separated and alienated from many of our social structures. The present study investigated adolescents' perceptions and experiences of exclusion and the implications it may have for identity and social role development. Ten adolescents', three males and seven females, were interviewed about themselves, and their experiences within, and their perceptions of their social support networks and communities. A semi-structured interview schedule was developed to assess the participants' social support networks and psychological sense of community (SOC). The data was analysed thematically, using a question-ordered matrix to identify recurring themes. The psychological sense of community model was used to facilitate and organise the themes. The findings indicated that as a response to feelings and perceptions of social separation and exclusion from the majority of others within the community, adolescents find the social support they require to satisfy their emotional and social needs, within their peer groups. These groups have been identified as relational communities. Further analysis identified clear feelings of inbetweenness that were facilitated by an absence of social roles, disempowerment, and conflict with the dominant 'teenage' narrative. This study provided further support for the use of the SOC framework, and its application with adolescents. It is suggested that the SOC framework is a useful tool for investigating and understanding social support networks of adolescents'. However, it did not capture all the pertinent issues that are particularly relevant to this group of people. In addition this study also demonstrated the benefit of using a qualitative methodology in regards to adolescents. Future directions for research are also discussed.

Psychological Sense of Community: Adolescents' Response to Exclusion

Industrialisation, advances in technology, and subsequent economic and political changes, have resulted in a number of social changes in western society over the past century (Blakers, 1990; Hurrelmann, 1996). The impact from many of these social changes have afforded many adolescents' with better health and nutrition, greater material benefits and an increase in a number of opportunities (Hamburg, 1997).

However, these changes have also brought with them a number of stresses and risks into the experience of adolescence. Research on adolescence in the last century has indicated that life stresses appear to increase during this phase of the life span (Brooks-Gunn et al., 1989). The early literature strongly suggested that stress in adolescence is inevitable and is primarily a result of individual and hormonal changes, often resulting in negative social and psychological outcomes (Arnett, 1999; Dornbusch et al., 1991). Unfortunately, despite the accumulating evidence that the majority of adolescents do not experience psychological disturbance or overall turmoil during this period (e.g., Offer & Boxer, 1991), much of the current literature remains focused on studying problems during adolescence (Steinberg & Sheffield-Morris, 2001). For example recent research has continued to address issues such as increased rates of depression (Roberts, 1999), suicide (Vannatta, 1996), eating disorders (Brooks-Gunn et al., 1989), substance abuse (Carvajal et al., 1998) and delinquent behaviours (Moffitt, 1993), with the focus predominantly on the individual.

More recently, studies have addressed more contextual responses resulting from social change that are also impacting on adolescent development, such as changes in the family context (e.g., high divorce rates, full-time outside work by both parents, and increase in single parent families) (Hamburg, 1997; Noack, Hofer, Kracke, & Klein-Allerman, 1994; Trommsdorff, 1994). Others have further suggested that many

of these issues have been exacerbated by the erosion of the more traditional community support networks following changing social environments (Glynn, 1981; Hamburg, 1997; Sarason, 1974).

Still, in light of the recent contextual evidence, the majority of adolescents manage to navigate through this transition period with few social, emotional or behavioural problems (Steinberg & Sheffield-Morris, 2001), which may be the result of positive and stable support networks. Social support has been defined as the exchange of resources between people, with the intention of benefits to the recipients' well-being (Felton & Shinn, 1992). Emotional support has been highlighted as the component of social support most strongly linked to psychological well-being (Felton & Shinn, 1992). Unfortunately little research has been conducted on adolescent support networks, in particular peer relations. Of those studies that have been undertaken, the focus has generally been confined to exceptional or problematic groups (e.g., gangs), where the influence is often associated with negative implications (Clark, 1992; Tate, 2001).

Within the literature however, a number of studies have been conducted with adults and their social support networks (Brodsky & Marx, 2001; Robinson & Wilkinson, 1995; Sonn & Fisher, 1996). The research suggests, that positive social supports, and integration into these support networks, where the individual can experience belonging, positive relationships, and have meaningful roles, can enhance both physical and psychological well-being and promote the social health of the individual (Cauce, Mason, Gonzales, Hiraga, & Liu, 1996; Jones, 1990; Meehan, Durlak, & Bryant, 1993). In contrast, there is also evidence to suggest that a lack of integration and an absence of positive social supports can result in negative psychosocial outcomes (Leary, 1990). Recent studies have suggested, that failed integration into social networks may be due to alienation or exclusion (Leary, 1990;

Sonn & Fisher, 1996) as opposed to the earlier literature that indicated inadequate social skills and personality types (Felton & Shinn, 1992). Exclusion, the deliberate or perceived alienation of a person from a group (Lloyd & O'Regan, 1999; Stanley & Arora, 1998), has been found to result in low self-esteem, which has often equated with many social issues (e.g., unsafe sex, aggression, criminal behaviour and substance abuse) (Al-Talib & Griffin, 1994; Leary et al., 1995). These factors ultimately impact on an individuals' self-concept and psychological well-being. However, as mentioned, much of this literature has focused on understanding adults. Therefore questions regarding the impact of failed integration or exclusion in relation to adolescent health and well-being, remain largely unanswered.

Adolescents' Social Support Networks

The early research on adolescent development predominantly focused on internal factors such as biology, hormones and genetics to explain development (Jacobson & Rowe, 1999; Petersen & Taylor, 1980). More recently however, research has incorporated an ecological framework, enabling researchers to address a societies social and cultural issues, that can further impact on individual development and surrounding support networks (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Steinberg & Sheffield-Morris, 2001).

Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological systems theory provides a unique framework, that suggests adolescent development takes place not in a vacuum of internal factors, but rather in combination with the immediate social context of everyday life, such as family, school, and peers (Crockett & Silbereisen, 2000a). The relationships within these microsystems form the daily interactions between the adolescent and the social environment, which over time, shape the development of the individual within larger macrosystems, containing social and cultural beliefs (Crockett & Silbereisen, 2000a). Transformation to any aspect of the macrosystems, such as

economic, political, cultural or social changes, will ultimately result in changes in context for individuals within their own microsystems. As a result, individuals will be forced to alter how they respond to situations, groups and individuals. In addition they may also be forced to redefine aspects of themselves to adapt and aid integration into their changing social environments (Steinberg & Sheffield-Morris, 2001).

Studies on adolescent development within the family context have mainly focused on the parent-adolescent relationship. Much of the early research suggested conflict during this time, resulting in detachment from parents (Petersen, 1988; Steinberg & Sheffield-Morris, 2001). However current research, including studies on parenting styles (Baumrind, 1991), have identified evidence to the contrary. Some have reported that adolescents value these relationships and feel a closeness with parents (Blyth et al., 1982; Montemayor, 1982), and that as a result, adolescents are more competent, mature and less likely to engage in antisocial behaviour (Baumrind, 1991). However, Perry, Kelder, and Komro (1993) strongly suggest a need to provide sufficient quantity of time, in which to maintain communication and intimacy within these relationships.

Unfortunately as a result of economic and social changes within the family, such as higher divorce rates (Rogers & Ryan, 1998), single parent families (Stipek & McCroskey, 1989) and full time work of both parents outside the home (Hoffman, 1989) the quantity of time young people spend with parents and significant adults has been greatly reduced. Subsequently adolescents spend less time with supervised adults in socially acceptable roles and more time alone or with peers (Perry et al., 1993). Research suggests that as a result, adolescents may engage in behaviours not considered acceptable by adults (e.g., use of alcohol, sexual intercourse, drug use) in order to establish themselves socially (Csikszentmihalyi & Schmidt, 1998; Moffitt, 1993; Perry et al., 1993).

The majority of the research on peer influences has been conducted on negative affects of peer groups including: substance abuse (Chassin et al., 1990), gang membership (Clark, 1992) and violent behaviours (Bernberg, 1999).

One possible reason for this, is the perceptions that people hold of adolescents that are perpetuated by many of our social institutions, particularly the media (White, 1990). White (1990) suggested that young people are generally reported within the media under four main categories: the 'ideal young person, young people as a 'threat', young people as 'victims' and young people as 'parasites'. The later three are seen to challenge and threaten the fabric of society, resulting in a need for policy changes and interventions. Consequently, much of the attention and research has focused on the negativity of adolescents and peers. In contrast, the few studies that have been conducted on the positive effects of peer groups, have produced similar findings to those of positive adult support networks (Brown et al., 1986; Laible, 2000).

Therefore as a result of social changes impacting on the family, the increased time spent at school and negative perceptions within the general community, peer groups may be viewed as important "mediating structures" (Heller, 1989, p. 6) that serve to connect adolescents to the wider society. These mediating structures, referred to by Heller (1989) as relational communities may work to provide adolescents with the opportunity to satisfy many of their personal needs. As with adults, needs facilitated by social supports and group membership include, feelings of belonging, self-determination, empowerment, increased self-esteem and the facilitation of a social role and an individual and social identity (Cauce, 1986; Felton & Shinn, 1992; Sonn et al., 1999).

Social Identity, Shared Narratives, and Sense of Community

Within the literature, social identity has been defined by a number of authors (Mankowski & Rappaport, 1995; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). The premise behind social

relational communities (Sonn et al., 1999). Heller (1989) proposed, that mediating structures, such as informal peer groupings may be understood as relational communities. Relational communities, not bound by locations, fulfil supportive functions such as sense of belonging, emotional and social support, and safety. Further these communities help facilitate the development of social roles and social identities (Cauce, 1986; Felton & Shinn, 1992; Heller, 1989; McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Sonn & Fisher, 1996; Sonn et al., 1999)

The elements within the McMillan and Chavis' (1986) framework help to understand and describe the notion of SOC. The elements include membership, influence, integration and fulfilment of needs and a shared emotional connection. Utilising these elements McMillan and Chavis (1986) defined SOC as "a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together" (p. 9).

Many researchers examining psychological sense of community have identified that integration into supportive networks is a way of facilitating well-being and providing a social identity and functional social role (Brodsky & Marx, 2001; Chavis & Wandersman, 1990). However, to date much of this literature has been conducted with adults, and only a small number of studies have looked at the significance of SOC in relation to adolescents. Of those that have been conducted, some have examined adolescents' SOC in a territorial context such as the neighbourhood or block (e.g., Pretty, Conroy, Dugay, Fowler, & Diane, 1996), and the remaining studies have explored SOC within the school context (e.g., Goodenow, 1993; Pretty et al., 1994). The findings from these studies support the use of the SOC framework to examine adolescents' experiences and perceptions, however all have been conducted in North America and have utilised a quantitative approach. As suggested by Hill (1996), the

“diversity which underlies the very nature of SOC would suggest that much could be gained by using diverse methods to study it, including qualitative approaches” (p. 435).

In light of the literature, the present study aims to investigate and address the larger community contexts that incorporate the social networks that impact on adolescents' development and well-being. Specifically it aims to examine adolescents' perceptions and experiences of exclusion and the implications it may have for identity and social role development.

Method

This study examined adolescents' perceptions and experiences of exclusion and the implications for identity and social role development. The SOC framework proposed by McMillan and Chavis (1986) guided the study. In recent years researchers have highlighted how the diversity of the SOC framework, lends itself to diverse methods of study, including qualitative methods (Hill, 1996). It has further been suggested that since the study of the community as a territorial phenomenon has declined in recent years, SOC is being explored more vigorously in relational communities, adolescents' peer groups may be such communities (Brodsky & Marx, 2001).

Participants

Ten adolescents, three males and seven females participated in the study. Participants were between 15 and 17 years of age ($M=15.67$, $SD=.6672$). In a qualitative study, up to twelve participants are considered adequate to reach saturation, more participants may make the analysis too complex and produce only thin data (Creswell, 1988; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Valle, 1998).

Participants were recruited using a snowballing technique, which Fife-Shaw (1995) indicates is useful for “difficult to get to populations” (p. 111).

Participants were recruited through the researchers social networks. Criteria for participants, consisted of anyone between the ages of 15 and 17 years of age, either attending or not attending an education institution. Franklin and Franklin (1990) acknowledge that in western society, education and employment play a large part in determining a person's role and identity within the community. For this reason, participants were not recruited through a High School, which would have excluded participants who were currently not enrolled.

The majority of the sample was Australian born, with only one participant born in South Africa. Nine participants were currently attending a high school with 6 attending North of the River public High Schools and 3 attending North of the River private Schools or Colleges. Only three members of the sample were currently employed, two worked part-time as well as attending a public school. The one participant not at school had left two months prior to interviewing, mid way through fourth year (year 11) and was working part-time. All participants except one, were currently living with both parents and other family members (e.g., brothers, sisters and cousins). The other participant resided with their mother, and two sisters. At the time of interviewing, the participants had been living in their current suburbs between 3 and 16 years, with the average length of residence being 8.5 years.

Instruments

A semi-structured, open-ended interview schedule was used in this study (Appendix A). The schedule consisted of two similar versions, one for participants at school and the second, different only in the tense used, for participants who were not at school. The questions were developed using theoretical support from the SOC literature, with the aim of understanding adolescents' perceptions and experiences in relation to individual and community issues (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). The schedule consisted of 17 questions that were developed to investigate the research aims.

Examples of the questions include 'Share with me how you feel about being your age?' 'What are some of the things you like about going to school?', 'How would you describe the part you play or how you fit into your group (friends)?', and 'Do you feel you have any influence or input into what happens in your community, or decisions that are made?'.

Prior to conducting the interviews, the interview schedule was read through by a colleague and an adolescent known to the researcher to assess the questions for readability and face validity. Following this, a pilot study was conducted with two adolescent participants, who were not involved in the final study. One participant was currently attending high school in year 11 (age 15) and one was not currently at high school or working (age 16). The pilot study was conducted to ensure the clarity of the questions (Breakwell, 1995), and to aid the analysis through coding of the questions (Silverman, 1993). Following both interviews, some of the questions were altered and redefined (Smith, 1995). Changes included the rewording of some questions, making them more appropriate for the target audience; and the removal of some questions that were eliciting similar responses. Finally all interviews were tape-recorded to ensure the reliability of data collection.

Procedure

Information packages were handed to participants through the researchers social networks. Included in the package was a letter of introduction to participants, outlining the purpose of the study, with contact names and phone numbers for additional queries (Appendix B). Participants also received a consent form (Appendix C) and demographic form asking for information that included: age, gender, high school, employment details, nationality, suburb and length of current residence in suburb and family support network in the home (Appendix D). An information letter and permission form was also given to participants' guardians (Appendix E and F).

The packages further contained information addressing the issues of confidentiality and anonymity. Upon receiving the signed consent forms from both participant and guardian, participants were contacted to arrange an appropriate time and location for the interview. For the purpose of privacy and comfort, all interviews were conducted in the participants' family homes. Smith (1995) suggests that finding a place where the participant feels more comfortable and familiar can aid with the process of data collection due to a less threatening environment and where interruptions can be minimised. Prior to the interviews, participants were reminded their participation was voluntary and they could refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. Verbal consent to tape record the interviews was obtained from all participants prior to commencement.

The researcher began the interview by ensuring the appropriate interview schedule was chosen, depending on whether the participant completed the demographic form as being at school or not at school. The semi-structured, open-ended schedule was used to collect the data for analysis. Use of a semi-structured schedule allows the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' perceptions and experiences of the desired topic. At the same time, this format, allows a greater degree of flexibility for the participant to introduce novel areas that may not have been addressed by the researchers questions (Smith, 1995). Finally, this form of interviewing has the added advantage of producing richer data that enables the researcher to draw on the participants' own thoughts and beliefs when conducting the analysis.

The interview questions were formatted so that all topics began with a general question, funnelling down to more specific questions dealing with adolescents, exclusion and community issues (Smith, 1995). According to Smith (1995) this

enables the participant to generate his or her own views on the general topic before being funnelled into the desired area of interest of the researcher.

The interviews lasted between 30 and 80 minutes, with the average being approximately 55 minutes. Immediately following the interview, participants were given an opportunity to ask questions or readdress any areas deemed necessary. Finally, participants were debriefed and reminded of the crisis numbers should any form of stress appear following the interview. Participants' comments and relevant reflections by the researcher were noted in a research journal immediately following the interviews. The journal was used to support the analysis by helping to further define responses to the interview questions.

Data Analysis

Recordings of the interviews were firstly transcribed verbatim to aid in simplifying the data and to ensure accuracy of each participant's responses. Following transcription, the researcher conducted a thematic content analysis, utilising a question ordered matrix to aid in data reduction as outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994) and used by Sonn and Fisher (1996). The raw data, in the form of participant responses, quotations and keywords were recorded in the question ordered matrix. The matrix showed participants in the far left hand column with the remaining columns representing each question the participants were asked. The rows containing the cells of the matrix represented the collective responses of one participant, whilst the columns contained the cells that were representative of all participants' responses to a single question (for example see Appendix G).

Miles and Huberman (1994) suggested a number of advantages in using a matrix that include: the ability reduce the data and display it in a systematic and logical way and to help the reader of the final report trace the "intellectual journey" undertaken by the researcher (p. 239). The matrix was used by the researcher to

systematically view the responses and note any patterns or themes that emerged across the questions, as well as across participants. The researcher was also able to identify any contradictory themes or patterns that will aid in the discussion of the findings. During the analysis, memoing and note taking was conducted to facilitate the development of the themes as they emerged. As possible themes emerged they were placed with similar themes, this enabled the researcher to cluster groups of similar themes and generate master themes with relevant sub themes.

Next summary statements of themes were generated allowing the researcher to reformulate themes or add further clarity (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Significant statements and sentences were then used to illustrate the salience of the themes as well as the participants' experiences. The statements and sentences were determined by their importance in addressing the research aims, as well as highlighting the essence of the experiences and perceptions of the participants (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Following the inductive generation of themes, the thematic analysis was further considered and facilitated by the SOC framework (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

In order to address the possible issue of researcher bias with the generation of themes, triangulation of the data was conducted. A co-analysers was asked to read and independently interpret and verify the themes to corroborate the findings (Silverman, 1993). This was finalised after a discussion of the relevant literature and helped to ensure that themes honestly reflected the participants' experiences. Following this, member checking was conducted by taking the tentative findings back to a small number of participants for respondent validation to ensure authenticity of the researchers interpretations (Silverman, 1993). All levels of data analysis were clearly documented in the research journal.

Findings and Interpretations

The aim of this study was to examine adolescents' perceptions and experiences of social exclusion and their application to identity and social role development. The interview data was used to inductively explore the experiences of adolescent's, their social supports, and their communities. Consistent with the process of substantive theorising (Wicker, 1989), the conceptual domain of inclusion and exclusion was used to examine issues within the adolescents' communities. A number of themes were generated from the data. The SOC framework facilitated and organized many of the themes, and included the following elements: Membership, Influence, Integration and Fulfilment of Needs and Shared Emotional Connections. An additional theme, not addressed by the SOC framework was also identified. This theme, labelled the Phase of Inbetweeness, was found to be particularly relevant to adolescents' experiences of inclusion and exclusion. Three conceptually relevant sub-themes were identified and labelled: 1) Social Role Confusion, 2) Disempowerment, and 3) Identity Conflict. The sub themes related to issues that adolescents identified as promoting and maintaining feelings of separation within the community.

Membership

Membership is a feeling of belonging, and as a result of voluntary personal investment, the individual feels a 'right to belong' (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 9). McMillan and Chavis (1986) identified five main attributes that facilitate the notion of group membership – boundaries, common symbol systems, emotional safety, sense of belonging and identification and personal investment. From the data analysis the elements of the SOC model appear to be operating at two distinct levels for this group. The first level, identified as externally imposed criteria for group membership. The second level suggested positive feelings of community found with the participants peer groups.

Boundaries. Boundaries establish and decide who belongs in the group and who does not (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). The boundaries operating for this group are a strong determinant of their group membership. Social structures have acted to create a social distance, with the responses suggesting a feeling of us and them. At the community level, the boundaries are externally determined by the social constructions of the category of adolescents. These boundaries were found to include, age, lack of financial resources, and stereotypes associated with the label 'teenagers'. The data collected suggested that the majority of teenagers did not accept the negative stereotypes associated with the imposed category. For example, according to one participant:

...by elderly people we're probably seen as rebels...usually they probably think you take drugs and alcohol, but not everyone's like that...I guess they don't think we're as reliable.

Strong feelings of us [teenagers] and them [community] were evident in a number of other responses. When asked how they felt they were viewed by others at their age, participants commented: "...we're teenagers and we get up to no good", and "...they reckon all teenagers are like troublemakers". One participant made particular reference to negative stereotypes conveyed via the media suggesting that:

...its like you [teenagers] walk into shops...and they [shopkeepers] just walk around and stare at you they follow you around for shop lifting. I don't know it's just the way we're viewed on the news and stuff, its just bag snatching thieves.

The data analysis also reflected that many participants felt their financial situation, (i.e., not working and attending full-time schooling) had a strong impact on what they could and could not do. Financial control and money therefore further acted

to reinforce the boundaries around this group of individuals. One participant reported that:

...well I can't do as much as I would like to do...it restricts you a lot to do what you want to do...everything that's fun comes at a price, whether it's the movies or going out to dinner with friends, it all costs something, you cant even really stay home and watch videos, you have to pay for the videos.

Another participant said, "...it does affect what I do in my free time, obviously you need money for transport, food, things like that". In addition to this, some of the participants made mention of their financial dependence on their families and how not having ownership of their own money reduced their feelings of control and independence over their activities as one participant explains:

[financial situation affects them]...a lot, because when your working you own your own money, but when you don't have a job and you have your \$10 pocket money, it limits everything.

According to another participant:

...it can to a certain extent slow down what I want to do cause sometimes I wont have any money, I wont be able to go out or if there's a concert I wont be able to get a ticket unless I'm really nice to my parents.

Lack of financial resources due to enforced schooling, and an inability to actively control this aspect of their lives, may be facilitating feelings of disempowerment for these participants (Rappaport, 1981). Some participants reported feelings of being, "frustrated" and "annoyed", "busting to get out and get a job". Whereas others responded with "It doesn't bother me, I just work around it" and "It doesn't make me feel anything, I'll do it one day". One participant further adding that:

...with a job, some of the free times that you do have to go out you can't cause you have to work, so that's why I'm really iffy about getting a job, cause I like being able to go out and have fun.

Data also reflected feelings of restriction and suggest further enforced boundaries for adolescents due to age. Some participants mentioned not being able to do certain things that they wanted, due to age restrictions like, "clubbing" or "going to pubs" and "driving", whereas other mentioned lack of independence due to parental control. Most of the responses suggested that adolescents' group boundaries were constructed and enforced as a result of their age and the perceptions that other members of the community have about teenagers.

Common symbol systems. Common symbol systems can indicate membership to a group and can facilitate notions of separateness and belongingness and work to create unity amongst group members (McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Sonn & Fisher, 1996). Participants were not asked directly about specific symbols that typified teenager or their peer groups in particular, however some participants in discussing how others see them mentioned their style of dress and the way they look. One participant reported that:

...you're going to rebel and they [adults] think you're going to cause trouble...they'll see one person dressed in Adidas and bulky stuff and chains and earrings and they think that most teenagers are like that and so when any teenager comes in [shop] they probably think you're going to cause trouble.

Another participant when asked what they think others say about them responded, "...probably bad things cause like how we dress and stuff, if they're like in baggy stuff they think they're bad...they're up to no good". The participants referred to their dress and the way they look as a means by which others prejudge them. Analysis further reflected that adolescents discussed their dress as a part of the

Other participants described, “we all enjoy the same things like sports”, and “we all love volleyball”. Research into peer influences has shown it to be a powerful factor in adolescent development, however much of this research has been confined to “exceptional or problematic populations” (Tate, 2001, p. 215). Within these populations, studies have worked to be mainly reproductive of the status quo (Drew, Sonn, Bishop, & Contos, 2001) held of adolescents, that are generally associated with negative connotations (Hopkins, 1994; Tate, 2001). The influences seen in the responses of the participants in this study would suggest that selecting group membership on the basis of positive common symbol systems not only works to provide a common bond that facilitates togetherness and emotional security, it further acts to promote positive adolescent development.

Emotional safety. Emotional safety can be considered as the notion that members feel both physically and subjectively safe within their own group. Establishing the boundaries that exclude others works to provide the emotional safety that fosters group intimacy (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). The interview data indicated that group membership provides feelings of both emotional and physical safety for this group of individuals. Responses indicated that participants felt a sense of security and acceptance within the social support of the peer group which worked to create intimacy as suggested by one participant, “I’m happy they chose me because if people didn’t accept you, you would feel sad and you’d kind of give up...” and from another participant, “you’re always able to share your experiences with each other...”.

The feelings of security stems mostly from shared understanding that they had people who treated them well and that they could depend on and share their experiences with. These relationships with peers may result as a response to the boundaries that are externally imposed by society. Further knowing that they had people they could confide in if they needed them and know there was a sense of trust

suggest similar feelings of security and protection as a result of peer group membership.

The data from a number of participants also mentioned that, similar to findings from other studies on youth gangs (e.g., Dukes, Martinez, & Stein, 1997), the issue of safety was further facilitated by fear of the adolescents by other members of the community. One participant when asked about reasons behind conflicts with adults responded, "People get intimidated if they see more than two teenagers walking together at one time", the same participant when asked how others see them when they're alone responded, "its totally different...they're not so scared of you because you're not in a big group". Another participant responded similarly with, "I don't think it's the same...because they're not going to be intimidated by just one person".

When asked how this perception of teenagers makes them feel, not one of the participants showed support, rather they responded with feelings of "angry", and "annoyed". From the participants responses these negative perceptions indicated a gap between adolescents and the rest of the community that have evidently resulted in feelings of alienation and lack of acceptance. The challenge to this stereotype was evident in a few responses to the question what they wanted the community to know about them. This was demonstrated in the following response, "...just that...I'm not a threat, I know when you all see me out with friends in the street like I'm some rebel, but I'm not a threat, cause I'm not". She further added that:

[important] because its more acceptance I guess, its more social acceptance because when you're a rebel and stuff its like you're being excluded you know, its like 'keep away from them they're dangerous', but when they know that you're harmless like you're not a threat, its just more acceptance.

Sense of belonging and identification. Essentially a positive phenomenon, sense of belonging and identification relates to feelings, beliefs and expectations of

fitting in and being accepted within the group (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Responses that reflected a sense of belonging within the participants peer groups centred mainly on feelings of acceptance and being wanted by other members, as well as having others that you can relate to. One participant said that belonging to a group meant, “being able to just relate to them and having an understanding, like mutual feelings towards things”, and from another participant, “you know they care about you...and you can rely on them”. Feelings of a safe environment and familiarity with other members of the group were seen to foster feelings of belonging and integration as seen in this participant's response:

...you've always got someone there for you, to laugh with, cry with, hug, that is quite important for me being part of a group, its really good to be with a group and to be able to do that.

However, one participant made mention that sometimes she didn't feel that she belonged with her peers as commented, “sometimes I don't feel like I belong when no one talks to me...and you think they don't like you”. Highlighting that communication and perceived feelings of being liked and wanted strongly impact on an individuals feeling of belonging.

In addition, it was also evident that there were clear feelings of togetherness and a strong sense of relatedness that has possibly been generated by enforced age segregation particularly in the school system. All the participants said their peer groups were met through attendance at the same school and all reported that “seeing their friends” and “socialising” were the main factors that they liked about attending school.

Researchers have acknowledged the importance of adolescence social supports on adolescent development, including peer relations (Erikson, 1968; Piaget, 1972). However, many such as Tate (2001) report that studies into peer relations have focused mainly on the negative indices and provide incomplete accounts of the role of peer

supports. Recent studies, such as Pretty et al. (1994) and Pretty et al. (1996) have demonstrated that feelings of membership, belonging and emotional connections contribute to positive adolescent development as well as alleviating the negative consequences of loneliness that can impact on adolescents well-being (e.g., delinquent behaviours and hopelessness).

In contrast the data analysis revealed very different feelings and experiences of belonging for the participants within the larger community. When asked about belonging to their 'community' [as defined by them], a number of participants referred less to feelings and beliefs of acceptance and being wanted, but rather to their physical presence within the community. For example one participant commented, "yeah, cause I still live here", and from another participant, "I guess I do but when I'm older I might not live here", and from another participant, "like everyone else I guess I'm just there". The participants' responses demonstrate a lack of emotional identification within their geographical community, with their feelings of belonging related only to their physical presence within the community. Within the literature belonging has been identified as an important part of life (Goodenow, 1993) and a fundamental human motivation (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). In relation to adolescence, the need for belonging, social support and acceptance has been found to be particularly prominent due to its links with identity formation, in particularly the development of a social identity (Goodenow, 1993).

Sense of belonging and identification with peers is shown to be a very important and positive phenomenon for this group of adolescents. The need to belong and have valued membership has been found in many studies (e.g., Brodsky & Marx, 2001; Goodenow, 1993; Pretty et al., 1996; Sonn & Fisher, 1996) to be extremely important and suggested as taking precedence over many other social concerns. The peer groups in this study could be seen as mediating structures (Heller, 1989) during

...yeah we all do to some extent...but it depends, the more outgoing people they usually have to have their own way.

Dominance within the group, and a lack of power to influence group decisions was further seen at the community level. All participants responded to questions of their influence at the community level with comments such as, "no I don't think so", or "I don't really have any say", and "no because of who I am. When asked why they felt this way, all commented on their "age" or their social position within the community such as "you have to be a professional or have money", as factors that they felt excluded them from having an active influence within the community. Further a number of participants mentioned either a lack of opportunity to "have their say" or the perception that "no-one would listen" even if they were to.

Other responses given by participants about their communities reflected a genuine feeling and need for reciprocity between members as well as the notion of equality and sharing. When asked what makes a good community one participant commented:

...everyone getting along...if everyone did things for each other and it wasn't just take and take, it was a lot of giving, and mingling and just everyone knowing each other well.

In addition some participants responded to what makes a not so good community with comments such as:

...everyone not being treated like they should be...just having uneven relationships and people sectioned in groups...cause everyone should be able to mix with each other...and having people who are dominant and have power over the rest, everyone should have an equal say...not just some that make all the rules...everyone should have like a democracy.

Integration and Fulfilment of Needs

Integration and fulfilment of needs is central to SOC and refers to the rewards and reinforcements that group members experience as a result of their association with others who have shared values and goals (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). The shared values contribute to group cohesion by facilitating a feeling of integration and satisfying members' needs creating a sense of togetherness (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

As the interview data suggests, participants invest a great deal of their time and emotional energy in and around their peers. Although the sharing of free time is voluntary, attendance at school is predominantly a response to the current social, economic and political environment. The majority of participants felt compelled to remain in school and this was clearly reflected by many in comments such as, "would be harder to get a good job", "I want to get a good job so I don't fail", and "people might not respect me as much...if I didn't finish school".

These shared beliefs and values have worked to prolong the attendance at school by many adolescents, thereby increasing the time peers spend with each other within the school system. Described by Murray as 'environmental press' ("the physical, interpersonal or social demands that environments put on people", Kail & Cavanaugh, 1996, p. 485), Pretty (1990) suggests that these forces must be viewed as more than just patterns of adolescents social interactions. Within this perspective, peer groups can be seen, as meeting the support needs of adolescents, including social, psychological and sometimes physical, that result from the environmental demands they face. These feelings of support were reported by many and are illustrated in the following comment:

...you've always got someone to ring up and support you...you know someone that feels exactly how you feel about things cause you're the same age and

Other participants' commented that: "I've known them all so long", and "I think because we're all the same and we've all been to school together". This strong connection with others during and throughout this stage of the life span, could be considered a result of the age segregation that is created within the social structure of our school system. The age segregation is further facilitated through the boundaries that are socially constructed by the dominant cultural beliefs within our society.

Participant responses also suggested that by sharing experiences that were common to each other, helped to foster feelings of connectedness and alleviate feelings of isolation and alienation. As the following demonstrates:

...you have an understanding and mutual feelings towards things...because you've got the same background and you're the same age and you're able to really connect...whereas with parents or someone older its different because they've got different aspects of life.

In addition to the shared histories, experiences and the identification with peer members as a means to foster feelings of community, external forces operate to help further facilitate feelings of connection for the participants. Environmental forces (social, economic and political) that prolong the participation of adolescents within the school system are responsible for bringing the adolescents together and providing the opportunity for shared emotional connections to develop (Brodsky & Marx, 2001). When asked how leaving school would affect them, nearly all participants made mention of their relationships with peers. The following response from one participant reflected the feelings across the majority of responses:

[leaving school] would be really difficult because all my friends are still at school...like you'd stay friends with them but there'd be this gap between you now because with most friendships school is the only connection and if that goes away then its gone.

Phase of Inbetweenness

The SOC framework proposed by McMillan and Chavis (1986) was helpful in identifying and unpacking a number of issues that were pertinent to many of the experiences and perceptions reported by the participants. Deeper analysis of the interview data further revealed issues that related to feelings of role confusion, disempowerment and identity conflict as a result of the social structures in which adolescents develop. These elements were found to be very important for this group and were strongly identified within the data.

The phase of inbetweenness is used to refer to the feelings that deal with the socially constructed boundaries that define and facilitate the gap between childhood and adulthood. The theme deals with the issue of not feeling connected to anything and strong feelings of separation as a result of a lack of acknowledged social roles. In addition, the interviews highlighted issues dealing with labelling and stereotyping that have left participants feeling powerless to influence others perceptions of them, and also an inability to communicate with many adults. A lack of respect both at school and within the community, has resulted in feelings of worthlessness for adolescents as a group and a strong desire to quickly reach adulthood, to find acceptance and belonging within the community. Finally, as a result of the dominant narrative of teenagers, participants appeared to experience a conflict with projected social identities and those the participants generated with their peers. This conflict worked to further facilitate feelings of inbetweenness as participants struggled to reject the negative stereotypes and internalise positive peer group identities. These feelings of inbetweenness that were reflected across the interview data revealed social and psychological implications not only for identity and role development but also in relation to the participants' feelings of well-being.

socially constructed external boundaries operating within the dominant community (Sonn & Fisher, 1998). These were identified as mainly including factors such as age, lack of financial resources, and negative labels and stereotypes, generated by the dominant cultural narrative of 'teenagers'. These negative narratives were perceived by the participants, as strongly held by the majority of others within the community. Rappaport (2000), in discussing narratives, proposed that negative narratives can have disempowering effects, resulting in strong negative implications for a person's identity and their self-esteem (Sonn & Fisher, 1998). From the participants responses, the effects of labelling resulting from the dominant narratives, have worked to generate feelings of separation, disempowerment, and a conflict of social identities. These feelings were seen to ultimately impact on an individuals self esteem, which was evident in their lack of confidence, particularly with adults (Felton & Shinn, 1992). Some had internalised the label, which researchers have acknowledged has serious implications for social and psychological outcomes, including identity formation and psychological well-being (Al-Talib & Griffin, 1994; Felton & Shinn, 1992; Sonn & Fisher, 1998). However, the majority rejected the stereotypical label held of 'teenagers', and preferred to focus more on the positive identities that were created through their peer groups. These positive identities were seen to be fostered by newly created shared group narratives (Mankowski & Rappaport, 1995), that were facilitated through shared values and beliefs and participation in common activities, such as sports and movies. In return these experiences within the peer groups promoted a strong emotional connection with peers, displayed as feelings of trust and acceptance.

The findings also revealed that the main social institutions have worked to create a social distance for these individuals, primarily through enforced age segregation. The enforced age segregation, particularly operating within the school system, helped to reinforce membership at the peer level by providing the location, the

promote a SOC, the adolescents' must at least have the perceptions that they are "part of the common good" (Pretty et al., 1996, p. 366). Consequently, for individuals to develop psychological empowerment, they must feel that their participation is considered important, in order for them to stimulate healthy development of both themselves and the environment in which they function (Chavis & Wandersman, 1990).

In light of the findings, the majority of the elements of the SOC framework were supported in this study, therefore demonstrating both the validity and the applicability of the framework to be used with adolescents. However, additional analysis did reveal themes addressing the issue of inbetweenness, which were not facilitated through the use of the SOC framework. Suggesting that other frameworks may be necessary to fully understand the experiences of young people. However, in utilising the SOC framework in this study, it is clearly illustrated that individuals may participate in a number of unique communities however, if not actively integrated into all the communities, they may not feel the same psychological connection to each (Brodsky & Marx, 2001). In a study by Brodsky and Marx (2001), the authors put forward their understanding of what may facilitate multiple instances of SOC, all working together. Their suggestions are particularly pertinent in the development of adolescents' SOC:

In the best of worlds, the macrocommunity respects, supports, and nurtures the unique experiences, concerns and contributions of the subcommunity, meanwhile providing opportunities to build community experiences which connect subcommunities together. Thus the answer to the 'problem' of diversity isn't combining and erasing differences, but promoting and recognising the necessity of diversity as a rich, textured whole. (Brodsky & Marx, 2001, p. 177)

This statement reflects the need to address these issues in a holistic manner.

The use of a qualitative, holistic mode of inquiry permitted the investigator to explore and understand many of the perceptions and experiences as they were actually felt and lived by the participants. This was particularly important in understanding the influence these experiences may have on promoting and maintaining a psychological sense of community in adolescents.

The present qualitative study was originally designed within a number of time and resource restrictions, and as a result there were some limitations. With a longer time frame, follow up interviews may have been possible to confirm understandings and explore specific issues. With additional resources young people from different ethnic groups may have been recruited to explore culture specific experiences of exclusion. The nature of a qualitative inquiry does not enable the investigator to generalise the findings to other populations. However, the purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences and extend the theoretical knowledge of adolescents. Future researchers may want to extend the study to enable generalisations to be made.

In conclusion, the findings generated from this study provide some interesting insights into the perceptions and experiences of a group of adolescents. In particular it would seem that integration into positive and supportive peer groups has alleviated many of the participants' perceptions and experiences of alienation and exclusion felt from the general community (Cauce, 1986; Sarason, 1974; Sonn & Fisher, 1998). These perceptions and experiences were mainly generated as a result of the economic, political and social changes apparent in the individuals' environments. This was further perpetuated by the externally generated boundaries and stereotypes, which have been socially constructed for adolescents in western society. Also, failure by the community to actively integrate young people has resulted in an absence of SOC

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6. For a lot of young people school is the place where they make many of their close friendships, Can you describe for me the group of friends you have in school?
 - a. What do you think it is about this group of people that makes you friends?
 - b. How many of your friends from school would you say are still at school and how many are not? (*Only if some have left school - What do you think are some of the reasons they left school?*)
 - c. What does being a member of this group mean to you? (What is important?).
7. Some teenager's wonder when they leave school how different their lives will be. I'm interested to know how you think leaving school would change aspects of your life. How do you think your leaving school **now** would affect the kinds of things you can do? Lets start with your free time?
 - a. How do you think leaving school would affect the kinds of employment you can find?
 - b. How do you think leaving school would affect the way people react or behave towards you?
 - c. Can you describe for me how you would feel if people reacted towards you like that?
 - d. Can you think of some reasons why they might react like this towards you?

Financial

8. Moving on from school, I'd like to understand your experiences of being in school instead of working and what implications it has for this part of your life. Can you tell me how your financial situation (ie., not working) affects the type of activities you do with your free time?
 - a. Are there things you can't do that you wish you could do?
 - b. (If YES to a – What are they, and why do you feel you can't do them)
 - c. How does this make you feel?
 - d. Are there any other reasons apart from money that prevents you from doing these things or other things you would like to do?

Group

9. Having friends and maintaining a sense of togetherness, means operating as part of a group, can you describe to me what types of things you think are good about being part of a group?
 - a. What types of things are not so good about being part of a group?
 - b. How would you describe the part you play or how you fit into your group? (friends)
 - c. Do you feel you have any influence or input in this group – How?
 - d. Do you feel you belong – How?
10. Now I'm interested to know about the experiences you have had with others outside of your group, while you have been with your friends. Can you describe for me the kinds of conflicts you may have been involved in with others outside of your group (not family)?
 - a. Did any ever involve adults - Can you think of any one occasion?– if so what were these conflicts about? (Where did they occur?)
 - b. What could be some of the reasons you feel were the cause of the conflicts?

Appendix D
Demographic Information Form for Participants

Demographics:

First Name: _____

Age: _____ years

Gender: Male / Female

High School being attended: _____

If no longer at High School (Age left High School): _____ years

Employed: YES / NO (full-time or part-time)

Attending TAFE (or other Training Course): YES / NO

Nationality: _____ (that best describes you)

Suburb: _____ (where you live)

Suburb: _____ (how long have you lived there)

Family: _____
_____ (who you live with)

Please complete if participating and return with the signed consent form.

Thank you

Appendix G
Question-Ordered Data Matrix
(Example Only)

Youth and Identity page 1

Participant #	Questions	How you feel about being your age?	Things you like about your age?	Things you don't like about your age?	Viewed as a person at your age?	Older person: reasons you would like to be like them?	Viewed as a person at their age? (older)	Describe yourself	Things you like about yourself?
1		Stressful age, heading t/ward adulthood, looking at life beyond school,	Young people play up cause your allowed to	Getting looked down upon by adults,	You don't have a function, e/ones in the world for me at the moment,	Sister – at uni, old enough to go out, drives a car,	As you get older you get more respect, I'm sought of in b/tween,	Year 12, student councillor, do debating,	Got so many friends,
2			Get into MA movies, go out to movies	Being compared to older people, we cant drink,	We're teenagers and we get up to no good	Friend, year 12, can go out with friends,	Treated like an adult not as a kid, able to get a job and leave school,	I'm 15, highschool, like shopping and going to movies,	That I'm tall, and blonde hair
3			Allowed into MA movies, able to go to more things,	Your allowed to work but you don't get as much money,	we're seen as rebels, think you take drugs & don't know you,	Friends brother, excellent at school, parents trust him a lot, goes out a lot	More reliable than my age cause they've left schl	Shy, I don't think I'm smart, don't have much self confidence,	If I need help or advice I'll ask for it,
4		Pretty good, I thought it would be better, its like when I was 15	Get more privileges, do more stuff,	Responsibility, doing dishes, cleaning room	Normal, average 1* yr old,	Brother, got his licence, got more freedom, stay out later	They'd treat me with more respect	Average height, dark hair dark eyes,	I don't really care what others think of me,
5			Don't have too many pressures on you, laid back,	stereotypes, if stuff goes wrong pp blame you,	2 ways, at schl normal, out with friends	Brother - 21, good career that I'm interested in	Probably cause he's a skateboarder,	I'm a skateboarder, enjoy sports, interested in arts, rather short	My talent in skate boarding, good at sports,

Appendix H

Instructions for Authors

Community, Work & Family welcomes original contributions from all parts of the world on the understanding that their contents have not previously been published nor submitted elsewhere for publication. All submissions will be sent anonymously to independent referees. It is a condition of acceptance that papers become the copyright of the publisher. **There are no page charges.**

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Manuscripts

Manuscripts may be in the form of: (i) regular articles (between 5,000 and 10,000 words); or, (ii) short reports for rapid publication (not exceeding 2,000 words); or, (iii) personal accounts for the 'Voices' section (not exceeding 2,000 words). Four complete copies should be submitted to:

The Editors, **Community, Work & Family**, Department of Psychology and Speech Pathology, Manchester Metropolitan University, Elizabeth Gaskell Campus, Hathersage Road, Manchester M13 0JA, UK (E-mail: cwf@mmu.ac.uk). Authors in the Americas should send their manuscripts to The Editor, **Community, Work & Family**, School of Social Work, Boston University, 264 Bay Street Road, Boston, Massachusetts, 02215, USA. (E-mail: jgonyea@bu.edu)

All submissions should be in the style of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (4th edition, 1994). Papers should be typed on one side of the paper, double spaced throughout (including the references), with margins of at least 2.5 cm (1 inch). All pages must be numbered. The first page should include the title of the paper, first name, middle initial(s) and last name of the author(s), and for each author a short institutional address, and an abbreviated title (for running headlines within the article). At the bottom of the page give the full name and address (including telephone and fax numbers and e-mail address if possible) of the author to whom all correspondence (including proofs) should be sent. The second page should repeat the title and contain an abstract in English of not more than 200 words. Authors are invited to submit additional abstracts in French and Spanish. The third page should repeat the title as a heading to the main body of the text. The text should normally be divided into sections with appropriate headings and subheadings. Within the text section headings and subheadings should be typed on a separate line without numbering, indentation or bold or italic typeface.

Electronic Submissions. Authors should send the final, revised version of their articles in both hard copy paper and electronic disk forms. It is essential that the hard copy (paper) version *exactly* matches the material on disk. Please print out the hard copy from the disk you are sending. Submit three printed copies of the final version with the disk to the journal's editorial office. Save all files on a standard 3.5 inch high-density

disk. We prefer to receive disks in Microsoft Word in a PC format, but can translate from most other common word processing programs as well as Macs. Please specify which program you have used. Do not save your files as "text only" or "read only".

References

References should follow American Psychological Association style. All publications cited in the text should be listed following the text; similarly, all references listed must be mentioned in the text. Within the text references should be denoted by the author's name and year of publication in parentheses, e.g. (Lambert, 1993) or (Mansell & McGill, 1995) or, if there are more than two authors, (Gallico *et al.*, 1986). Where several references are quoted consecutively within the text the order should be alphabetical, e.g. (Elford & Sherr, 1989; Folkman, 1992). Similarly, where several references are quoted within a single year, the order should be alphabetical (Mansell & McGill, 1995; Woods, 1995). If more than one paper from the same author(s) and year is listed, the date should be followed by (a), (b) etc., e.g. (Blazer, 1995a). References should be listed at the end of the paper in alphabetical order, typed in double spacing. Responsibility for the references and their verification against the original documents lies with the author(s).

References should be listed on a separate sheet(s) in the following standard form, capitalisation and punctuation:

1. **for periodical articles** (titles of journals should not be abbreviated): Lambert, S. (1993). Workplace policies as social policy. *Social Service Review*, 67, 237-260.
2. **for books**: Norman, A. (1987). *Aspects of ageism*. London: Centre for Policy on Ageing.
3. **for chapters within multi-authored books**: Lewis, S. and Kagan, C. (1995). Children: dual career families, in M. Moore, J. Sixsmith & K. Knowles (Eds.), *Children's perspectives on family life* (pp. 29-51). Brighton: Falmer Press.

Units of Measurement

All measurements must be cited in SI units.

Illustration

All illustrations (including photographs, graphs and diagrams) should be referred to as Figures and their position indicated in the text (e.g. Fig. 3). Each should be submitted on a separate sheet of paper, numbered on the back with Figure number (Arabic numerals) and the title of the paper. The captions of all figures should be submitted on a separate sheet, should include keys to symbols, and should make interpretation possible without reference to the text. Figures should ideally be professionally drawn and should be capable of reduction.

Tables

Tables should be submitted on separate sheets, numbered in Arabic numerals, and their position indicated in the text (e.g. Table 1). Each table should have a short, self-explanatory title. Vertical rules should not be used to separate columns. Units should appear in parentheses in the column heading but not in the body of the table. Any explanatory notes should be given as a footnote at the bottom of the table.

Proofs

Proofs will be sent by fax or air mail to the author nominated for correspondence. Proofs are supplied for checking and making essential typographical corrections, not for general revision or alteration. Proofs must be returned (by air mail or fax) within 72 hours of receipt.

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