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ABSTRACT

Using the yardsticks of independence and equality, an analysis of the literature on youth from a citizenship perspective can track youth's citizenship status and capacity to become full citizens. For young people, education is an avenue to either exclusion or independence and equality. For example, dropouts are more likely to live in poverty, and economic independence is considered key to achieving full citizenship. Exclusion exists in the school system, as schools continue to stream young women into traditional career paths and allow racial discrimination. Schools fail to provide the knowledge and capacity to make informed, intelligent choices about substance abuse and sexuality. Access to education, student debt, and labor market conditions delay economic independence. Young people face discrimination due to age and membership in a particular community. Examples of differential treatment are found in the areas of work, medicine, social services, and legal system. Their right to protection from harm is infringed upon most by the transportation system and societal problems related to gender, poverty, and marginalization. Having hope for the future and feelings of belonging influence youth participation in politics and resistance to marginalization through formation of subcultures and via political protest. The notion of precariousness best captures the experience of youth citizenship with respect to exercise of rights and responsibilities, access, and belonging. (Appendixes include a 271-item bibliography and roundtable summary.) (YLB)

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A Literature Review on Youth and Citizenship

By

Caroline Beauvais
Lindsey McKay and
Adam Seddon

CPRN Discussion Paper No. CPRN|02

June 2001

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A Literature Review on Youth and Citizenship

By

Caroline Beauvais
Lindsey McKay and
Adam Seddon

Foreword

When CPRN was founded in 1995, it was structured around three research Networks that were designed to focus on the policy implications for some very important aspects of the lives of Canadians – Family, Health, and Work. Although each Network developed its own niche and expertise, it became apparent that a number of cross-cutting themes were emerging from their independent research endeavors. Issues related to citizenship emerged as one such theme.

In 1999, the research Directors of the three Networks and I began to examine the synergies in our work in order to plan a research project on citizenship that would do two things: (1) enable our research teams to collaborate on a major project; and (2) scope the possibility of further work on citizenship that could be undertaken by the Networks, separately or together. Our subject of choice for this unique cross-Network initiative was "Youth and the Transition to Citizenship."

Citizenship is a status usually reserved for adults. While young people may have their own passports and driving or marriage licenses, and they can form couples and families, take up full-time work, be put into jail and vote, they also seem caught between statuses. Some young people are part of the backbone of the e-economy, sometimes becoming very rich before they are old enough to drink alcohol. Yet, many still live at home, and more are returning home after time at university or living as a couple.

Youth unemployment rates are high, and young people are often forced to remain for years in temporary, part-time jobs or internships. Governments show little compunction about denying social assistance benefits to young people who have reached the age of majority, and forcing their families to maintain "responsibility" for them, even though they are old enough to vote. While there is increasing evidence that, on average, girls do much better than boys in formal education, young women heading lone-parent families have one of the highest poverty rates in the country. HIV-AIDS and other health menaces can make the prospect of sexual activity frightening, yet access to health information and services is often denied to youth.

Given all of these real but contradictory and confusing characteristics of young people's lives in Canada today, attention to their citizenship status is in order. Researchers in the Family, Health and Work Networks of Canadian Policy Research Networks prepared a Discussion Paper that reviews the literature on youth in detail. Next, they re-read it to answer the question: *What is the citizenship status of young people today?* After categorizing and assessing the literature, gaps in current knowledge and topics for further research were identified. Then, in April 2001, CPRN hosted a Roundtable in Ottawa to discuss the draft report. Participants engaged in lively discussion about the paper, and provided many additional ideas about the types of research that are needed on the lives of youth as they move into full citizenship.

This final report considers is a detailed literature review, which includes a summary of the Roundtable findings. A companion paper, aptly titled *Highlights: Youth and the Transition to Citizenship*, provides a summary of the key findings of this discussion paper, as well as the areas identified as ripe for further research.

I wish to thank Caroline Beauvais, Lindsey McKay, and Adam Seddon for their sustained efforts in producing both the discussion paper and highlights report. As well, I thank Jane Jenson for directing this unique project, and Sharon Stroick for managing CPRN's first cross-Network venture. I also wish to acknowledge the dynamic group of experts, stakeholders and young people who participated in the Roundtable. Last but not least, I would like to thank the funders of this project, without whom none of our work would be possible.

We look forward to exploring new horizons in the realm of citizenship, and to further develop our knowledge on youth and citizenship.

Judith Maxwell
June 2001

Executive Summary

Citizenship is a status traditionally reserved for adults. Therefore, while many people might accept that youth are *citizens*, at the same time they might be skeptical of the notion that youth, even those over 18, are *full citizens*. Somehow it seems that they cannot be more than "citizens-in-becoming."

In fact, examining their situation shows youth to have a precarious citizenship status. While they may have their own passports and driving or marriage licenses, and they can form couples and families, take up full-time work, be put into jail and vote, they also seem caught between statuses. Some young people are the backbone of and big earners in the "e-economy," sometimes becoming very rich before they are old enough to drink alcohol. Yet, many still live at home, and more are returning home after time at university or living as a couple.

Youth unemployment rates are high, and many young people remain for years in part-time jobs or internships. Some governments show little compunction about denying social assistance benefits to young people who have reached the age of majority, and forcing their families to maintain "responsibility" for them, even though they are old enough to vote. HIV/AIDS and other health menaces can make sexual activity a frightening prospect, even as the age of menarche is dropping. While there is increasing evidence that, on average, girls do much better than boys in formal education, young women heading lone-parent families have one of the highest poverty rates in the country.

At the same time, the category of "youth" has been extended considerably in recent years. Younger children are now included, since the category is sometimes applied to those aged 12 and older. More commonly, however, is the prolongation of the status until the age of 29 or even older.

Given all of these real but contradictory characteristics of young people's lives in Canada today, attention to their citizenship status is in order. This literature review represents an effort to create some order out of this confusion. It reviews in detail the literature on youth, re-reading it so as to answer the question: *What is the citizenship status of young people today and, in particular, where are the inequalities across social and economic categories, as well as between younger and older people?* It also assesses whether young adults have the capacity to achieve full citizenship. As they gain formal civil and political rights, are they also gaining social and economic rights? *Do they have the necessary independence to construct the full citizenship that most older adults enjoy?*

This review covers only the published, and for the most part academic, literature on the subject. It provides a careful reading of the literature available in English and French, dealing with young people in Canada and a few other countries. In order to carry out this review, we consider that citizenship is composed of three analytical dimensions: (1) rights and responsibilities, (2) access, and (3) feelings of belonging (that is, identity). All three dimensions must be present in order for someone to be a citizen, although not everyone has the same rights, responsibilities, access or feelings of belonging.

The extent to which people enjoy these three dimensions of citizenship establishes a certain citizenship status, often one that is less than *full citizenship*. This is the case for many youth, either because they are not yet old enough or because their social and economic circumstances cause them to be excluded from full citizenship. Being a full citizen, therefore, means having the capacity to exercise the three dimensions of citizenship. It is more than having theoretical rights to citizenship, it means *actively seeking to engage* so as to realize one's rights, exercise one's responsibilities, have access to political institutions, be empowered, and share a sense of belonging to the community – national as well as local. Being a full citizen means having the resources and opportunity to participate in different areas of life.

Independence is a key element of citizenship because it helps gain – and indeed underpins – each of the three dimensions of citizenship. Following this argument, the longer that young people stay dependent, the longer it takes to become a full citizen. Equality is another key principle of citizenship since theorists agree that there is no real citizenship without the notion of equality among citizens. Therefore, if rights, responsibilities and access are unequally distributed among young people of the same age or between young adults and older adults, then the citizenship status of some is limited. If there is a consensus that it is normal for a 16-year-old not to have full citizenship rights, the situation is quite different for young people over 18. Many and perhaps an increasing number of young people over the age of majority and well into their twenties have the formal, legal rights of citizenship but do not enjoy full citizenship.

While there is a great deal of literature on youth, it has not been analyzed from a citizenship perspective. It is thus through a "citizenship lens" that connections are made between two sets of literature, that on youth and that on citizenship. This review has two goals: (1) to revisit the literature on youth using a citizenship lens, and (2) to thereby describe the current citizenship status of young people, as well as the capacity of young adults to become full citizens.

This is important to do because research on youth citizenship issues in Canada, especially in English, remains rare. In contrast to the United Kingdom and France, the matter of youth and citizenship has rarely been taken up. Some thinking about the matter has taken place in Quebec. Nonetheless, this remains the "exception that proves the rule" that insufficient attention has gone to the vital matter of young people's rights, responsibilities, current citizenship status, and possible access to full citizenship.

This paper is divided into four sections. Section 1 unpacks the concept of *youth*, which is an unstable sociological category that varies in space and time. Whereas in the past, there were certain rites of passage that marked the transition from being a child to being an adult, the current situation is one of prolongation of youth. In addition, the markers of adulthood are increasingly "out of synch" in the sense that young people may demonstrate some of the signs of autonomy – forming a couple, for example – while still being dependent on their parents, perhaps even living with a spouse at their parent's home. This means that it is important to understand the citizenship status of youth in the here and now, and not simply treat young people as "citizens-in-becoming" who pass through certain transitions.

Section 2 provides a description and assessment of the treatment of youth and citizenship by a range of authors, and then proposes an analytical grid. The framework used to read the literature on youth and citizenship pays attention to the capacity of young people to achieve *independence*. This has been described as one of the fundamental principles of being a full citizen, yet little attention has gone to young people's capacity for independence. The extent to which youth from different groups can achieve the independence required to be full citizens varies. So, the second foundational principle is that of *equality*. Some youth enjoy a better citizenship status than others do, and we will seek to uncover patterns of discrimination and higher barriers to full citizenship. Another approach is to examine intergenerational inequalities. If independence is an essential component of the definition of full citizenship, there are consequences of prolonging young people's period of dependency in terms of intergenerational inequalities.

Section 3, by far the longest in the paper, provides an overview of several areas where youths exercise and apply their citizenship. In this section, we use the literature to assess young people's capacity to be independent, as well as patterns of equality and inequality. By using the yardsticks of *independence* and *equality*, it is possible to track the citizenship status of youth in the here and now, as well as their capacity to become full citizens. The findings of the literature review are very rich, but can be summarized for each of the parts of Section 3 as follows:

Education – An Avenue to Exclusion?

For young people, many routes to exclusion still exist in Canadian society. Despite declines in the high school drop-out rate, a full 20 percent of young people fail to graduate. In the past, those with low levels of education could find employment, but those who now fail to complete high school face the very real prospect of being unemployed or finding poor paying jobs and insecure work. They are therefore more likely to live in poverty, without the economic independence considered key to achieving full citizenship. This problem particularly affects Aboriginal youth and those from disadvantaged families, perpetuating inequality across generations.

While young people who quit school are likely to experience social exclusion and a corresponding segregation from full citizenship status, exclusion can also exist within the school system itself. Schools continue to stream young women into "traditional" career paths and gender roles. The in-school presence of racism and discrimination based on ability is well documented, having the effect of isolating young people who are deemed "different."

Education – A Route to Independence and Equality?

While there is a growing concern that young people must "learn" to become good citizens, citizenship education is not taught in a direct or consistent manner. Rather, the focus remains on the study of the social sciences more generally, or on political institutions. Observers fear that even an explicit citizenship education curriculum does not encourage young people to think critically. Moreover, the institutions most responsible for teaching citizenship, the schools, are insufficiently democratic. Therefore, the school environment may not reinforce good citizenship practices.

Studies have found a relationship between volunteering or extracurricular activities and political involvement later in life. Therefore, some observers are alarmed about the effects that budget cuts may have on access to extracurricular activities. These trends may therefore have long-term implications for political engagement and the social exclusion of disadvantaged members of society.

Overly simplistic messages promoting abstinence from alcohol, tobacco and recreational drug use fails to provide young people with the proper tools and resources to make informed decisions. Abstinence is rejected as hypocritical since substance use often reflects an attempt to explore issues of personal identity, and in part represents a young person's shift to a more mature adult status.

Insufficient information is also a concern regarding health education. Researchers and young people themselves observe that the teaching of sexuality in school is often inadequate. Failing to provide young people with the knowledge and capacity to make informed and intelligent choices can be detrimental in a world characterized by fatal sexually transmitted diseases. Compounding this lack of appropriate education is the limited and declining access to preventive health services.

Education, Economic Independence and Security

Access to education, student debt and labour market conditions are delaying the economic independence of youth. While those who have a good education (that is, a post-secondary degree or diploma) fare much better in the labour market than their less-educated counterparts, general trends in the youth labour market are negatively affecting many young people. There has been a 20-year trend of declining real and relative earnings of young people, occurring in most industries and for most educational groups.

Over the past decade, there has been a significant increase in post-secondary enrolment. While in absolute terms access to post-secondary education has increased for all groups, it has been at a slower pace for those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. In short, there is polarization along socioeconomic lines. This trend likely reflects the increase in tuition rates since the early 1980s, and studies suggest that lower-income families are most sensitive to such increases. Concomitantly, the incidence and depth of student debt have increased markedly over the past two decades, and there has been a corresponding increase in repayment difficulties.

The ability to leave home is also a major indicator that young people are close to attaining independence. However, the age at which the majority of young people are leaving the parental household has been increasing, an outcome that reflects factors such as tight housing markets, a decline in relative wages, high levels of unemployment, prolonged education, and high student debt levels. Yet another indicator of the attainment of independence is the timing of family formation. With both the lengthening school-to-work transition and delays in leaving the parental home, young women may find themselves "squeezed out" of their prime childbearing years.

Justice and Freedom from Discrimination

There are several areas in which youth face discrimination. This occurs directly and indirectly on the basis of age and due to membership in a particular category (gay or lesbian, for example) or community (for example, newcomers to Canada). As well, if youth come into contact with the criminal justice system, harsh treatment is likely as a result of the shift to a more punitive approach in thinking about youth and the justice system.

Youth encounter discrimination when they enter the labour force a tier lower than their older, more established co-workers. Such measures disproportionately affect young people because they represent the majority of new entrants to the labour market.

Not having a home or material wealth to rely on from parents can contribute to a weakened citizenship status due to problems in accessing health and social services. Youth are not treated equally with respect to social assistance requirements. For young people, receipt of this entitlement is conditional upon obligations such as workfare or training. In matters of reproductive health, contraception may be difficult for young people to obtain, and there are significant barriers for young women in accessing health care services should they seek to terminate a pregnancy.

In several policy spheres, the treatment of young people can be seen as inconsistent – youth are both treated as adults and as children. Rights and responsibilities are not granted in tandem but, instead, are uneven and inconsistent.

Personal Security and Well-being in the Community

This subsection addresses the health of youth in terms of the causes of morbidity and mortality, as well as through recreation and leisure. The ways that youth interact with their environment has an important relationship to their citizenship status. The literature on youth and health indicates that the right of youth to protection from harm is infringed upon most by the transportation system and societal problems related to gender, poverty and marginalization.

At the most fundamental level, youth morbidity and mortality is highly affected by injuries in motor vehicle crashes, sports, and intentional violence. Systemic discrimination against young women and Aboriginal youth has a disproportionate effect on the rates of sexual violence and suicide they experience. These findings suggest that the context in which youth live put certain young people in a position of lacking access to basic citizenship rights such as personal and environmental security. Research also reveals that young people may be the perpetrators of violence. As such, they fail to uphold the citizenship responsibilities to obey the law and refrain from causing harm to others.

Youth participation in recreation is a form of engagement in the community. It, too, is mediated by differential access since income, transportation and parental rules serve as barriers to participation. There is a significant difference in leisure activities between male and female youth, and among some youth of colour.

Opportunities for extracurricular activities in sports and culture also vary significantly by school or school district, and by young people's access to material resources. The introduction of user fees and the high cost of recreation equipment have made class differences increasingly significant. Inadequate physical activity among young people may undermine their access to health and well-being in the future, as well as in the present.

Identity, Belonging and Participation

Youth citizenship is about identifying with and feeling a sense of belonging to one's community. This would logically translate into political participation at all levels of government. However, the literature examining this aspect of young people's lives identifies areas in which young people feel excluded, and do not fully participate.

While there are several research gaps in this literature from a citizenship perspective, the context in which young people live their lives emerges as an important factor accounting for patterns of participation. Societal problems such as racial discrimination and unemployment affect the outlook of youth. Having hope for the future and feelings of belonging influence both youth participation in mainstream politics and their resistance to marginalization through the formation of subcultures and via political protest.

Section 4 of the paper provides a set of summary questions and presents a list of possible directions for future research based on the major conclusions of the paper. Overall, the survey of the literature finds that youth possess a citizenship status that might best be characterized as *precarious*. Many young people are arriving at full citizenship, enjoying its fruits, and contributing to their communities. Nonetheless, the picture is not equally positive for all youth. Problems still remain.

For young people who have passed the age of majority and therefore have attained "citizenship," precariousness in this status comes from the gap between formal and substantive rights. Many youths have not attained full citizenship, because they have not yet achieved *independence*. For younger Canadians, their citizenship rights are limited by their age, to be sure, but we have also observed that there are frequently contradictions between the responsibilities expected of young people and the rights conferred on them. Moreover, for both older and younger groups, we have found significant patterns of *inequality* related to the economic, social, and cultural circumstances of youth subgroups. Therefore, the notion of precariousness best captures the experience of youth citizenship with respect to the exercise of rights and responsibilities, as well as access and belonging.

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A Literature Review on Youth and Citizenship

CPRN embarked on this project to lay the groundwork for future research on youth as citizens. A literature review was conducted to identify areas of research that were well covered and determine where more research was needed. This is the result – a paper that reviews the literature on youth through the lens of citizenship.

The paper does not provide original research. Therefore, among other limits is one that it does not "incorporate the voices" of young people. Rather, the paper reflects the fact that most of the research on youth, as on most other topics, is conducted by adults in universities or other research settings. In this sense, the paper reflects the gaps as well as the strengths of the existing literature. Its goal is to identify a research agenda that would help to fill the gaps.

The process that brought us to this point proceeded in two phases. Researchers from CPRN's three networks took a broad sweep of the academic research on youth. The paper was then reviewed at a national Roundtable on youth and citizenship. At both stages, CPRN focused on areas in need of further research. The insights of those who participated in the Roundtable are documented separately in Appendix A.

Introduction

Citizenship is a status traditionally reserved for adults. Yet, increasingly, we hear of the "rights of the child," a discourse that has gained currency in the decade since the release of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 1989). Moreover, while many people might accept that youth are *citizens*, at the same time they might be skeptical of the notion that youth are *full citizens*. Somehow it just seems that they cannot be seen as more than "citizens-in-becoming."

In fact, examining their situation shows youth to have a precarious citizenship status. While they may have their own passports and driving or marriage licenses, and they can form couples and families, take up full-time work, be put into jail and vote, they also seem caught between statuses. Some young people are the backbone of and big earners in the "e-economy," sometimes becoming very rich before they are old enough to drink. Yet, many still live at home, and more are returning home after time at university or living as a couple. Youth unemployment rates are high, and many young people remain for years in part-time jobs or internships. Some governments show little compunction about denying social assistance benefits to young people who have reached the age of majority, and forcing their families to maintain "responsibility" for them, even though they are old enough to vote. The HIV/AIDS and other health menaces can make sexual activity a frightening prospect, even as the age of menarche is dropping. While there is increasing evidence that, on average, girls do much better than boys in formal education, young women heading lone-parent families have one of the highest poverty rates in the country.

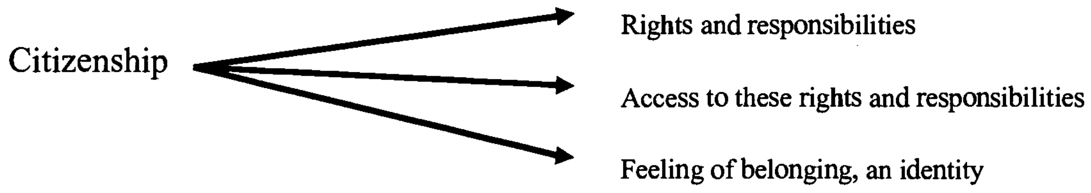
At the same time, the category of "youth" has been extended considerably in recent years. Younger children are now included, as the category is sometimes applied to those aged 12 and older. More commonly, however, is the prolongation of the status until the age of 29 or even older.

Given all of these real but contradictory characteristics of young people's lives in Canada today, attention to their citizenship status is in order. As researchers of the Family, Health and Work Networks of Canadian Policy Research Networks, we have prepared this literature review in an effort to create some order out of this confusion. It reviews in detail the literature on youth, re-reading it so as to answer the question: *What is the citizenship status of young people today and, in particular, where are the inequalities across social and economic categories, as well as between younger and older people?* This review also assesses whether young adults have the capacity to achieve full citizenship. As they gain formal civil and political rights, are they also gaining social and economic rights? *Do they have the necessary independence to construct the full citizenship that most older adults enjoy?*

A first step involves some *definitional work* because, as will become clear in the next sections, there is no general agreement either about the meaning of citizenship or about the definition of youth, and even less about the citizenship status of youth.

In order to carry out this review, we consider that citizenship is composed of three analytical dimensions: (1) rights and responsibilities, (2) access, and (3) feelings of belonging (that is, identity). All three dimensions must be present in order for someone to be a citizen, although not everyone has the same rights, responsibilities, access or feelings of belonging (see Box 1).

Box 1
The Three Dimensions of Citizenship


Citizenship
Rights and responsibilities
Access to these rights and responsibilities
Feeling of belonging, an identity

The extent to which people have these three dimensions of citizenship establishes a certain citizenship status, one that is often less than full citizenship. This is the case for many youth, either because they are not yet old enough or because their social and economic circumstances cause them to be excluded from full citizenship.

Being a full citizen, therefore, means having the capacity to exercise the three dimensions of citizenship. It is more than having theoretical rights to citizenship, it means *actively seeking to engage* so as to realize one's rights, exercise one's responsibilities, have access to political institutions, be empowered, and share a sense of belonging to the community – national as well as local. Being a full citizen means having the resources and opportunity to participate in different areas of life.

Independence is a key element of citizenship because it helps gain – and indeed underpins – each of the three dimensions of citizenship. Following this argument, the longer that young people stay dependent, the longer it is likely to take to become a full citizen.

Equality is another key principle of citizenship since theorists agree that there is no real citizenship without the notion of equality among citizens (Lamoureux, 1991).[1] Therefore, if rights, responsibilities and access are unequally distributed among young people of the same age or between young adults and older adults, then the citizenship status of some is limited.

If there is a consensus that it is normal for a 16-year-old not to have full citizenship rights, the situation is quite different for young people over 18. We will observe that many and perhaps an increasing number of young people over the age of majority and well into their twenties have the formal, legal rights of citizenship but do not enjoy full citizenship. The reality of their situation is a limited capacity to exercise full citizenship.

In this paper we assess the citizenship status of young people in Canada, by examining their situation in a range of areas key to exercising their citizenship, such as education, justice, work, housing, social services, health care, and the political sphere.

These issues are important because research on youth citizenship issues in Canada, especially in English, has been particularly slow to appear and remains rare. In contrast to the United Kingdom and France, the matter of youth and citizenship has been rarely taken up. Some thinking about the matter has taken place in Quebec, where the 2000 Youth Summit framed issues partly in terms of citizenship. For example, the Conseil permanent de la Jeunesse called on the Summit to develop "*les bases d'une nouvelle philosophie valorisant l'accès des jeunes à une citoyenneté pleine et active*" (Secrétariat du Sommet du Québec et de la jeunesse, 2000: 15-16). Nonetheless, this remains the "exception that proves the rule" that insufficient attention has gone to the vital matter of young people's rights, responsibilities, current citizenship status, and possible access to full citizenship.

While there is a great deal of literature on youth, it has not been analyzed from a citizenship perspective. It is thus through our "citizenship lens" that we make the connection between two sets of literature. This review has two goals: (1) to revisit the literature on youth using a citizenship lens, and (2) to thereby describe the current citizenship status of young people, as well as the capacity of young adults to become full citizens.

Before doing any of this, however, it is necessary to unpack the concept of youth, which is done in Section 1. In Section 2, we turn to a description and assessment of the treatment of youth and citizenship by a range of authors, and derive our own analytical grid. In Section 3, we examine several areas where youths exercise and apply their citizenship, using the literature to assess young people's capacity to be independent, as well as patterns of equality and inequality. We apply our grid to a careful reading of the literature available in English and French, dealing with young people in Canada and a few other countries. In Section 4 we summarize our findings and provide a list of some directions for further research.

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[1] The notion that citizenship implies equality is deeply embedded in traditional meanings of the concept, since at least the Middle Ages (Jenson and Papillon, 2000).

1.0 What is "Youth"?

At its most simplistic, the definition of youth is that found in the dictionary. Both the *Larousse* and *Oxford* dictionaries define youth as the time "between childhood and full maturity." Here we clearly see the notion of youth as a time of "between-ness," during which young people are sandwiched between children – who are not considered responsible for their actions – and adults, who are accountable for their behaviour. Therefore, as we will see, the matter of responsibility is key to the issue of youth citizenship.

Yet the boundaries of the category are fluid. Box 2 below lists the various age ranges developed by a few major social and political institutions, as well as academic researchers. This leads us to adopt the notion elaborated by Madeleine Gauthier (2000), that youth is an "unstable sociological category."[2]

Box 2
Some Definitions of "Youth"

Organization	**Age Range**
National Youth in Care Network	14 – 24
United Nations	15 – 24
Canadian Labour Congress	15 – 24
Leeds University Study, "Researching Young People's Transition to Citizenship"	16 – 24
Quebec, for its "2000 Youth Summit"	15 – 29
Observatoire sur les jeunes, INRS – Culture et Société	15 – 29
Quebec Federation of Labour (QFL/FTQ)	15 – 35

1.1 Youth – An Unstable Sociological Category

Identifying youth as a sociological category rather than a demographic, legal or biological one puts the accent where it belongs, on the variations that exist in the treatment of youth. Such variations depend on the country and the historical moment, as well as the socioeconomic situations of different categories of young people (Secrétariat du Sommet du Québec et de la jeunesse, 2000: 34; Dagenais, 1996: 90).[3]

If youth is frequently described as a series of transitional phases that culminate in adulthood, modern societies do not agree on when the final transition occurs. In the past, many societies had clearly defined rites of passage, so the age of transition was defined for everyone (Gauthier, 2000: 27; G. Jones, 1995: 1).

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[2] A *fait social instable*. She adapts this notion from the work of Levi and Schmitt (1996).

[3] For example, the Quebec Federation of Labour (QFL/FTQ) has redefined its category of "young member" because, in recent years, many young people's experience with contingent work means that they see themselves as "young" well into their 30s. See http://www.ftw.qc.ca.

Modern societies either do not have such rites, or have multiplied them, so the notion of transition is blurred. For example, acquisition of a license to drive, being able to consume alcohol legally, leaving home, and high-school graduation are all important rites of passage recognized and marked within the family and peer group, with their own rituals.

All of these "passages" involve some recognition of *independence and responsibility*. They have always provoked political debates about the age at which such responsibility is merited or reasonable to expect. Civil status and the right to take independent decisions have generally shifted from a foundation in marriage status to markers based on chronological age. This shift affects women in particular. Also, this ignores other possible markers such as demonstrated skills or capacities. The debate continues about the age at which responsibility for decisions about health care and other matters can be exercised by a young person without the approval of a parent or guardian. There are significant variations across countries, and even across provinces in Canada.

In part, the absence of precise rites of passage and uncertainty about independence is due to the invention of a new moment in the life cycle, that of *adolescence*. Prior to the industrial revolution in Europe, no clear distinction was made between childhood and other stages of pre-adult life. As Frank Musgrove notes "the adolescent was invented at the same time as the steam engine" (quoted in Tanner, 1996). Both Tanner (1996) and Griffin (1993: 12) claim that, in part, the concept of adolescence emerged in conflicts between capitalists and unionists over whether young people should work in factories. It was, in other words, the result of changed technology and class relations. The early factory system depended on huge amounts of unskilled labour. Technological change brought labour-saving machines, the displacement of jobs of factory workers, and lower wages. Adult male workers, through their unions, campaigned to restrict youth employment in factory work in order to reduce the size of the labour pool. Humanitarians, appalled by working conditions in early factories, joined their campaign and legislation protecting "child labour" was introduced.

Industrial cities of Europe and North America had large populations of young people displaced from factory work. Soon, a new type of criminal was named, the *juvenile delinquent*, engaged primarily in committing property crimes. Simultaneously, however, the extension of public education provided an institutional space that might provide youngsters with "correct" moral training, something which social reformers deemed to be lacking in family life (Tanner, 1996: Ch. 1). As this brief summary also might suggest, the problems of youth employment, of absorbing excess capacity in the labour market, and of organizing institutions to prepare young people for adult life were never settled once and for all, and continue today.

Hence, the construction of "youth" as a social category – whether as a threat or as holding potential for later life – must be understood in the context of shifting technology and labour markets, and the social dislocations they provoke. The category's contours are also the result of changing public institutions, such as schools, and changing family practices. While much public and academic discourse focuses on "youth" as a time for learning, apprenticeship and promise, the category is also often deployed in connection with so-called "youth problems." This was a tendency that was observed in much of the literature. Whereas youth of the 1960s were portrayed as a social movement, there is a tendency to see today's youth as social problem.

Julian Tanner (1996) and Christine Griffin (1993) both observe that "moral panic" has always surrounded situations considered deviant for youth. For example, age is the only variable making sex, pregnancy, alcohol use and smoking deviant for youth – all are perfectly legal for adults.[4] Teen pregnancy is often described as an "epidemic," even though pregnancy is not a disease and statistics show that a minuscule number of young women become pregnant during their teen years.[5] At the same time as these "problems" are defined for youth and capture media attention, other matters, such as the high mortality rate of young people in automobile crashes, receive considerably less attention.

Even if Western societies lack a clear moment of introduction into adulthood, many authors are studying "modern" rites of passage. In the literature, youth is most often portrayed as a period of transition to adulthood or as a time to make important choices for adult life, even though the latter way of thinking inflames some critics.

1.2 Youth – A Stage, Transition, Pathway, or Moment for Making Choices?

The first social scientist to "discover" adolescence was Stanley Hall in the 1880s. His writings laid the basis for viewing youth as a force of generational change but, at the same time, a problem for society. Hall used a developmental interpretation, linking adolescence to physical change and growth. He saw adolescence as a psychological stage triggered by the onset of puberty (Griffin, 1993: 17).

Since Hall's pioneering work there have been significant debates between those who hold to generational analyses – that is, a "transition perspective" – and those who focus on the social divisions among different segments of the population of young people (Jones and Wallace, 1992: 8). These debates have especially structured intellectual controversy in the United Kingdom and, to a somewhat lesser extent, in Canada. In particular, with increased attention going to "youth cultures" since in the 1960s, many analysts deployed a class-based perspective in their attempt to better understand various youth cultures, primarily working-class youth subcultures such as the punk movement of the late 1970s.[6]

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[4] Indeed, age has largely replaced marital status in determining the appropriateness of pregnancy. This shift in Western society was recently illustrated by the case of Bariya Ibrahim Magazu, a young Nigerian woman who committed the crime of extramarital sex. Although the focus was on the use of corporal punishment (in contravention of several international Human Rights conventions), the Canadian press consistently presented the story as a case of "teen pregnancy." This was despite the fact that her age was of no relevance to the charges against her or to her conviction in the state of Zamfra under *sharia* (Islamic law). Ironically, one investigative report stated that she was actually "quite old" for a first-time mother, since most women in her society marry and begin childbearing at age 15.

[5] A 1993 report by the College of Family Physicians of Canada stated that only 4 percent of women overall become pregnant during their teen years. The teenage pregnancy rate in Canada fell by almost 20 percent between 1975 and 1989 (Bala and Bala, 1996: 285). The pregnancy rate of 15- to 19-year-olds declined between 1974 and 1984, but rose again in 1989 and 1994, with greater variation and significantly higher rates over this period for 18- to 19-year-olds than for 15- to 17-year-olds. The most recent statistics also show substantially higher teen pregnancy rates in the Yukon and Northwest Territories than elsewhere in the country (Canadian Institute of Child Health, 2000: 132).

[6] For some interesting and primarily class-based analyses of the punk rock movement of the late 1970s, see Paul Fryer (1986); David Laing (1978; 1985); John Savage (1992); Robert Tillman (1980); and Julian Tanner (1978).

Given that so much attention is paid to young men's public lives, young women and families receive much less attention. Feminists and others have, therefore, been critical of the youth culture perspective. They have demonstrated the ways that an emphasis on class divisions and young men's experiences renders invisible other dimensions of social stratification (such as gender and race), and their consequences for the stages of adolescent life (Jones and Wallace, 1992: 12; Nava, 1992).

Despite such warnings, there continues to be a body of work that seeks to identify, with increasing complexity, the patterns of youth transition to adulthood, describing these as something like rites of passage. For example, work in France has been significantly influenced by the stages categorized by the Olivier Galland (1991) in his *Sociologie de la jeunesse.* He identifies both a public trajectory (schooling ➡ contingent work ➡ permanent work) and a private one (living with parents ➡ living alone ➡ living as a couple), and contends that each phase follows in succession of the one before (see also de Singly, 2000: 9). Therefore, transition to adulthood occurs at the *end* of adolescence, with the completion of schooling, and it coincides with the take-up of significant responsibilities such as leaving home and acquiring practical citizenship (work and earnings) and then full citizenship (Ellefsen and Hamel, 2000: 135; Hamel 2000: 68; Molgat, 2000: 81).

For her part, Gill Jones has followed the increasing complexity of processes and stages of leaving home. She observes that "leaving the parental home is a normal part of the overall process of transition from dependant childhood to independent citizenship. ... The move away from the family home is linked with other strands in the transition to adult citizenship, in particular the transition through education and training into the labour market, and the formation of a new family"(G. Jones, 1995:1). Indeed, leaving home and the formation of a household have always been seen as a rite of passage from dependent childhood to independent adulthood, along with other transitory events as such leaving school, starting a first job or having a baby (Jones and Wallace, 1992: 94). Many authors note that during much of the post-war era, the assumption was that there would be a close connection between starting work, leaving the parental home, getting married and having children. Many young people completed this pattern in order and in a relatively short period of time. However, the current situation of high unemployment among youth, longer education, family breakdown, changes in marriage patterns, and the general use of birth control has fragmented this pattern, making independence less predictable (G. Jones, 1995; Jones and Wallace, 1992; Mitchell and Gee, 1996).

If the work just mentioned has been heavily sociological, this discipline has not been alone in thinking of youth as a time of "between-ness." For medical and health disciplines, youth is an important stage in physical and psychosocial development.[7] Physical, emotional and intellectual maturation, cognitive skills, sexual development, gender socialization and self-esteem are all understood to play a role in the identity formation that occurs during adolescence. As is the case with early childhood, the frequent emphasis in the health literature on proper development and successful transitions or "outcomes" implies that what is important for this age group is less the effect on the lives of youth *at present* than the implications for young people's futures as adults (Advisory Committee on Population Health, 2000: 1).

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[7] For examples of research that treats youth as a time of "transition," see Hendry, *et al.* (1993); and Galaway and Hudson (1996).

A current effort is to identify biological pathways whereby "fundamental influences upon health status embed themselves in human biology." Focusing on future health problems contributes to the positioning of youth as acolytes (Hayes and Dunn, 1998: 12). This construction contains an element of determinism and establishes adulthood as an ideal of the rational actor – in control of life, practising healthy behaviour, and contributing to family, community and society.

Rather than focusing on predetermined stages through which one passes – more or less successfully and in accordance with a traditional pattern or biological development – some researchers have adopted a more action-oriented framework. They describe youth as a time of *choices*, of decisions that will have significant consequences in the future (Secrétariat du Sommet du Québec et de la jeunesse, 2000: 34; Coles, 1995: 9). Rather than focusing on transitions or trajectories, both being categories that imply a fair amount of determinism and an evolutionary way of thinking, Bob Coles writes of young people's *careers*. This concept puts the accent on the responsibility of actors for making choices and for designing their own lives. By "career," Coles means a sequence of statuses through which young people pass as they move from childhood dependency to independence. The notion of "staged status sequences" is relevant, and differs from the idea of a transition, because each decision in the sequence helps identify possible future steps (Coles, 1995: 9). There is a greater emphasis on the multi-dimensionality of the process. Thus, the decision to leave school early will have consequences for future employment, and is more than simply a "transition to work."

Of course, choice possibilities are not equally distributed, and therefore long-term consequences are not equal either. "Each of the three main transitions [education to labour market, family of origin to family of destination, and residence with parents to living away] do, therefore, interrelate, and the status gained in one may both 'determine' and 'be determined by' the status sequences which are likely to be attained in another" (Coles, 1995: 10). Jones also identifies life conditions that set down constraints or opportunities for choice. In addition to socioeconomic patterns of advantage and disadvantage are those related to having been raised in care, having a disability, and having been involved in crime and the juvenile justice system (Coles, 1995: 17). Some characteristics put one more or less at risk, and people who face the greatest risks are the least able to avoid them (1995: 47). These are often young people in conflict with their parents, those from a broken family, those with family unemployment or poverty, or those living in disadvantaged areas.

Brenda Copeland and colleagues use a similar metaphor, but write of *pathways* rather than careers. "Differences in social experience determined by gender, class, race, ethnic origin, ability, sexual orientation, rural/urban origins pervade the experiences of youth just as they do adults. These differences also provide important continuities of experience between youth and adults and are the social pathways. Public policies and social practices need to be attentive to these pathways" (Copeland, Armitage and Rutman, 1996: 273).

Whether describing transitions or careers, stages or pathways, all of these approaches treat youth as a moment of being "in between" or of "becoming." Again, these approaches view youth as a preparation for the future, and not a time important in itself. This way of thinking about youth is even more obvious when we examine the ways in which citizenship and youths' transition to citizenship is most often treated in the literature.

2.0 Youth as Citizens – Literature on Young People's Citizenship Status

Much of the literature treats adulthood as synonymous with independence. That is why we have defined being a full citizen as having the *resources, capacity and opportunity to participate* in the political, social, and economic areas of adult life. This view of citizenship conforms to long-standing treatment of the concept. Since the Greeks invented the notion, citizenship has been a status defined by the individual's capacity to participate in decision-making, and to take on the responsibility of self-government and the protection of the community by bearing arms. Of course, the capacity to do so was controlled by social norms that defined certain persons as less than human or less than fully capable. For centuries, slaves and women were excluded from citizenship on such grounds. Being unable to bear arms, and deemed to be the property or dependant of another person, meant that they could not be citizens.

Children are also excluded from citizenship by the fact of their dependency. Adults have more rights than do children: they can vote, enter into contracts, and be held responsible for their behaviour in both criminal and civil matters. As such, adults are regarded as independent and responsible for their actions in ways that children can never be. But the situation of youth is more complicated. "While childhood and adulthood can be distinguished in terms of dependency and independency, youth can be regarded as a state of relative semi-independency and autonomy" (Coles, 1995: 89). Youth are neither as dependent as children nor do they enjoy the rights and responsibilities of adults.

2.1 Independence and Autonomy

The full rights of adulthood are achieved gradually, depending on age and the particular right or responsibility under consideration (Coles, 1995: 6; Jones and Wallace, 1992: 21). As young people age, they acquire certain formal or legal rights such as the right to drive, to vote and to work. These "formal" rights tend to be static, are granted at certain ages, and generally change only by amending or introducing legislation that extends or limits the right or responsibility. Thus, the voting age can be lowered, the drinking age can be raised, and the age at which one is charged as an adult can be altered in accordance with political or ideological judgements.

In the literature, the action of leaving home is also seen as a junction between the private world of family and the public world of housing, labour markets, and other aspects of public life (G. Jones, 1995; Coles, 1995: 89). This action brings certain rights. Leaving the parental home generally produces legal emancipation from parental control. "By leaving home and seeking their place in society as emancipated adults, young people are trying to enter into a social contract with the state. As dependant children, it was their parents who held this contract on their behalf. By leaving home, they are effectively acknowledging the responsibilities and claiming the rights of adult citizens" (G. Jones, 1995: 4). Therefore, as Gill Jones does, one might see the acquisition of citizenship as a *process* of acquiring a package of rights and responsibilities. These are accumulated as young people progress from an indirect relationship with the state, mediated by their parents, to a direct relationship with the state as emancipated adults (1995: 19).

Clearly then, the capacity to maintain a living space separate from the family home is very important in thinking about true independence. It is more than that, however. Financial resources are key to this independence. François de Singly reminds us of an important philosophical distinction between the *autonomy* of the individual in a modern individualized society and true *independence*. The latter depends upon having one's own resources. In a time when schooling is lengthened, young people may acquire autonomy from their parents long before they are independent (de Singly, 2000: 12-13). In times of high unemployment or precarious employment, independence may not arrive until much later, and so the individual remains in a condition of dependence. The acquisition of full citizenship is thereby limited. Lacking their own resources, young people only attain "citizenship by proxy" (G. Jones, 1995).

The distinction between autonomy and independence explains why so many authors focus on access to a permanent job as a proxy for access to citizenship. For many, it is the key to real independence, marking the end of studies and the capacity to establish one's own family. A job is also an important basis for one's social identity, and therefore, it is often the beginning of taking one's place independently in society (Ellefsen and Hamel, 2000: 136; Gauthier, 2000: 25; Banks, 1992).

In such thinking, there are many parallels to and much learning from feminists' insistence that women's full citizenship depends on economic independence (Jones and Wallace, 1992: 150; Lister, 1990).[8] Indeed, some of the same authors (Lister, *et al.*, 2000) have turned to the matter of youth and citizenship, arguing that the most important barrier to overcome in the transition to adult citizenship status is access to quality employment.

We admit that this vision of citizenship is derived from a western notion of "the good life." It does not take into account cultural differences, such as societies in which adult children remain in the family home even while they are founding their own families. Rather, it assumes that the experience of Western European and Anglo-American countries of the last century apply to Canada as a whole. Independence is a liberal concept tied to individualism. Therefore a sign of being fully adult is living separately from one's parents and earning one's own income. Despite the limits to this definition, the reason we adopt this stance is that it underpins the vast majority of the academic literature reviewed here. Developing indicators more sensitive to diversity would be a research task, and the need for such is one of the conclusions of this work.

For us, however, citizenship and being a full citizen involves more than access to employment, even if this is a key variable in access to independence. Access to education, health care and social services, to protection from discrimination, to social and physical security, and to political participation all affect the dimensions of citizenship and are prerequisites to full citizenship.

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[8] Many authors indicate that access to secure employment is of paramount importance in the move out of economic dependence to independence and the capacity to be full citizens. Lister (1990); Lister, *et al.* (2000); O'Connor, Orloff and Shaver (1999); and Orloff, (1993) approach the issue of dependency from a feminist perspective but this is easily and usefully transposed to youth.

2.2 The Difficulty of Thinking about Youth and Citizenship as "Between-ness"

Many authors argue that the current extension of dependency fuelled by changes in social and economic contexts may affect the citizenship status of youth by reducing their capacity to be independent. Much work and thinking about citizenship has raised serious doubts about the notion that youth is a status of "between-ness," a way-station on the road to adulthood. Patterns have significantly changed, and there is now much more ambiguity and instability in the processes (Maunaye, 2000; Gauthier, 2000; Jones and Wallace, 1995; Boisvert, Hamel and Molgat, 2000). Indeed, there is what might be termed a "de-synchronization" of the stages of transition described previously (Ellefsen and Hamel, 2000: 138). Therefore, we can no longer think of generalized "transitions" when young people's rights are undermined by the rising likelihood of long periods of dependency upon their parents (Coles, 1995: 90-91).

A number of socioeconomic changes have put the notion of transition into serious doubt. First, formal education continues longer than it did previously, while lifelong learning means that one is never "done" with education or training once and for all. Second, rising unemployment hinders the transition to economic independence, and high levels of poverty among the working poor have the same effect. Moreover, the notion of citizenship has also changed significantly.

If the right to work has been a cornerstone of the post-war citizenship ideal, young people's *access* to that right today is increasingly structured by market forces. Young people now often experience a prolonged "junior status" before they enjoy the status of full adult workers (Jones and Wallace, 1992: 47). In addition, they remain dependent on their family of origin and its resources for an extended period. This is due both to rising tuition fees for those who decide to continue with their education (with all the corresponding implications this has for rising student indebtedness) and to the lack of job opportunities for those who choose to work. As well, governments frequently distinguish between the age of different forms of citizenship, conferring civil and even political rights well before those of social citizenship.

The capacity to establish an autonomous household has also been identified as fundamental to full citizenship (O'Connor, Orloff and Shaver, 1999).[9] Yet studies show that the rate of such establishment has declined significantly. In 1996, 23 percent of Canadian women aged 20 to 34 lived with their parents, compared to only 16 percent in 1981. Among young men, the comparable figures were 33 versus 26 percent. Among those aged 20-24 in 1996, almost three-quarters (74 percent) of men and over two-thirds (67 percent) of women lived with their parents, whereas, in 1981, only 69 and 60 percent respectively did so.

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[9] The reference is to a woman's ability to survive and support her children without being forced to marry or enter into a family relationship. For these authors a key issue of gender relations is whether women, like the majority of men, are in a position to be able to *freely choose* whether or not to enter into a marital or other form of relationship. Women's power vis-à-vis men is enhanced to the extent that this choice is truly "free" (O'Connor, Orloff and Shaver, 1999: 32). In all western states, the vast majority of men gain the ability to maintain an autonomous household through access to paid work. In the case of women, Orloff and others maintain that access to paid work has the effect of undermining the breadwinner-housewife family form. Accordingly, this enables women to claim full status as independent citizens and provides them with a significant degree of economic and political power (O'Connor, Orloff and Shaver, 1999: 33; Orloff, 1993: 322).

Moreover, many more young people were living as a couple, married or not, in their parents' homes. This percentage more than doubled for women between the ages of 20-24 (from 3 to 7 percent) and tripled for men (from 3 to 9 percent) during the same 15-year period (Boyd and Norris, 1999: 3).

While earlier historical periods were also characterized by a gap between leaving home for work and marriage, the return to the family home after a time away is a relatively new pattern. The presence of single-person or peer households is a new phenomenon, as is the idea that young people could leave home more than once. For Barbara Mitchell and Ellen Gee, "this is part of a general trend toward an increasing ambiguity or disorderliness in life course transition in western societies" (1996: 62).

These studies demonstrate the existence of a growing distinction between the moment of individual autonomy and that of independence – that is, between current citizenship status and the capacity to become full citizens. Some authors note that this prolongation of dependency, and therefore of *de facto* "youth" status, creates uncertainty among young people about their futures (Molgat, 1996: 4).

2.3 Youth as Citizens in the Here and Now

Observers point out that youth are facing significant new barriers to achieving independence and participation in society. As the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (1990: 20) warns:

> It should be made explicit that young people have the citizenship right to the material and non-material conditions to enable them to participate in society. In particular, the right of young people to autonomy, to leave the parental home and set up an independent household, should be acknowledged. In some member states, little policy is concerned explicitly with youth. Social policies concentrate on the need of other social groups and, in some cases, even discriminate against young people by disqualifying them from entitlement to services or transfer payments. Such policies as they exist concentrate in general on the areas of education and training and neglect young people's living conditions in a broader sense. Only small-scale and experimental initiatives exist, which are concerned with promoting the autonomy of young people and their participation in society.

Numerous observers, from the researchers cited above to the Quebec Federation of Labour, have noted that "youth" can extend well into a person's thirties. If people are living an experience that can last as long as 15 years, it seems somewhat inappropriate to treat it as little more than an apprenticeship or a preliminary stage of something more important. Semi-independence is extended for a long time in the lives of young people, and this extension may affect their citizenship status and delay their capacity to become full citizens.

Given these breaks in the traditional pattern, it seems useful to go beyond the perspective of youth as a time of transition, and to turn instead to an examination of the current situation. While we are concerned about the growth and development of young people, both personal and social, we primarily seek to understand their citizenship status *as youth*, in the here and now.

Therefore, our questions are of the following type. What kind of citizenship do youth enjoy now? What rights and responsibilities do they have, how do they gain access to them, and from which are they excluded? We next examine what the literature says about the citizenship status of youth in the here and now, in light of current social and economic conditions.

3.0 A Framework for Thinking about Youth and Citizenship

The framework that we will use to read the literature on youth and citizenship owes a great deal to the thinking presented above. In particular, it pays attention to the capacity of young people to achieve *independence*. This has been described as one of the fundamental principles of being a full citizen. Apart from basic civil rights, young people's rights were until recently usually confined to those of education, training or health. Much less attention has gone to their capacity for independence.[10]

Based on this argument, we want to know what the citizenship status of all youth is in the here and now, and the extent to which youth from different groups can achieve the independence required to be full citizens. So, the second foundational principle is that of *equality*.

There are two different ways that equality can be examined. One is to assess the extent to which inequalities exist among young people of different social backgrounds, ethnicity, national allegiances or gender. Some youth enjoy a better citizenship status than others, and we will seek to uncover patterns of discrimination and higher barriers to full citizenship. Another approach is to examine intergenerational inequalities.[11] If independence is an essential component of the definition of full citizenship, there are consequences of prolonging the period of dependency in terms of intergenerational inequalities.[12]

While the condition of *full citizenship* may seem a utopia because many adults never achieve it, nonetheless it is a useful measure against which to assess the situation of two groups. Throughout this review, we will consider both young adults who are formally citizens and young people who, before the age of majority, have a partial citizenship. In the case of the former, we will assess their capacity to achieve full citizenship. For the younger group, the goal is to determine what their citizenship status is, and the extent to which it may be changing over time.

By using the yardsticks of *independence* and *equality*, we will be able to track the citizenship status of youth in the here and now, as well as their capacity to become full citizens. The following subsections of this paper provide a re-reading of the literature on youth, examining the application of these two foundational principles of citizenship in six key areas of young people's lives.

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[10] Jones and Wallace (1992: 20) point out that the debate around citizenship has not been applied directly to young people – the notion of citizenship has remained primarily an adult concept.

[11] Of course, we are not alone in taking this approach. Several of the British authors cited here have also done so. See G. Jones (1995); Jones and Wallace (1992); Copeland, Armitage and Rutman (1996); Coles (1995); and Lister, *et al.* (2000).

[12] Gøsta Esping-Andersen notes that, while many of us have held "bad jobs" in our youth, for the most part we have not suffered any long-term repercussions from such experiences. The real issue is whether or not there is an opportunity for social mobility. According to Esping-Andersen, the ideal welfare state should be one that redefines social rights in a manner that provides the best opportunity for upward social mobility (1999: 294).

- ***Education: An Avenue to Exclusion?*** School is a primary site in the lives of youth in terms of learning about citizenship. The first subsection examines the problems of dropping out and of discrimination in education.
- ***Education: A Route to Independence and Equality?*** School is obviously a significant location for learning about citizenship and about community involvement, as well as about health and sexuality. This subsection reviews this literature.
- ***Education, Economic Independence and Security.*** Access to education, student debt and labour market conditions are delaying the economic independence of youth. Restructured employment has significantly changed young people's access to jobs and to income, thereby fundamentally altering when and if full citizenship is achieved.
- ***Justice and Freedom from Discrimination.*** There are several areas in which youth face discrimination. This occurs directly and indirectly on the basis of age and due to membership in a particular community. Examples of differential treatment are found in the areas of work, medical care, social services, and equal treatment before the law.
- ***Personal Security and Well-being in the Community.*** This subsection addresses the health of youth in terms of the causes of morbidity and mortality, as well as through recreation and leisure. It examines the rights of youth to a safe environment and personal security. In this realm, as in others, significant gender differences exist.
- ***Identity, Belonging and Participation.*** This subsection examines issues of identity, belonging, as well as political participation among youth. At the same time, the five areas listed above all can affect the extent to which young people feel included and able to engage in society.

3.1 Education – An Avenue to Exclusion?

Young people in Canada are legally required to remain in school until age 16. One of the goals of education is to prepare young people for the various responsibilities and forms of engagement with society that they will experience as adults. School prepares young people for future employment, and for their future role as citizens. School also involves learning about how to manage the consumption of a range of substances, enjoy a healthy life, and to practise safe sex. Good schools and schooling cannot guarantee that young people will achieve independence and full citizenship, but factors limiting access and generating inequality in education will undermine their citizenship status, in the here and now as well as in the future.

Besides playing a role in preparing young people for the world of work, school also plays a role in fostering a sense of belonging among youth. Unfortunately, the research shows that not all students feel included at school. Schools are not free from discrimination and some young people experience disengagement. There is evidence that discrimination based upon gender, race, sexual orientation, and ability exists within Canadian schools. The absence of a safe and supportive environment within the school system has a direct impact on the ability of young people to exercise their citizenship right to an education. Moreover, it has the effect of isolating and excluding certain students. The continued persistence of attitudes of intolerance threatens the right to be free from discrimination, and can lead to marginalization from citizenship.

One outcome of disengagement is that not everyone finishes high school. Drop-outs often share common characteristics such as race or social class, suggesting that our education system does not offer the same schooling opportunities to all youth. Acquiring a high school diploma is generally seen as a rite of passage from youth to adulthood, as it opens the door to higher status positions in the adult labour market. Dropping out of high school reduces a young person's opportunity to achieve independence and to engage successfully in society later in life.

Dropping Out of School

For decades, the issue of high-school drop-outs has captured a great deal of media attention. Such individuals are often portrayed as potential social and economic problems. The alleged failure of institutions to keep young people in school is often portrayed the same way. If education represents a decisive factor in the acquisition of full citizenship, its absence could be a strong factor in inducing exclusion.

Statistics Canada (1991) suggests that the real drop-out rate for Canadian high school students is actually lower than the one-in-three figure frequently quoted.[13] The most current estimates suggest that about one-in-five students fail to complete high school.[14] The evidence suggests that the drop-out rate has been in steady decline for several decades, likely a reflection of the increased difficulties drop-outs experience in the labour market (Tanner, Krahn and Hartnagel, 1995: 150). While in the past, drop-outs were generally able to find secure albeit low-skilled employment in manufacturing, this is increasingly no longer the case (Tanner, Krahn and Hartnagel, 1995: 4).

Drop-outs are often presented as a threat to the democratic system and to law and order. A well-educated population is considered vital to the proper functioning of a democratic political system, particularly when public issues are complex and citizens with insufficient education appear ill-equipped to make informed choices. Moreover, levels of political apathy are noted to be highest among the least educated (Tanner, Krahn and Hartnagel, 1995: 9). Those who do not finish school are often deemed to be more likely to engage in "deviant" behaviour, such as petty crime and substance abuse. Studies, however, generally attribute such behaviour to the economic deprivation that usually accompanies low-levels of schooling, as opposed to a lack of education *per se* (Statistics Canada, 1991; Tanner, Krahn and Hartnagel, 1995: 117, 149).

It is ironic, then, that some studies find that government policies can have the effect of undermining young people's ability to remain in school (Tanner, Krahn and Hartnagel, 1995: 157). In Alberta, the government decided to stop providing free secondary education for students who take longer than normal to complete high school. While the goal of the program was to discourage students from prolonging their high school years, this policy may have the unintended effect of discouraging completion.

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[13] Drop-out rates differ between males and females. On average, females are more likely to graduate from high school than males, while males are more likely to fail a grade and to believe that school will not lead to a job (Gauthier and Bernier, 1997: 160; Furlong and Cartmel, 1997: 22).

[14] As cited in Massicotte, Levin's estimate of not finishing within 13 years is between 30 and 35 percent, but the Canadian Teachers Federation's estimate of the national drop-out rate is around 18 percent, although almost half return to school by age 20 (Massicotte, 1996, 15-16).

Those who are experiencing difficulty in school may become more inclined to quit rather than persist and pay fees (Tanner, Krahn and Hartnagel, 1995: 157). A similar policy also exists in Quebec, where students who fail a CEGEP course have to pay a special fee to retake it.

Aboriginal youth are at particular risk of dropping out. Numerous studies have found that many Aboriginal children perceive high-school graduation to be an unrealistic and largely unattainable goal (Gabor, Thibodeau and Manychief, 1996: 84).

While the success of Aboriginal youth in school is improving overall, the Auditor General of Canada (2000) notes that, at their current rate of progress, it will be a full two decades before academic parity is reached with other Canadians. The generally poor academic attainment of Aboriginal youth has long-term implications for their ability to find adequate employment and achieve financial independence (Gabor, Thibodeau and Manychief, 1996: 87).

Studies consistently indicate that young people from lower socioeconomic classes are less likely than their middle-class peers to finish high school or secure a place in institutions of higher learning (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997: 20). This trend may reflect a lack of social capital upon which less advantaged youth can draw upon in the classroom (Wotherspoon, 1998: 184; Looker and Lowe, 2001: 6). Other problems which individuals from poor families face are nutritional deficiencies, poor health, and pressures to combine school and work to help the family "make ends meet." These challenges have negative effects on school performance (Wotherspoon, 1998: 184). Indeed, this trend can become cyclical, reproducing social inequality from generation to generation. As Tanner and his colleagues point out, "since children from less-advantaged families are more likely to drop out of school, high drop-out rates reflect the reproduction across generations of patterns of social inequality" (Tanner, Krahn and Hartnagel, 1995: 10).

Box 3
Highlights: Dropping Out of School

- Although high school drop-out rates are declining, about one-in-five young people fail to graduate. This has direct implications for their future success in the labour market. Drop-outs experience much higher unemployment and are often confined to poor paying jobs and insecure work.
- Provincial policies that impose fees on those who fail to graduate "on time" may have the unintended effect of discouraging some young people from completing high school.
- Higher drop-out rates among poor students and among Aboriginal students indicate a systemic problem. Social inequality is reproduced as successive generations of these two groups fail to achieve academic parity and drop out of school at higher rates than their peers.

Discrimination in Schools – Sexism, Racism, Disability and Poverty

Research on what leads to success in school often identifies a sense of belonging, a safe and supportive environment, an inclusive curriculum, and a sense of respect. Social exclusion continues to be present within the school system at all levels, often taking the form of sexism, racism, and discrimination on the basis of ability. These social pathologies have direct consequences on the capacity of all young people to exercise their citizenship rights to an education and to be free from discrimination.

A substantial body of research exists on gender bias within the educational system. Jennifer Tipper (1997), for instance, identifies the existence of a "hidden curriculum" that shapes the educational experiences of young women, which has the effect of influencing gender roles and stereotypes about women's abilities, particularly in the areas of mathematics, science and technology. Research also suggests the existence of systemic discrimination in teachers' attitudes towards students through encouraging more assertive behaviour in boys, often at the expense of female participation. These forms of discrimination can result in a loss of interest in academic achievement, or a retreat from participation due to lack of confidence among young women. Tipper adds that the "hidden curriculum" serves to reinforce gender inequities and limits a young woman's ability to develop a healthy sense of self and to succeed academically (1997: 39).

There is also evidence of gender inequality in post-secondary education (which is discussed in Section 3.4 in more detail). Lorna Erwin (1996) found that women's educational and career aspirations tend to be lowered or compromised over the course of their undergraduate experience. Her study uncovered contradictory messages: "That women should pursue careers has become firmly entrenched in the culture of both our corporate and educational institutions, but this has not eradicated traditional understandings of women's responsibility for the domestic sphere" (Erwin, 1996: 203).

The women in Erwin's study consistently indicated that career fulfillment did not replace, but was added to, a version of the traditional gender role. Although they wanted men to be equal participants, women continued to view raising children and running the home as "something for which they are uniquely fitted and responsible" (Erwin, 1996: 203). The author therefore argued that the mandate of schooling should expand beyond material outcomes to include cultural ones. She concluded by calling upon schools to implement curricula that facilitates "critical thinking about the contradictory forces that women confront and identifies the structural basis of the oppression and blocked mobility" that women often face (Erwin, 1996: 204).

While a great deal of attention has been paid to the problems young women face in school, some observers have begun to examine how the school system also appears to be failing young men. Based on so-called "inherent characteristics" of males and females, Michael Gurian claims that boys are often short-changed by the public school system. He contends this is because the conventional classroom model fails to recognize boys' tendencies to be more aggressive and to possess weaker verbal and communication skills, when compared to girls (cited in Yee, 1997).

Since school tends to emphasize the verbal over the "active," many young men therefore experience problems at school. They are often seen as being disruptive, are more likely to be diagnosed with learning disabilities, more likely to be victims of violence, and more prone to dropping out (Yee, 1997).

As with sexism, the continued presence of both overt and covert racism in Canada is also well documented (Hendry, *et al.*, 1995: 92). Research suggests that race and ethnicity affect educational and social opportunities, and that these two variables cannot easily be separated from class, gender and other social characteristics (Wotherspoon, 1998: 170). Others note that the norms, values, ideas, perspectives and traditions of one social group, namely White settlers, have become institutionalized as the legitimate basis of power and knowledge in Canadian society (Sefa Dei, 1996: 29). This has the effect of marginalizing the traditions of other groups.

A recent study by Paul Anisef and Kenise M. Kilbride (2000) found that newcomer youth (both immigrants and refugees) who arrived in their later teen years experienced problems associated with the development of identity, communication, and customs and values, as well as gender discrimination. One particular problem that newcomers face is the inadequacy of training in English as a second language (Anisef and Kilbride, 2000; Henry, *et al.*, 1995). Poverty was also noted to be a recurring problem for many newcomers. Anisef and Kilbride conclude that the specific differences of immigrant youth need to be addressed if we are to ensure that youth develop a valued sense of self and do well in school (Anisef and Kilbride, 2000).

To enable youth to cope with racism, experts argue that students must be encouraged and provided with the means to think critically about racism as a societal problem (Dwyer, 1999). This would enable those affected to understand their personal experiences as part of a broader social structure. Moreover, it would help raise awareness among those not affected by racism (Kobayashi, 1999). From this perspective, there is a need to highlight the issue of racism within the core school curriculum, rather than treating it as a special unit (Dwyer, 1999).

Education also falls short for young people with physical disabilities. A Statistics Canada study found that youth with disabilities are over-represented in the lower educational categories and under-represented in the higher ones (Hill, 1996: 118). Due to barriers that exist throughout the education system, students with disabilities are usually not properly prepared to enter post-secondary education (Hill, 1996: 118).[15] This evidence supports the view that physical disability causes a "delayed adolescence" by interfering with mobility, socialization and acceptance of developing adult roles among adolescents, their parents, educators, and service providers (Stevens, *et al.*, 1996). For youth with disabilities, these studies indicate that achieving the autonomy needed to move into full citizenship is compromised.

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[15] Problems faced by young people with disabilities include logistical issues such as a lack of transitional support, institutional inflexibility, physical barriers that limit accessibility, and a lack of both services and faculty accommodation. The attitudes of teachers, employers and even parents also contribute to a lack of the self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-determination needed to pursue a post-secondary program (Hill, 1996).

Box 4
Highlights: Discrimination in Schools

- Systemic discrimination on the basis of gender, race and ability are problems within the Canadian educational system. These types of social exclusion weaken the citizenship status of youth.
- A "hidden curriculum" reinforces stereotypes and traditional gender roles.
- Recent research on the school system suggests it may fail to meet the needs of young boys.
- Attitudes of discrimination in schools, and in society in general, continue to persist. Racism needs to be addressed as a social structure.
- For newcomer youth, programs for English as a Second Language (or French as Second Language in Quebec) are often inadequate to meet their needs. Many of these students are also adversely affected by poverty.
- Students with disabilities continue to experience problems in school. They are over-represented among those with the lowest educational attainment and often are poorly prepared for post-secondary education.

Box 5
Citizenship Implications: Education and Avenues to Exclusion

For young people, many routes to exclusion still exist in Canadian society. Despite declines in the high school drop-out rate, a full 20 percent of young people fail to graduate. In the past, those with low levels of education could find employment, but those who now fail to complete high school face the very real prospect of being unemployed or finding poor paying jobs and insecure work. They are therefore more likely to live in poverty, without the economic independence considered key to achieving full citizenship. This problem particularly affects Aboriginal youth and those from disadvantaged families, perpetuating inequality across generations.

While young people who quit school are likely to experience social exclusion and a corresponding segregation from full citizenship status, exclusion can also exist within the school system itself. Schools continue to stream young women into "traditional" career paths and gender roles. The in-school presence of racism and discrimination based on ability is well documented, having the effect of isolating young people who are deemed "different."

3.2 Education – A Route to Independence and Equality?

Citizenship Education and Learning Citizenship

Courses in citizenship education have recently been added to provincial curricula. The High School Foundation Program in New Brunswick expresses the hope that through education "all students will become active and concerned citizens, knowledgeable about their community, provinces and country and its place in the global village" (Sears, Clarke and Hughes, 1998: 4). It has also been observed that "almost everyone agrees that a principal aim to schooling ought to be to prepare students to be informed and active citizens" (Sears, 1998: 1, 7).

In Canada, the preoccupation with national identity has always been a key component of citizenship education, and the federal government has long been interested in using education to foster a sense of national identity (Sears, Clarke and Hughes, 1998). However, few jurisdictions in Canada provide a separate curriculum for citizenship education. Rather, it is seen as the ultimate goal of social studies in general.

Significant debates continue to exist regarding the appropriate content of citizenship education (McAndrew, Tessier and Bourgeault, 1997: 73; Papillon, 2000; Jenson and Papillon, 2000; Sears, 1998). Who will decide which knowledge is necessary to foster access to full citizenship? Who defines what it means to be a good citizen? How much capacity do minorities have to influence school curriculum and citizenship education? How far do we want to go to involve youth in school decision-making? These are only some of the issues involved in implementing a citizenship education program.

Quebec and British Columbia already have explicit elements of citizenship education within their school curricula. Nova Scotia and Ontario also require the inclusion of this topic in the curriculum.

But citizenship education is not necessarily just about content. It is also about practices and the teaching of autonomy. However, researchers who have examined the teaching of citizenship in high school have generally found that despite the apparent interest in promoting a more activist form of citizenship, there is still a tendency to teach about formal political institutions and peoples' rights within the polity as opposed to teaching about the practice of citizenship. Rarely does citizenship education promote a critical way of thinking about citizenship or political participation (Sears, 1998; Pammet, 2001). Indeed, Jon Pammet indicates that the apparent lack of political interest that young people exhibit may reflect the fact that young people are rarely taught about politics in such a manner that encourages direct participation (2001: 16). Therefore, there has been recent interest in preparing young people for a more active form of citizenship (Papillon, 2000; Pammet, 2001).

Students learn by both experience and observation, and school acts as an important and early place where they observe the exercise of democracy and citizenship. Many authors, however, identify contradictions between the discourse of citizenship participation, and the actual manner in which schools operate (McAndrew, Tessier and Bourgeault, 1997: 66; Papillon, 2000: 18; Sears, 1998: 13).

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As many observers note, if schools are supposed to prepare students to be good citizens, the school system will have to take a serious look at its own democratic credentials since schools continue to be organized in a hierarchical and less than democratic fashion. For instance, students tend to have little say in how the education system is run, even though they are arguably the most affected by changes made to it.

For many, opening up aspects of the decision-making process to young people could greatly improve young people's ability to exercise their citizenship rights at a relatively young age and encourage critical thinking (McAndrew, Tessier and Bourgeault, 1997: 73). Pammet also notes that facilitating political involvement at younger ages might promote concern for community over individual benefits (2001: 15).

A number of authors have also begun to examine the role of volunteering and of extracurricular activities on citizenship education (F. Jones, 2000: 36; McNeal, 1999; Paré, 1997: 81). Glanville, for instance, found that participation at a young age in organizations such as student government is strongly correlated with political engagement later in life (1999: 285), a point corroborated by others (McNeal, 1999; Canadian Council on Social Development, 2001: 28).

Many other authors highlight the importance of paying attention to the equality aspects of participation in extracurricular activities. While involvement in extracurricular activities when young might reduce the discrepancy between the political participation of different economic classes, the reverse has also been observed. This is because access to extracurricular activities differs by race, gender, socioeconomic status and academic ability. Therefore, participation might widen the gap in political involvement, especially between youths from families of high and low socioeconomic standing (Glanville, 1999: 289).

Authors have tended to express concern over two trends, however: (1) extracurricular activities tend to decline among older youth cohorts, and (2) involvement in extracurricular activities is not equally distributed among youth (McNeal, 1999: 304). Of particular concern is the fact that extracurricular activities have been a focus of budget cuts in recent years (Paré, 1997: 80; Mahon, 2001). The Canadian Council on Social Development, for instance, has recently noted that young people from poorer families tend to participate less in recreational activities (2001: 37). In this vein, young people's access to citizenship may be in retreat. In short, while extracurricular activities are an important determinant of young people's citizenship, both as actors exercising some control over their present circumstances and preparing for their future, equality is clearly not the norm.

Box 6
Highlights: Citizenship Education and Learning Citizenship

- Despite a renewed interest in citizenship education, few jurisdictions in Canada actively teach it. Citizenship education tends to be part of the more general social science curriculum. While citizenship education involves both content and practice, much less emphasis is placed on the latter.
- To the extent that citizenship education does exist, it tends to focus more on "passive" knowledge about political and democratic institutions and less on the acquisition of a sense of autonomy and a critical way of thinking. Rarely is citizenship taught in a manner that encourages critical thinking about the issues and active engagement as citizens.
- Authors note that schools, the very institutions used to teach citizenship, are not very democratic. Students have little input into how schools are run. Therefore, the lessons learned in that environment may not reinforce good citizenship practices.
- Evidence suggests that participation in extracurricular activities has a positive effect on political engagement, especially later in life. Increasing inequalities in access to extracurricular activities may therefore have an impact on citizenship, particularly for those from poorer backgrounds.

Learning Self-Control – Health Education

The citizenship right to be and remain healthy includes health education. Historically, public health played a role in the education system, teaching young people how to live a healthy life (Advisory Committee on Population Health, 2000). Reviewing the presence of a right to health education is difficult because there is a general lack of research examining the role of health units, or teachers, or what "life skills" are taught in provincial curricula.

Some observers suggest that this aspect of the curriculum is generally shaped by a perceived adult need to control youth behaviour, rather than to serve the needs of youth. They add that this is particularly true with respect to the adoption of "contested behaviours" symbolic of adult status (Paglia and Room, 1997).

Most research on youth alcohol and drug use measures behaviour. For example, a 1999 Health Canada report found that 20 percent of teens are heavy drinkers (defined as five or more drinks per drinking session), and 3 percent of girls and 6 percent of boys eleven years old said they were regular drinkers (Health Canada, 1999: 112). Stoduto, Adlaf and Mann (1997) found that approximately 40 percent of young people report attending "bush parties."[16] Seventy percent drink alcohol at parties, and 16 percent either drove a vehicle after drinking or rode in a vehicle with someone who had been drinking.

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[16] "Bush party" is a slang term often used to describe nighttime outdoor parties that take place in forests, fields, quarries, and so on.

Young men were 3.5 times more likely than women to drive after drinking. Cannabis use increased from 12.7 percent in 1993 to 22.7 percent in 1995 among young people in grades 7, 9, 11 and 13. However, when put into context, we observe that drinking and driving, as well as cannabis use, have declined steadily since the late 1970s (Health Canada, 1999: 113).

The goal of most research on patterns of substance use is to reduce harm, and in particular to prevent traffic fatalities. Norman Giesbrecht of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health points out that addiction and drinking are complex issues. The roots of harmful drinking for drinkers are situational, environmental and intra-personal. Knowledge about current behaviour can lead to interventions to reduce harm, by creating lower-risk environments for alcohol consumption or by discouraging binge drinking. He adds that engaging youth in discussions about approaches to dealing with drinking-related problems may provide an opportunity to reduce harm (Giesbrecht, 1999: 354).

Less attention has been paid to how alcohol use is learned, and what strategies are successful in reducing harm. Rather than cast all alcohol use as "risk-taking," some authors such as Jennifer L. Maggs (1997) recommend recognition of the strong social needs and goals of youth that are associated with alcohol use. In examining the period of transition from high school to post-secondary institutions, participants in Maggs' study reported a positive aspect of drinking often resulting in peer acceptance and inclusion in social events (1997: 349).

Prevention literature rarely acknowledges the reasons why youth engage in substance use in the first place – for fun. From the perspective of youth, the primary reason for experimenting with drugs is because they enjoy the experience. It is generally not used as a form of escape (Paglia and Room, 1999: 37). Drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes or marijuana are also activities that symbolize the desirable status of adulthood. For this reason, youth often reject the message they cannot drink until they are "of age" because it is seen as contradictory and hypocritical. The message prohibits at the same time that it invites, by reinforcing the status of these behaviours as claims and behaviours synonymous with adulthood (Paglia and Room, 1999: 8).[17]

Over the last ten years, tobacco use among youth has increased, particularly among young women (Advisory Committee on Population Health, 2000). Approximately 27 percent of males and 31 percent of females aged 15 to 19 are smokers (Seguire and Chalmers, 2000). In their study of persistent smoking by girls in the United Kingdom and the United States, Arthur Crisp and his colleagues found that smoking is most common among relatively overweight females. Because this segment of the population uses smoking as a (potentially effective) weight-control strategy, these researchers argue that smoking cessation programs often fail, in part because they do not address the link between concerns about body weight and the use of tobacco as an appetite suppressant (Crisp, *et al.*, 1999: 667).

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[17] Gambling is another activity of adulthood that is known to have addictive properties. Youth are barred from legally participating in gambling until the age of 18 in most provinces and the territories. Following the opening of a casino in Windsor, Ontario, a study found that underage gambling was accessible, that it had become an accepted norm even for young adolescents, and that a significant number of participants reported gambling-related problems. For instance, 22 percent had difficulty controlling the amount of gambling they engaged in, 8.6 percent borrowed money and did not pay it back, and 2.2 percent stole in order to gamble (Govoni, Rupcich and Frisch, 1996).

Smoking prevention and cessation programs must therefore address some of the underlying causes of smoking, such as such as weight control among young women, and the associated cultural messages that women (and men) must be slim to be successful (Crisp, *et al.*, 1999). Based on this research, teaching youth the skills needed to make healthy choices would therefore require addressing smoking and substance abuse as complex behaviours, which are often symptomatic of other problems.

A review of the evaluation literature on substance abuse programs found the goals of such programs to be two-fold: (1) life-long abstention from tobacco and illicit drug use, and (2) postponement of alcohol use until the legal drinking age. Considering actual youth behaviour, Paglia and Room argue that these goals are unrealistic (1999: 13). Consumption patterns are well documented, the age of initiation is low, and preventing use completely is only sporadically attained. An exception to this strategy is the recent harm reduction approach taken for drinking and driving. This is unique in that the realities of teenage drinking are accepted and the goal is to minimize the casualties. According to researchers, this approach has met with some degree of success (Paglia and Room, 1999: 33).

Paglia and Room claim that health education shaped by an adult desire for control or by moral panic infringes on the present and future ability of young people to be independent and responsible citizens. The school health curriculum should therefore address the real needs of youth for information on limiting harm from substance use and for coping with difficult circumstances (Paglia and Room, 1999: 40). The issues of unintentional injuries, intentional violence and suicide, which are also part of health education, will also be addressed below in the section entitled Personal Security and Well-being in the Community.

Box 7
Highlights: Learning Self-Control – Health Education

- Simplistic educational messages of prohibition and abstinence from alcohol and recreational drug use appear to have little effect in influencing the behaviour of youth.
- Research suggests that use of alcohol, tobacco and marijuana often symbolize the desirability of adult status. Some observers suggest that alcohol use often reflects an attempt to explore issues of personal identity, and in part represents a young person's shift to a more mature adult status.
- If education to reduce youth smoking is to be effective, programs must take into account the reasons why young people smoke. Some young women use tobacco as an appetite suppressant in order to control their weight.

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Sexuality Education

Sex education is another area where youth are entitled to knowledge that is adequate and appropriate.[18] Sexuality is one of the areas where youth develop autonomy. Having the resources and capacity to take on this aspect of life while avoiding morbidity, mortality and unwanted pregnancy, as well as becoming pregnant when desired, is a matter of individual education and context – social norms, degree of equality, and types of relationships. For health and social reasons, and on the basis of morality and societal intervention, adult regulation plays a large role in influencing youth sexuality via sex education.

What youth learn about sexuality through cultural mediums and pornography requires attention in sex education curricula in order to reduce harm. Youth who cited pornography as a form of sex education were also found to lack knowledge about the boundary between consensual and non-consensual sexual violence (Lavoie, Robitaille and Hébert, 2000). As with racism, the presence of sexism means that young people need a language and the critical capacity to recognize inequality in cultural mediums, in order to interpret what is "normal" and forge healthy sexual relationships.

Knowledge about sexually transmitted diseases is also important. Young Canadians have experienced the HIV epidemic in greater proportion than other age groups (Albert and Williams, 1998: 13). Between 1985 and 1990, the estimated median age at time of infection was 23. Higher infection rates among socially and economically marginalized youth (young gay men, street-involved youth, and Aboriginal youth) have led researchers to focus on the specific dynamics that contribute to the creation of susceptible populations. While men who have sex with men still represent the majority of new cases, females now account for 7.5 percent of the total cumulative reported AIDS cases in Canada (Health Canada, 2000).[19]

Although women aged 30 to 39 are contracting AIDS at higher rates than younger women, a few studies indicate that an awareness of the risk of infection with HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases through heterosexual relationships is low among youth (Dematteo, *et al.*, 1999: 361). Sexually transmitted diseases affect young women far more than young men, and far more than other age groups. The rate of chlamydia infection – which can have permanent health repercussions, including infertility, if left untreated or treated too late – has dropped, but is still extremely high, at 999 per 100,000 for women aged 15 to 19 (Canadian Institute of Child Health, 2000: 134). Gonorrhea and syphilis are also a problem for female youth.

Although "safe sex" is the main message of many sex education courses, pregnancy has dominated concerns in the adult regulation of youth sexuality. "Teen pregnancy" was declared a crisis in the mid-1980s and, as in other countries, stigmatization associated with pregnancy was targeted at unmarried women whose pregnancy revealed sex outside of marriage (Kelly, 1996).

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[18] The issue of "appropriate" teaching is obviously complicated. The viewpoints of various faiths and cultural communities are the same, and this raises a challenge for providing culturally sensitive teaching and transmission of the information youth require to practice safe sex.

[19] Heterosexual contact with a man from an endemic country or a man otherwise at risk represent the two main exposure categories among adult female cases of AIDS. Injection drug use ranks third, and doubled during the 1990s (Health Canada, 2000).

Although there are important differences among those promoting the reduction of teen pregnancy rates, there is a general consensus that the term *teen* pregnancy labels this life stage as one inappropriate for childbearing. This message has dominated both the literature and sex education programs in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. Ironically, other Western European countries (where early pregnancy and childbearing are less prevalent) provide more supportive conditions for parenthood via universal access to child care and post-secondary education (issues that are dealt with in greater detail below).[20]

Early childbearing is associated with increased risk of poor social, economic and health outcomes for mothers and children (National Health Service, 1997: 1). Significantly, however, findings consistently indicate that "an adolescent mother has no more problems [raising a child] than a mature woman does when socioeconomic class is factored in" (Ward, 1995: 156).[21] Longitudinal studies have demonstrated that women who have children early can "catch up" to their peers who follow another life course. Differences in outcomes usually depend upon age, skills, return to school, time of second pregnancy, and degree of social isolation (Gullotta, Adams and Markstrom, 2000: 312). A comparative study of lone mothers in Britain and Sweden found that both had poor health. However, about 50 percent of the health disadvantage of lone mothers in Britain was accounted for by poverty and joblessness, versus only 3 percent in Sweden (Whitehead, Burstrom and Diderichson, 1999).[22] When asked their views, youth report their problems not as pregnancy or parenthood but as "money and jobs, jobs and money" (Ward, 1995: 154).

Information about and techniques to control one's own body is a fundamental civil right of citizenship. Yet, of the few studies on this subject, several report that health education is not taught adequately to inform and empower youth to take control of their own lives and thus take full responsibility for their actions. While sex education is taught in most Canadian high schools, its content varies widely (Bala and Bala, 1996). A recent government document cites research that indicates adolescents often express frustration with the narrow scope of that curriculum. Young people desire information on a broad range of topics, such as sexual orientation and date rape, which many of them do not feel they are getting (Advisory Committee on Population Health, 2000).

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[20] There are also cultural differences in attitudes towards youth sexuality. At an international level, the anti-natalist policy directed at young people to restrict childbearing fits with the emergence of a vision of reproduction as a privilege that follows success in the labour market. The World Bank (1993) calls this model "the unfinished reproductive revolution." Faye E. Ginsberg and Rayna Rapp (1995) refer to this as "stratified reproduction" for its inherent class bias, particularly in casting children as consumers who thereby represent a burden for all but the wealthy.

[21] Research conducted in the 1990s found that earlier studies may have overstated the negative socioeconomic consequences of teen parenthood (Kelly, 1996: 426).

[22] Whitehead, Burstrom and Diderichson (1999) hypothesize that the health gap of Swedish lone mothers is caused by "time poverty," poor quality of work (with greater exposure to occupational health hazards or high-demand/low control jobs), and lower access to social support.

Another study of young people's views found the following recurrent themes in Canadian focus groups: (1) the need for timely and appropriate education, including information that is not exclusively heterosexual and that covers issues associated with "coming out" for gay and lesbian youth; (2) access to resources; (3) discussions on various aspects of love and sexuality; and (4) information on services for sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, and risk behaviour (Caputo, 1999: 11-16). Given other evidence that AIDS, pregnancy and sexual abuse have been found to precipitate youth suicides, the right to health education should include the transmission of the information and skills that are needed to cope with negative life events (Health Canada, 1997: 271). Dialogue on topics such as sexual identity (straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender), and sexual abuse, including commercial sexual exploitation in the sex trade, would broaden the ability of youth to think critically about these issues as societal problems. Listening to the perspectives of youth who can speak from these perspectives would be instructive in this regard.[23]

The same focus group results found that many young women expressed frustration in their sexual relationships with young men. In particular they noted the inequality of being subjected to a hypocritical double standard – whereas male promiscuity is usually perceived to be "cool," promiscuous females are usually viewed as "sluts" (Caputo, 2000: 11). Michelle Fine's comparison of sex education in New York City and Sweden, although two decades old, found a silencing of a "discourse of desire" that carried the consequence of denying female students access to a view of themselves as sexual subjects (Fine, 1973).

She observed that sex education in New York City was comprised of three discourses: (1) sexuality as violence, (2) sexuality as victimization, and (3) sexuality as individual morality.[24] This contrasted sharply with sex education in Sweden, where government documents encouraged "teaching students to 'acquire a knowledge … [which] will equip them to experience sexual life as a source of happiness and joy in fellowship with other [people]'." An examination of the Swedish curriculum found that it also contained the explicit instruction of inclusion, to make youth who wish to wait and those who have had early sexual experiences feel understood and accepted (Fine, 1973: 79). In Sweden in the early 1970s, the curriculum assumed and enabled responsibility for one's actions at any point. This was in stark contrast to the New York curriculum, where marriage was implicitly used as a marker of the assumption of responsibility.

Although there is little research on sex education in Canada, it appears that young women are held to a higher level of accountability than male youth. Yet they lack access to a language (and to health services, as the next section will show) to enable them to be accountable. This may in part be due to changing or conflicting social norms. One way to develop a language for understanding different views between generations in a pluralistic society may be through the use of "standards" or types of relationships.

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[23] Such documents or speakers would be available from gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender organizations. On the sex trade, see Kingsley, Krawczyk, and Mark (2000).

[24] All three discourses also spoke exclusively about heterosexual relations and presented marriage as a safe haven, denying the existence of other sexual orientations and ignoring the victimization of women that can occur within marriage.

Cultural influences on "sexual mores in the age of AIDS" were examined in an in-depth study of University of California students conducted by Dana Lear. The findings shed some light on the challenges young people often face in talking about safe sex with their partners. Participants in Lear's study were "generally unprepared to communicate." They reported that sex education before university was "woefully inadequate" and that their friends were found to be the most important influence on safe sex practices (Lear, 1997: 148). She also found that one of the most important difficulties in practising safe sex was male resistance to condom use. Specifically, "among the straight and bisexual women and gay and bisexual men, more than half had experience with a man resisting condom use" (Lear, 1997: 104).[25]

A study of Hispanic youth in Montreal also found that half of the 114 male and female heterosexual youth surveyed did not use any contraceptive method during first intercourse. Acculturation was not significant in determining contraceptive use – but degree of traditionalism in sexual roles was (Arroyo, *et al.*, 1998). To be effective, the prevention of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases needs to take into account the construction of trust and risk, as well as the connections between sexuality, gender, relationships and consent.

A barrier to improving sex education for the safety of young people are reports that public health systems have decreased the priority placed on working in schools (Advisory Committee on Population Health, 2000). Access to health services have "seriously eroded" in recent years, and interventions have switched to tertiary rather than primary prevention. Only if students experience problems do they meet the requirements for accessing public health nurses, psychologists, or counsellors. Less teaching time for health education is thus compounded by waiting lists for health professionals assigned to several schools (Advisory Committee on Population Health, 2000). As a result, youth may be denied access to adequate health and sexuality education and preventive services.

The ability of young people to be assertive and act independently appears to be hindered by inadequate education. Particularly in an age when sexual activity can be fatal, full membership in a community means providing youth with the means to participate safely in sexuality.

The issue of access to contraceptives and abortion, which are also part of sexual education, will be addressed later in the section entitled Justice and Freedom from Discrimination.

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[25] Lear found that heterosexual men were the least concerned about risk, that participants reported reliability problems with condoms, and that concern was expressed that an argument over condom use would spoil an encounter (1997: 105).

Box 8
Highlights: Sexuality Education

- Youth do not view the knowledge about sexuality learned through sex education to be sufficient. The content of sex education is inconsistent, varying from province to province.
- Youth need to be given the tools to think critically about what is learned about sex through popular mediums, including pornography.
- Childbearing at a young age continues to be stigmatized, despite evidence that poverty – not age – is the real problem.
- Inadequate knowledge about safe sex limits the ability of young people to develop the capacity and resources needed to protect themselves.
- Access to health services remains too limited, and declining access to services is a cause for concern.

Box 9
Citizenship Implications: Education – A Route to Independence and Equality?

While there is a growing concern that young people must "learn" to become good citizens, citizenship education is not taught in a direct or consistent manner. Rather, the focus remains on the study of the social sciences more generally, or on political institutions. Observers fear that even an explicit citizenship education curriculum does not encourage young people to think critically if it is not accompanied by a capacity for citizenship engagement by youth. Moreover, the institutions most responsible for teaching citizenship, the schools, are insufficiently democratic. Therefore, the school environment may not reinforce good citizenship practices.

Studies have found a relationship between volunteering or extracurricular activities and political involvement later in life. Therefore, some observers are alarmed about the effects that budget cuts may have on access to extracurricular activities. The costs of participation in sports, in combination with the introduction of user fees, is making it increasingly difficult for all families, especially low-income ones, to maintain access. These trends may therefore have long-term implications for political engagement and the social exclusion of disadvantaged members of society.

Overly simplistic messages promoting abstinence from alcohol, tobacco and recreational drug use fails to provide young people with the proper tools and resources to make informed decisions. Abstinence is rejected as hypocritical since substance use often reflects an attempt to explore issues of personal identity, and in part represents a young person's shift to a more mature adult status.

Insufficient information is also a concern regarding sex education. Researchers and young people themselves observe that the teaching of sexuality in school is often inadequate. Failing to provide young people with the knowledge and capacity to make informed and intelligent choices can be detrimental in a world characterized by fatal sexually transmitted diseases. Compounding this lack of appropriate education is the limited and declining access to preventive health services.

3.3 Education, Economic Independence, and Security

A young person's capacity to obtain stable and well-paying employment is a key foundation upon which independent citizenship rests because it grounds the all-important variable of economic independence. However, there remain significant patterns of inequality in the patterns of transition from school to work, as briefly mentioned with respect to school drop-outs.

Disruptions in the transition from school to work have long been seen as a threat both to individual young people and to the broader society. High rates of youth unemployment during the Great Depression aroused public concern about the consequences of loss of skill, prolonged dependency on adults, higher rates of crime, increased illegitimate births, and political unrest. During World War II, the problem of youth unemployment virtually disappeared in Canada. Ironically, as young workers were quickly absorbed into the labour force, concerns began to be expressed about the social costs of both child labour and of young people sacrificing their education in favour of work (Krahn, 1996: 9).

During the post-war years, the number of universities and colleges expanded at a rapid pace. While this expansion had the effect of somewhat reducing social inequalities, it by no means eliminated them – class, gender and race differences remain quite pronounced. Today, children of better-educated and wealthier parents are much more likely to complete high school, go on to college or university, and pursue post-graduate degrees. Conversely, young people from lower-income families are more likely to drop out of high school (Krahn, 1996: 19, 29; Looker and Lowe, 2001: 6-7). Increasing numbers of young people are attending post-secondary education and a large portion of them are having to deal with high levels of student debt, a situation made all the worse by a relatively weak youth labour market.

Much of the post-war period was marked by high levels of employment, in large part maintained through strong domestic economic demand, low real interest rates, and a nominal government commitment to promote full employment. In part a reflection of the abandonment of the full employment objective in the late 1970s, the last two decades have witnessed a significant slowing of real wage growth, as well as high unemployment rates.[26]

Historically, youth labour markets have mirrored the behaviour of the general labour market. Until the 1980s, youth unemployment generally moved in tandem with adult rates, albeit at higher levels. However, rising unemployment and the stagnation of real wages in the 1980s and 1990s have hit young people especially hard, producing negative real wage growth and a corresponding polarization of wages with older workers. In addition, young people are increasingly finding themselves in "non-standard" jobs.[27] It remains to be seen whether or not the recent improvement in labour market conditions will bring a return to the pre-1980s "mirroring" pattern.

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[26] For an overview of the full employment objective in Canada and abroad, see Seddon (1999).

[27] In the context of this paper, the term "non-standard job" is used to encompass part-time and temporary jobs, own account self-employment, and multiple jobs. A "standard job" means full-time work exceeding 30 hours per week, plus a permanent relationship with an employer (Marquardt, 1996: 21).

The State of the Youth Labour Market – Mortgaging Independence?

Given the decline of the youth participation rate within the labour market, and their relatively small size as a cohort (thus, a decline in supply), the position of young people in the labour market should have been improving. At the very least, their position should not have deteriorated to the extent that it has.

The size of the Canadian youth cohort has been in decline since the 1970s (Foot and Stoffman, 2000). Whereas in 1976, about 30 percent of Canadians were youth, by 1997 their share had dropped to 20 percent (Justus and McCracken, 1997: 2). In fact, the only segment of the youth population that is on the rise is Aboriginal youth. One study found that the number of people of working age who identified themselves as Aboriginal grew by a full third between 1991 and 1996 (Mendelson and Battle, 1999: 2).

In addition to the smaller size of the youth cohort, the participation rate of youth in the labour market began to decline during the 1990s. Between 1966 and 1989, participation rates steadily increased to a peak of 71 percent in 1989, a full five points higher than the adult participation rate at that time. However, the youth rate has recently dropped dramatically, bottoming out at 61 percent in 1997, and rebounding slightly to just above 63 percent by 1999. This is the lowest participation rate seen in almost 25 years (Statistics Canada, 1999*a*). About half of the drop in the participation rate is attributable to poor employment prospects (Archambault and Gringon, 1999: 24).

Statistics Canada reported that, in 1989, only about one-third of young people 16 years of age and under had no work experience. This figure almost doubled to 60 percent by 1998. The difficulties in acquiring work experience were not confined to those under 16, however. For those aged 17 to 19, the incidence of having no work experience tripled over the same time period, from 9 to 27 percent. It also tripled for those aged 20 to 24 from 2 to 8 percent (Statistics Canada, 1999*b*: 13).

Even though the size of the cohort and the participation rate of youth have declined substantially in recent years, the unemployment rate for young people has increased. The most recent data from Statistics Canada (2000) indicates that youth unemployment is roughly double that of adults, at 12.7 versus 6.8 percent. These figures might actually underestimate the magnitude of the problem. If one tries to account for "discouraged" youth who are unemployed, some observers suspect that the true levels of youth unemployment approach 25 percent (Newing and Grant, 1999: 220; Rhenby and McBride, 1997: 13; Tal, 1998: 6).

While the Canadian labour market exhibited rather weak behaviour for all age groups in the 1990s, by the end of the decade, opportunities for older workers improved quite markedly. This improvement has not been shared among all age groups, however. Whereas the unemployment rate for those over 25 dropped from 8.4 percent in 1994 to 6.3 percent in 1999, the unemployment rate for those aged 15 to 24 declined only slightly, from 14.7 to 14.0 percent (Statistics Canada, 1999*a*). High youth unemployment is not unique to Canada but, in fact, is a trend seen in almost all OECD countries (International Labour Organization, 1999).

Picot and Heisz (2000) provide one plausible reason for these patterns. They note that, since 1984, Canadian employers have reacted to poor economic conditions by cutting back on hiring instead of increasing layoffs. In the mid-1990s, the proportion of new hires in the labour market stood at one in five, down from one in four a decade earlier (Picot and Heisz, 2000: S17). Moreover, if layoffs occur, young people are generally the first to be let go because they lack seniority (O'Higgins, 1997: 32). These dynamics have a pronounced effect on younger workers.

In addition to the increased difficulties that many youth are experiencing in trying to find work, those that do succeed are increasingly forced to settle for part-time or non-standard forms of employment. Since the early 1980s, there has been a rather rapid increase in the number of people working part-time, accounting for 14.4 percent of all jobs in 1980, but increasing to 18.5 percent by 1999. This trend has been particularly pronounced for young people. Whereas 24 percent of people aged 15 to 24 worked part-time in 1980, that number jumped to almost 45 percent by 1999 (Statistics Canada, 1999*a*).

Richard Marquardt (1998) notes that student labour increased in importance in the late 1970s and 1980s, as young people increased their stay in school and delayed entry into the full time labour market. Throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s, the supply of youth labour increased as a result of their large demographic size, in combination with an increased demand by employers for low cost just-in-time workers. Employers increasingly hired young people (many of whom were students) for part-time and temporary jobs in industries such as retail, fast food, and tourism. Often characterized by poor working conditions, little job security and low pay, such jobs came to be known as "McJobs." Many of these positions were not new *per se*. This work had previously been performed by individuals who experienced difficulties accessing full-time, well-paying jobs, predominantly people of colour and women (Marquardt, 1998: 71-72).

Indeed, the increased reliance of employers on flexible or part-time labour has resulted in an increase in the number of young people involuntarily working on a part-time basis. While some people choose to work part-time, the number of young people who work these reduced hours involuntarily has steadily increased since 1980. The most common reason cited for working part-time is being a student,[28] followed by not being able to find full-time work. Involuntary part-time employment rose from 19.6 percent in 1980 to 26.5 percent in 1995 (Betcherman and Leckie, 1997: 9; see also Marquardt, 1996: 22). This trend does not seem to be abating. Of the 35,000 jobs gained by youth in September 2000, fully 27,000 (77 percent) were part-time positions (Statistics Canada, 2000*a*: 1).

Other forms of non-standard employment have also substantially increased in recent decades. Whereas in 1999, about 12 percent of the labour force was employed in temporary jobs, over 28 percent of 15- to 24-year-olds found themselves in such an employment relationship, an increase of 3 percentage points since 1997 (Statistics Canada 1999*a*). This trend affected men and women in a similar manner, and much of this temporary employment appears to be involuntary. In fact, 64.5 percent of those under the age of 25 in temporary jobs indicated they would prefer to have permanent employment (Lowe and Schellenberg, 2001: 13).

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[28] It is important to note, however, that many young people are staying in school longer, in part because of the perceived weakness in the youth labour market.

Recent decades have also witnessed a polarization of wages between age cohorts. Up until about 1973, the relative earnings between older and younger workers tended to move in tandem. For a very short period of time (between 1973 and 1977), the wages of young people actually outpaced the gains made by older workers. After reaching its peak in 1977, the wages commanded by youth have steadily declined. By 1994, the real earnings of young workers were on par in real terms with what youth were earning in 1969, while workers aged 45 to 54 saw their real wages grow by 30 percent (Corak, 1999: 3.2).

University graduates also experienced a decline in wages. Between 1990 and 1995, the average earnings of university graduates aged 25 to 34 was $31,000, a decline of $3,500 from the 1990 average (Statistics Canada, 1998*a*). The decline was especially sharp for males, who experienced a drop in earnings of 19 percent between 1989 and 1995.[29] Young women's wages also dropped, although only by 3 percent (Kapsalis, Morisette and Picot, 1999: 15). Commenting on this trend, Picot and Heisz (2000: 24) observed that:

> The decline in real and relative earnings of the young through the 1980s and 1990s has been well documented. Each successive cohort of young workers entering the labour market in the last two decades has earned less than the previous cohort. The decline, which is particularly evident among male workers, seems widespread, occurring in most industries and occupations, and among the less and more highly educated alike.

The results are easy to discern. Young people will start their careers from a significantly lower economic base *and* they will not enjoy the "escalator" growth in wages enjoyed by previous cohorts (Myles, 1992: 177).[30]

Moreover, it appears that the weak labour market is increasing poverty levels. According to the Canadian Council on Social Development, young Canadians aged 15 to 24 were among the most likely to live in poverty in 1995. The study found that youth in this age bracket were over-represented among poor populations in almost all Canadian cities. For instance, in Montreal, youth represented 13.6 percent of the population but accounted for 16.5 percent of those living below Statistics Canada's low-income cut-off. Fully 51 percent of young Montrealers lived in poverty. Although slightly lower in Canada's other major urban centres, the incidence of young people living in poverty was found to be significantly high, at 43 percent of youth in Ottawa, 41 percent in Vancouver, one-in-three in Toronto, and 30 percent in Winnipeg. The study notes that, while there are many factors that contribute to the high poverty levels of young people, their poor standing in the labour market is a major contributor (Lee, 2000: 29-30).

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[29] Older men aged 45 to 54 also saw a decline in their wages, though not nearly to the same degree. University graduates in that age group saw a real decline in wages of just over 6 percent (Kapsalis, Morisette and Picot 2000: 15).

[30] This discussion is not meant to suggest that a university degree is of little benefit in the labour market. A recent Statistics Canada study showed that the median net worth of an individual possessing a university degree was almost double that of a high school graduate (Statistics Canada, 2001*a*: 17). The argument being made here is that the relative earnings of university graduates appear to be in decline vis-à-vis previous graduates.

Statistics Canada reports that the average earnings of young people in the 1970s and 1980s represented about one-half of the overall national average but by 1995, it had declined to less than one-third. In part, this drop is a reflection of the fact that fewer young people are working full-year and full-time (Statistics Canada, 1998*a*).[31]

Numerous studies have found that young people, particularly those under 25, are most likely to want union representation. Lowe and Schellenberg (2001) recently found that 34 percent of young people under 25 indicated that they would willingly join a union if one existed in their workplace. This compares with 30 percent for those 25 through 34, 21 percent for those between 35 and 44 and 19 percent for those over 45 (Lowe and Schellenberg, 2001: 59). In another study, Lowe and Rastin (2000) found that those who were involuntarily part-time or temporary employees were more likely to express and interest in joining a union than those who were satisfied with the hours they work. Unions are an effective means by which young people learn about their rights as workers and become socially active within their workplace at a relatively early age.

Despite their willingness to be represented by a union, and even with the recent organizing efforts by young people in the fast-food and service sector, the union density for those under 25 stood at a mere 14 percent in 2000. This is well below the 36 percent union density for those over 25 (Labour Force Historical Review, 2000). The very low unionization rate found among young people is likely the reflection of many factors including the difficulty in organizing small workplaces and the relatively high turnover rates (or job "churning") in service sector and fast-food jobs. In some instances, businesses have shut down specific workplaces prior to union certification votes, thus prohibiting employees the right to decide for themselves whether they would like union representation. Union organizers often point out that this practice is often used to send a message and dissuade other workplaces from organizing. Despite an interest in exercising their right to collective representation in the workplace, young people face many obstacles.

All these labour market patterns suggest that many young people are experiencing difficulty finding a job, remaining in the labour market or unionizing to better their working conditions. Yet, as we have indicated above, most thinking about citizenship identifies participation in the paid labour force and the capacity to earn a living as foundational for full citizenship. Therefore, such labour market patterns are cause for concern about the citizenship status of young adults, even if they have officially been adults for several years. The next section looks in more detail at younger people and their transition from school to work.

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[31] A recent Statistics Canada study also documents a similar trend, noting that the median net worth of individuals under the age of 35 has dropped dramatically since 1984. Those aged 25 to 34 saw their median net worth drop by over one-third, and those under 25 experienced a drop of 95 percent. The drop in median net worth was not confined to just the young (though they experienced the largest drop). In fact, the only age groups that enjoyed an increase were those aged 55 and over (Statistics Canada, 2001*a*: 31).

Box 10
Highlights: The State of the Youth Labour Market

- Access to quality employment is the basis of economic independence and, therefore, a foundation of citizenship.
- In the 1990s, the youth labour market began to follow patterns that no longer paralleled the adult labour market.
- Despite a drop in the size of the youth cohort and a lower labour market participation rate, the unemployment rate for younger workers remains high.
- New entrants to the labour market have been hard hit by trends favouring part-time and contingent work. Although these trends affect many people in the labour force, they affect young people to a disproportionate extent.
- The real wages commanded by younger workers have declined since the late 1970s. Each successive youth cohort has earned less than the previous one.
- Young people are over-represented among those living in poverty, a fact clearly related to patterns of labour market participation. Despite a clear willingness to join unions, young people remain under-represented in unionized jobs.

Post-Secondary Education and the Labour Market

In recent years, the amount of time taken to complete the school-to-work transition has been lengthening, a trend witnessed in Canada and many other OECD countries.[32] In 1985, the average length of this transition in Canada was six years, beginning at the age of 16 and ending at 21. In 1986, the transition was longer by a year – youth began to combine school and work one year earlier, thus extending the transition to an average of seven years. By 1991, the end of the average transition period extended to the age of 22. By 1993, the transition period extended yet again to span eight years. Although starting at 16, the transition period generally did not end until the age of 23, which has been the average start and end times for the past seven years (Bowlby, 2000: 44). While the reasons for the lengthening of the school-to-work transition are not entirely clear, it is certainly in part a reflection of young people staying in school longer, combined with the increased difficulty young people are experiencing in the labour market upon finishing school (Statistics Canada, 1999*b*: 26).

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[32] According to the OECD, the school-to-work transition takes place "from the age at which young people are no longer predominantly studying without working, to the age at which the majority are working without studying" (quoted in Statistics Canada, 1999*b*: 25).

Despite the persistence of inequalities with regard to access to post-secondary school, there is significant evidence that young people are spending increasing amounts of time at institutions of learning. For instance, in September 1976, there were 394,000 full- and part-time students aged 20 to 24, representing 18 percent of the cohort. By September 1998, that figure had almost doubled for this group to 744,000, or a full 37 percent of the cohort. Those aged 25 to 29 exhibited a very similar trend, shifting from 7 percent of the cohort in 1976 to 12 percent in 1998. It is important to note that these increases occurred despite the fact that the actual size of the youth age cohort has been shrinking (Statistics Canada, 1999*a*).

Increased participation in post-secondary education has been seen among full- and part-time university students, rising 30 and 20 percent respectively during the 1980s. Enrolment in community colleges, and in trade and vocational programs has also increased significantly. Indeed, since the mid-1970s, the number of degree holders in Canada has grown by an annual average of 5.4 percent. As a result, the share of the labour force with a university education rose from 10 percent in 1976 to 18 percent by 1998 (Picot and Heisz, 2000: S13-S15).

Recent decades have brought a polarization of labour-market experiences, with the concomitant effects for young people's capacity to achieve independence and full citizenship. These patterns of inequality are important because of the abundant evidence that those with higher levels of education do better in the labour market – if success is measured by income level and by the likelihood of being employed. However, as Krahn has noted, the number of jobs held by university graduates increased by 17 percent between 1990 and 1993, whereas the number of jobs "requiring" a secondary school diploma grew by only 0.5 percent. The number of jobs requiring less than a high school education actually declined during this period (1996: 27).[33] Indeed, in 1998, the unemployment rate for 15- to 29-year-old non-students with less than a high school diploma was 23 percent. In sharp contrast, the unemployment rate for those with a graduate degree stood at 5.2 percent. Similarly, those with a college diploma experienced unemployment of only 7 percent (Bowlby, 2000: 46).

Another way of examining the degree to which education helps in the labour market is to look at the employment rates of various groups. In 1998, for instance, the employment rate for 15- to 29-year-old non-students with a graduate degree was over 90 percent. Conversely, the employment rate for those who had failed to finish high school was under 55 percent (Bowlby, 2000: 46). Correspondingly, in 1996, the number of young people who found full-time work within one year of graduation stood at 66 percent for high school graduates, a full 20 percentage points lower than for university graduates (Bowlby, 2000: 45).

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[33] The growth in the number of jobs indicating that a given level of educational attainment is required does not necessarily mean that all these jobs require highly educated workers. When there is a mass availability of college and university graduates in the labour market, employers can raise the screening requirements for job applicants. In such a situation, the attainment of a post-secondary education becomes necessary to gain employment. Indeed, as we shall see in the next section, there appears to be a fairly high level of over-qualification in Canadian workplaces. In short, when there is a significant oversupply of highly educated job seekers vis-à-vis the availability of skilled work, employers are in a relatively strong position to engage in such screening practices.

Post-secondary graduates have also tended to land the "better jobs" that are available, and employees who held a university degree were more prone to indicate they felt good about their job. Krahn and Lowe (1993: 77) reported that university graduates were more likely than high school graduates to indicate that their pay was good (65 versus 46 percent), they had good fringe benefits (65 versus 49 percent), and they enjoyed job security (60 versus 52 percent). In short, staying in school beyond high school tends to lead to more success in the labour market and in acquiring a decent job. Indeed, this suggests that a form of labour market polarization is taking place given that young people who are more highly educated tend to be more successful in both acquiring and retaining employment, and generally good quality employment at that (Lowe, 2000: 110).

While earning a college diploma or a university degree no longer provides a guarantee of a job, post-secondary credentials continue to offer a form of insurance against unemployment, part-time work and low wages. Nonetheless, despite the clear benefits of staying in school longer, the lengthening of the school-to-work transition is having the ultimate effect of prolonging young people's access to independence.

Box 11
Highlights: Post-Secondary Education and the Labour Market

- The time required to complete the school-to-work transition has been increasing over the past 15 years, and has risen from an average of six to eight years.
- Enrollment rates in Canadian post-secondary institutions are among the highest in the world and are very high by historical standards. This likely reflects the (correct) perception that those with higher levels of education are more successful in the labour market.
- The more highly educated the person, the more likely they will find employment after graduation, obtain full-time work, enjoy good wages and fringe benefits, and report that they have interesting and challenging jobs.
- Although individuals who continue with school stand to better in the labour market in the future, their move into economic independence, and full citizenship, is delayed.

Access to Post-Secondary Schooling and the Cost of Student Debt

Clearly, young people with higher levels of education are faring much better than those with a high school diploma or who have dropped out of school. However, despite the clear benefits that the more educated enjoy in the labour market, recent trends may be leading to less equitable access to higher learning opportunities. Even though more women than men are currently studying at the post-secondary level, there remain marked differences in fields of study. Moreover, increases in tuition fees have a negative effect on equitable access for individuals, especially those from lower-income backgrounds. This promotes polarization. Those who can continue to access post-secondary education will, in turn, enjoy greater success in the labour market.

The recent and rather dramatic increases in tuition over the past decade, and the perceived costs involved in attending college or university, are no doubt exacerbating the challenges currently faced by prospective students who wish to attend post-secondary institutions. After adjusting for inflation, tuition rates have increased by 115 percent over the past two decades, whereas average family income has only grown by 1 percent (Clark, 1998: 24). In nominal terms, the average tuition for an undergraduate arts program more than doubled between 1990 and 2000, from $1,500 to $3,300. A recent study of the perceived barriers to attending post-secondary institutions conducted by the Manitoba government found that "not having enough money" was indicated by young people as the most important factor inhibiting access to post-secondary schools. In fact, lack of money was noted to be more important than lack of information about careers, grades, or not being accepted to college or university (Manitoba, 2000). This finding was echoed by a study from the University of Alberta (2000), which noted that young people from lower-income families have less access to the university system as tuition increases.

Other studies suggest that individuals from low-income families tend to be more sensitive to tuition changes since increases consume a larger portion of family income (Statistics Canada and the Council of Ministers of Education Canada, 2000). Samuel J. McGrath (1996) found that many eligible high-school graduates in Newfoundland were prevented from enrolling in post-secondary education due to financial constraints, in part because many students did not feel that the Canada Student Loan Program could meet their schooling needs. His study also found that there is "increasing hesitation by students to accumulate large debts to obtain higher education when there is no assurance they will find subsequent employment to repay these debts" (McGrath, 1996: 196). Other studies also consistently indicate that higher tuition and lack of services limits – and may altogether restrict – access to post-secondary education for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Wotherspoon, 1998: 185).

Concomitantly, there has been a trend to widening inequality with respect to access to post-secondary schools. While the participation rate of young people from low socioeconomic backgrounds remained relatively unchanged between 1986 and 1994, since that time a widening gap has developed between those from low socioeconomic versus middle income backgrounds. Whereas in 1986, the participation rates of these two groups stood at 13.7 and 14.5 percent respectively, by 1994, the gap widened from less than 1 to a full 7 percentage points, with participation rates reaching 18.3 and 25.3 percent respectively (Bouchard and Zhao, 2000: 28).

Gender inequalities also remain. Although significant gains in terms of overall access to post-secondary schooling have been made, with almost 60 percent of university diplomas and degrees going to women in 1997, gender stereotyping with respect to field of study remains quite pronounced.[34] This is despite the fact that women, on average, tend to perform better in high school than men in most western countries (Looker and Lowe, 2001: 7). Women still tend to be under-represented in traditional "male" programs such as engineering and the applied sciences, and are over-represented in the fields of health and social sciences (Krahn, 1996: 21; Looker and Lowe, 2001: 4).[35]

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[34] See Andres, *et al.* (1999); Butlin (1999); Pearson and Dellmann Jenkins (1997); Trusty, *et al.* (2000).

[35] A study of young Albertans traced the labour market transitions of 1985 high school graduates. By 1992, 46 percent of female and 36 percent of male high school graduates had found managerial or professional jobs. In the field of management, males and females were fairly evenly split at 10 percent for females versus 12 percent

Patterns of inequality for other groups have changed only slightly in recent decades. When compared with their peers, Aboriginal peoples in particular achieve significantly lower average educational attainment. In 1993, only 13 percent of Aboriginal peoples had some post-secondary education, compared to 31.7 percent of the general population (Wotherspoon, 1998: 174). Various programs and changes have attempted to address this imbalance, with some degree of success for Aboriginal youth in specialized schools, programs and universities (Wotherspoon, 1998: 96).[36]

As a result of tuition increases, university and college graduates have become increasingly burdened with debt upon graduation. Whereas the average amount owed by an individual who earned a Bachelor's degree in 1982 was $4,000 (expressed in 1995 dollars), by 1995, the average debt for those earning a Bachelor's degree had more than tripled to $13,300 (Clark, 1998: 26). Almost one in four graduates with Bachelor's degrees who had borrowed money to attend university owed more than $20,000 upon graduation (Statistics Canada, 1998*b*). In 1996, Human Resources Development Canada estimated that once living costs were taken into account, the average cost of an eight-month university or college course was between $10,000 and $13,000 for those living away from home, and between $3,400 and $6,400 for those living with their parents. In other words, the cost of a four-year program can exceed $50,000 for someone living away from home (cited in Clark, 1998: 27).

Statistics Canada reports that there has been significant growth in the aggregate amount of student debt, which has grown 620 percent between 1984 and 1999. Over the same period, the number of families whose main income recipient was under 25 years of age and who reported having student debt grew from 490,000 to over 1.4 million families (Statistics Canada, 2001*a*: 34). That same study noted that young people under 25 carry by far the largest debt burdens of all age groups. Another report states that young people who own a house carry 31 cents of debt for every dollar in assets and, for young non-homeowners, the figure rises to 53 cents. Most of this debt carried by young people can be attributed to outstanding student loans (Statistics Canada, 2001*b*).

Not surprisingly, repayment of student debts has been prolonged. Those who graduated from college in 1990 were able to pay off 35 percent of their student loans within the first two years after graduation, whereas those who graduated in 1995 successfully paid off only 19 percent of loans in the first two years (Clark, 1998: 27). University graduates experienced similar difficulties. Those who graduated in 1995 were only able to pay off 17 percent of their outstanding debt within two years of graduation, down from 27 percent paid off by the cohort that graduated five years earlier (Clark, 1998: 27).

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for males. In other areas, however, there were clear gender differences. For instance, there were twice as many women than men in teaching (10 versus 5 percent), and there was more than triple the number of women than men in health related fields (18 versus 5 percent). Conversely, men were over-represented in the natural sciences and engineering at 11 percent, versus 3 percent for women (Krahn and Lowe, 1993: 53).

[36] Progress in addressing the educational needs of Aboriginal peoples varies by province. Saskatchewan, with a large Aboriginal population, has the only college at a university that is specifically intended to meet the needs of Aboriginal peoples – the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College in Regina.

Recent graduates were also more likely to experience repayment difficulties within the first year of graduation.[37] Whereas 16 percent of university graduates from the class of 1990-91 experienced repayment difficulties, 23 percent who graduated five years later experienced such problems. Those who graduated from college were harder hit. For the class of 1995-96, one in three college graduates experienced repayment problems, up from the 23 percent rate experienced by the class of 1990-91 (Plager and Chen, 1999: 22). Moreover, the percentage of borrowers who were able to pay off their student loans in full within 12 months of graduation dropped substantially. For the class of 1990-91, 10.4 percent of college borrowers and 12.6 percent of university borrowers of were able to fully pay off their student debts within one year of loan consolidation. However, only 4.4 percent of college borrowers and 6.6 percent of university borrowers from the class of 1995-96 were able to do likewise (Plager and Chen, 1999: 27). Finally, the class of 1995-96 experienced a much higher rate of default than did the earlier cohort. Whereas 17.6 percent of the graduating class of 1990-91 defaulted on student debt within one year of consolidation, 21.8 percent of the class of 1995-96 defaulted. For those who studied at a private institution, the default rate stood at a full 38 percent (Statistics Canada, 1999*c*).

In June 1998, the federal government amended the *Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act*, making student loans "non-dischargeable" for a period of 10 years after the student has ceased their studies (Statistics Canada, 1999*c*). Interestingly, those who hold commercial loans can declare bankruptcy after only a nine-month waiting period (Bustos, 1999). Moreover, since 1964, under 20 percent of personal bankruptcies have involved student debt. Since that time, over 90 percent of all student loans have been repaid (Canadian Federation of Students, 2000). As the Canadian Federation of Students notes, changes to the *Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act* have created an artificial distinction between student debt and commercial debt, a distinction they claim is in violation of the equity provisions of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (Bustos, 1999). In March 1999, the Canadian Federation of Students launched a court challenge to this amendment, arguing that it is a violation of section 15 of the *Charter* because it discriminates against students. Whether the courts agree that this is a violation of citizenship rights has yet to be determined.

University and college graduates certainly experience lower rates of unemployment than those with lesser education, and they tend to accumulate much higher net worth over their lifetimes. Nevertheless, the relatively weak job market for recent graduates, in combination with the rising student debt loads, is making it increasingly difficult for many graduates to meet their debt obligations. This trend has direct implications for young people's ability to become economically independent, a trend that is likely to continue and possibly intensify, if tuition fees continue to rise and the economy continues to slow.

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[37] Individuals who were deemed to have experienced "repayment difficulties" were those who either received temporary assistance from the Interest Relief Plan to help them make monthly payments or defaulted on their loans (Plager and Chen, 1999: 21).

Box 12
Highlights: Access to Schooling and the Cost of Student Debt

- While access to post-secondary education is increasing for all socioeconomic groups, it is increasing at a slower rate for low-income families, thereby promoting polarization of access to education.
- Over the past two decades, university tuition rates have doubled in real terms. Increases in tuition make it increasingly difficult for those from lower-income backgrounds to attend post-secondary schooling.
- The number of households reporting student debt has increased dramatically since the mid-1980s. Student debt now accounts for a major financial liability for young people, and increasing numbers of young people are experiencing debt repayment difficulties.

Leaving Home and the Implications for Parenthood

The capacity to leave home is a major indicator of young people having achieved full citizenship (G. Jones, 1995: 144). Recent trends in the labour market, in education, and in the housing market, as well as rising debt loads, are making it more difficult for an increasing number of young people to become independent. When neither social housing nor the market offer adequate options, the family home is often used as a *de facto* safety net. Yet Molgat argues that forcing young adults to rely upon the family for longer periods of time seriously impedes their ability to be independent (Molgat, 1996, 14).[38]

Indeed, the number of young men aged 16 to 24 who are living with their parents has steadily risen – from 69 percent in 1982, to 74 percent by 1991, and reaching 77 percent in 1994 (Card and Lemieux, 2000: 180). For those who do leave home, the likelihood that they will be poor has increased. According to the Conseil national du Bien-Être Social du Québec, the poverty rate of young people living on their own rose from 44 percent in 1980 to almost 64 percent in 1994 (cited in Molgat, 1996: 13).

These trends are in part caused by the hardships young people are experiencing in tight and expensive housing markets. While sharing accommodation with peers solves some problems, roommates, unlike spouses, will rarely pay more than their share of the rent in hard times, at least not for any prolonged period of time (Gauthier, 2000: 2). Moreover, for young couples, the likelihood of owning a home has decreased. In Quebec, the rate of home ownership among people under 30 has been in constant decline since 1981 although it has remained relatively stable for those between the ages of 30 and 64 (Molgat, 1999: 86).

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[38] Increased time spent in the parental home has occurred in many countries including Canada, France, Spain, Britain and United States (Molgat, 1996: 14; Molgat, 2000: 85).

Since large numbers of young people rent, they are especially hard hit by the tight rental markets that characterize many Canadian cities (Cooper, 2001). The shortage of rental units in larger centres, and the removal of rent controls, has resulted in skyrocketing rents. The vacancy rate in the 10 largest metropolitan areas in Canada fell to 2.6 percent in October 2000, down over three-quarters of a point from 12 months earlier (Goff, 2001, citing Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation). Currently, the vacancy rate in Vancouver is under 2 percent, in Toronto and Saskatoon it is below 1 percent and, in Ottawa, a mere 0.2 percent. When vacancy rates within a city fall below 3 percent, there is deemed to be a housing crisis.

There is, however, no universal pattern to leaving the parental home. Leaving home often consists of a process whereby young people leave but often return to reside with their parents, and then leave again at a later date (G. Jones, 1995: 25).[39] For those who do return home, many will have to deal with a change in their social status. Upon return, they often are not seen or treated as adults. This, in turn, can foster feelings of frustration and of failure (Mitchell and Gee, 1996: 68). For many youths who do successfully leave home, large numbers of them continue to rely upon financial and other forms of support from parents (Maunaye, 2000).

Youth who experience family breakdown will have less choice about *when* to leave home, and will often do so at a younger age. Moreover, such individuals may not be able to afford to do so, or be adequately prepared for independent living (G. Jones, 1995:47). Mitchell and Gee note that "young people with economic disadvantages and without parental support face the risk of economic marginalization. They can easily come to be at the mercy of employers offering low-paid jobs, dead-end jobs, and homelessness as well" (1996: 69).

Often, the link between leaving home and homelessness is also indirect (G. Jones, 1995: 116). Homelessness is most likely to occur to those who had little choice about the timing of their departure from home. A study of street youth found that, for some, independent living was something they were forced into before they were ready (Bentley, *et al.*, 1999: 46). Many experienced significant difficulties in trying to be independent and longed for the parental support that they saw was available to others (G. Jones, 1995). Further, recent restrictions placed on young people's access to social assistance (which will be discussed below) is no doubt exacerbating the many difficulties these young people already face (Molgat, 2000, 87).[40]

Yet another consequence of the prolongation of economic dependence and insecurity is its effect on family formation. Although few studies have been done on this subject, there are indications that later ages for marriage, childbearing and parenthood are an adjustment to circumstances in the labour market. In a comparison of Quebec, France, Germany and Spain, Marc Molgat observed delays in both forming a couple and having a first child (Molgat, 2000: 85).

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[39] It is impossible to know the proportion of young people returning home, because Statistics Canada data does not distinguish between those who have never left home and those who have left and then returned (Mitchell and Gee, 1996: 62).

[40] In effect, youth who suffer most from the reforms of social assistance are those who cannot turn to their family for aid (Kempson, 1996: 134). Hudson and Liddiard (1997: 96) document that the increase in homeless youth in the United Kingdom can be directly linked to Conservative policies.

In a small sample study, Gillian Ranson found that although middle-class, highly educated women report in university that they expect "to have it all," the reality was that educational choices and occupational opportunities often hindered their ability to fulfill both career and parental aspirations. She notes (1998: 531):

> Women whose career paths were less straightforward and women whose careers took longer to establish were generally the ones to prolong the postponement of motherhood. ... Difficulties experienced in establishing careers, or the need to accommodate further education or career shifts, resulted not only in postponed pregnancies but also in prolonged singlehood, which all those involved saw as a further barrier to having children.

Women were prevented from having children when they were ready, because they lacked secure and quality employment. Ranson's study highlights that gender socialization and the organization of work affects reproductive decision making. In exchange for not having a child until the completion of school and the attainment of a good job, women may find that they have been "squeezed out" of their best childbearing years. The growing mismatch between women's biological clocks and their attainment of economic independence might therefore be seen as a source of indirect gender discrimination affecting a woman's right to reproduce.

Box 13
Highlights: Leaving Home and the Implications for Parenthood

- Leaving home is a major indicator that young people have achieved independence. Over the last two decades, the number of youth in a position to leave the parental home has declined. This development has been accompanied by an increase in the number of young people who return to the parental home (sometimes with a spouse) at some point after they initially leave. Tight housing markets and lack of access to quality full-time employment are factors contributing this delay in leaving, and in some cases returning to, the parental home.
- The rate of home ownership among young people under 30 has also been on the decline but appears to have remained relatively stable for those between the ages of 30 and 64.
- For young people that do leave home, the likelihood that they will be poor is high. This is especially true for those young people who are forced to leave home prematurely. Young people who find themselves in such a predicament may also find themselves trapped in low-skilled and poorly paying jobs, and are at greater risk of homelessness than their peers.
- The delay in leaving the parental home and forming a family may jeopardize a young woman's right to have children. As well, educational and career pursuits on the path to independence may mean that women run the risk of being "squeezed out" of their best childbearing years.

Box 14
Citizenship Implications: Education, Economic Independence, and Security

Access to a quality job is a key foundation upon which independent citizenship status rests. While those who have a good education (that is, a post-secondary degree or diploma) fare much better in the labour market than their less educated counterparts, general trends in the youth labour market are negatively affecting many young people. There has been a 20-year trend of declining real and relative earnings of young people, occurring in most industries and for most educational groups.

Over the past decade, there has been a significant increase in post-secondary enrolment. While in absolute terms, access to post-secondary education has increased for all groups; it has been at a slower pace for those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. In short, there is polarization along socioeconomic lines.

This trend likely reflects the increase in tuition rates since the early 1980s and studies suggest that lower-income families are most sensitive to such increases. Concomitantly, the incidence and depth of student debt have increased markedly over the past two decades, and there has been a corresponding increase in repayment difficulties. Moreover, young people have been denied the right to declare bankruptcy on their student debts for a full decade after graduation, a restriction that will haunt them well into their adult years.

The ability to leave home is also a major indicator that young people are close to attaining independence. However, the age at which the majority of young people are leaving the parental household has been increasing, an outcome that reflects factors such as tight housing markets, a decline in relative wages, high levels of unemployment, prolonged education, and high student debt levels. The return of young people to the parental home is part of new set of living arrangements sometimes “chosen” by young people.

Yet another indicator of the attainment of independence is the timing of family formation. With both the lengthening school-to-work transition and delays in leaving the parental home, young women may find themselves “squeezed out” of their prime childbearing years.

3.4 Justice and Freedom from Discrimination

Equal citizenship status implies equality of treatment and freedom from discrimination. Young people’s citizenship status is infringed upon in two ways. Age can and has been accepted as a legitimate basis for discrimination. In the labour market and the justice system, the age of young people has an impact on how they are treated. In other cases, fundamental citizen rights are denied through membership in a marginalized group in society, which may disproportionately affect youths due to their possession of fewer resources.

Protection from Discrimination in Employment

In 1948, the United Nations affirmed the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Article 22 of the *Declaration* reads, in part, that "everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work." At the time, women workers were expected to benefit most from this guarantee because gender-based two-tier wage structures were common. Such payment regimes were not eliminated in Canada until the 1970s, when the country finally ratified the *Declaration*. Yet, in the 1980s, it became acceptable for employers to introduce two-tiered wage and benefit arrangements (*clause orphelin* in French), which compensate employees differentially. In essence, two types of employees are created – old and new.

Based on their date of hire, newer employees are paid lower wages and have a weaker benefits package. While doing the same work as new employees, workers hired in previous years earn higher wages and have better benefits. Two-tier compensation provisions act as a form of discrimination against those who are trying to integrate into the labour market. While no reference in such provisions is made to the age of employees, a very large number of new hires are young people (Picot and Heisz, 2000: S17).[41] These kinds of employment contracts violate the principle of equal pay for equal work guaranteed by the United Nations in the *Declaration*.

This type of compensation structure reached its peak in 1988, affecting 90,000 employees. Although the number of collective agreements containing such clauses has diminished since that time, they still affected almost 30,000 employees (Human Resources Development Canada, 2000). La Féderation des Femmes du Québec reports that the presence of two-tiered wage and benefit structures in collective agreements covering more that 100 employees became increasingly common in Quebec after 1985. Just less than 2 percent of agreements contained such clauses that year, climbing by 1990 to 7.9 percent of agreements. The rate dropped to 2.6 percent in 1991 and rose one again to 6.4 percent in 1997 (Féderation des Femmes du Québec, 1998).

These figures do not reflect the marked variation in the prevalence of two-tier employment arrangements by sector. For instance, at aggregate levels, such clauses were more than double the average in the service sector and in municipal public administration (at 14 and 13 percent). Nor do they take into account the generally lower wages, benefits and lack of job security that temporary and student employees experience (Coutu, 2000: 312).[42]

Quebec's Conseil permanent de la Jeunesse (1998: 19) notes that the existence of such discriminatory practices are part of a much broader trend of growing inequality in the labour market between younger and older cohorts. The crux of unequal treatment lies in the fact that workers are paid different wages to perform the same work without justification save that they were hired at different times (Walker, 1987: 5).

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[41] Many new entrants into the labour market are also women and immigrants.

[42] As noted in Section 3.3 of this report, there has been a polarization between the wages of younger and older workers. The existence of two-tier compensation structures is part of a much broader trend of intergenerational inequality.

Experience and merit – not date of hire – are legitimate performance measures that justify paying older workers a form of pay premium. In addition to immediate discrimination, in the long run, two-tiered compensation measures inhibit the ability of the newly hired workers to ever catch up to the salary and benefit levels of older, more senior, workers (Coutu, 2000: 311).

For employers, two-tier wage structures provide a means to reduce labour costs over the long term, while avoiding potential conflict with current employees. These structures provide some room for granting wage or benefit concessions for currently employed workers, without maintaining them into the future. From the point of view of a union, allowing such measures might help prevent lay-offs or improve the working conditions of currently employed workers. Moreover, because "future" employees cannot vote on a collective agreement, their interests may not be taken into account (Conseil permanent de la Jeunesse, 1998: 18). Unions have nonetheless resisted, in principle, the introduction of two-tiered compensation schemes in collective agreements.

Despite the fact that the number of two-tiered compensation structures has diminished in recent years, they continue to be seen as a legitimate means for businesses to reduce labour costs. This position fails to take into account the equity issues such structures raise for young workers, and the discriminatory treatment they imply.

Box 15
Highlights: Protection from Discrimination in Employment

- Article 22 of the *United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights* guarantees everyone the right to equal pay for equal work.
- In the 1980s, businesses began to introduce two-tier wage and benefit arrangements. Though no explicit reference is made to age, such measures disproportionately affect young people because they represent the majority of new entrants to the labour market.
- Though the number of two-tiered compensation arrangements declined in the 1990s, they continue to be used by employers to reduce labour costs, especially in certain sectors.

Just Treatment and Juvenile Justice

In Western culture, adolescence is considered a time of exploration and limit testing, and therefore a time when errors of judgement may occur. It is considered normal and even expected that young people may engage in activities that might shock adults. At the same time, "politicians and members of the older generation have always tended to regard levels of criminality among the younger generation as abnormal" (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997: 83).

Some advocates of harsh penalties for youth crime argue that standards of behaviour have deteriorated as a consequence of recent social changes linked to a too permissive society, the break up of families and communities, and the excitement of immoral popular entertainment (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997: 83, Tanner, 1996: 3). Bernard calls this the myth of the "good old days," when youth crime was supposedly less of a problem,[43] and argues that such popular notions influence our thinking about contemporary juvenile offenders (Bernard, 1992: 13). The assumption that juvenile delinquency was punished more harshly in the past leads to calls for tougher sanctions against offenders in the present.

Criminologists, however, treat official statistics on youth crime with caution. In their view, "the evidence for a rising crime rate is somewhat contradictory and can reflect the different agendas of those responsible for compiling statistics" (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997: 85). Statistics may measure patterns of policing rather than offences, and therefore exaggerate the criminality of groups that are the focus of police surveillance[44]. As Bell (1999: 4-6) observes:

> Usually, the answers to questions about whether the juvenile justice system is effective in controlling youth crime can be divided into two groups. ... On one side are the youth advocates, people who see children and youth as victims in need of protection. The youth advocates are primarily concerned with the problems experienced by young people rather than youth crime. On the other side is a 'law-and-order' group of people who view children and youth accused of crimes as an enemy from whom adults need protection. For them, youth offenders have lack of respect for anyone and anything, they are not punished for their crime, and they are increasingly involved in violent crime.

For many Canadian criminologists, the *Young Offenders Act* and its replacement with the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* in May 2001 represent a move towards the opinions of the "law-and-order" group (Bell, 1999; Tanner, 1996; Bala, 1996).[45] Over the last 20 years, there has been an increasing tendency to see youth offences not as juvenile delinquency but as youth crime. This signals a move from a child welfare approach towards treating young people in the same manner as adult offenders (Bell, 1999, 29).

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[43] Recall what was said in Section 1.1 about the invention of juvenile delinquency as long ago as the 19th century, and the longstanding fear and moral panic about youth.

[44] Public issues are sometimes influenced more by structural, social, demographic and political factors than by actual criminal behaviours. In the last century, the under 25 age group formed half of the population and could not be represented or perceived as a small and particular group, as we tend to see them today. In Canada, youth under 18 accounted for 22 percent of all criminal charges in 1994 but only a small number of youth are involved in serious and recurrent criminal acts (Bell, 1999: 41). In 1997, 82 percent of this group were charged with non-violent crime, the majority of which were involved in crime against property for theft under $5,000. In comparison, young adults aged 18 to 31 were responsible for more property crime and considerably more violent crime than young offenders (West, 1991: 78).

[45] Within the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, custody is explicitly listed as a possible sentence when the young person has failed to comply with previous non-custodial requirements. The age at which mandatory adult sentences are imposed is also being lowered from 16 to 14. Publishing the name of the offender is now permitted if adult sentencing is imposed for a presumptive offence or if the youth is considered dangerous and at large (Government of Canada, 1999).

This trend in Canada, the United States and Britain is accompanied by the view that young people need to be held more responsible for their actions. As a result, most political parties are pushing for a more punitive response to youth crime (Tanner, 1996). Sandra Bell argues that while the *Young Offenders Act* and the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* both recognize that youths should be treated separately from adults, punishment – instead of guidance – is presented as the answer (Bell, 1999). According to her, the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* contains contradictory messages – on one hand, it treats young people as adults by making them more accountable, while on the other, it treats youth as children by reinforcing the authority of parents. This produces a paradoxical representation of rights and responsibilities – rights taken away and responsibilities added.

Numerous studies indicate that individuals from working-class families are more likely to be convicted for an offence than are those from wealthier backgrounds. Low-income youths live more often in poor inner city areas, and tend to be subject to higher levels of police surveillance. The Royal Commission on Criminal Justice in Britain noted that the over-representation of Black youth in the penal system was related to the tendency of Black families to be part of the working poor. They had lower levels of education, higher incidence of unemployment, and a tendency to live in poorer neighbourhoods (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997: 89).

In metropolitan Toronto, Alan Simmons and Luis Carrillos noted that 23 of 26 Latino youth they interviewed stated that they felt there was "a lot" of prejudice against Latin Americans among police officers. About half of the male youth in this study had been charged with an offence. Others recounted incidents of coming under police surveillance and being questioned simply for being on the street (Simmons and Carrillos, 1999).

In Canada, Aboriginal youth are over-represented in court and prison populations, and they tend to be charged with more serious crimes and receive harsher sentences than non-Aboriginal persons who are arrested for similar offences (Mallea, 1999: 12).[46] The *Aboriginal Justice Inquiry Report* in Manitoba concluded that systemic and individual racism permeates the criminal justice system in the province. It recommended creating crime prevention programs for youth that address some of the social problems that particularly effect young Aboriginal people (Mallea, 1999: 12).[47]

Experts have identified various causes of youth crime, many of which overlap. Within the family, violence and neglect, lack of supervision, degree of parental involvement, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, and poor housing have all been found to be contributors. In the community, a lack of recreation, health and education facilities, difficulties in school, peer pressure, youth unemployment, and poverty have been correlated with deviant youth behaviour (Bell, 1999; Tanner, 1996). With the exception of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, all causes are related to the environments in which young people live.

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[46] A study entitled "Locking Up Indians in Saskatchewan" concluded that a Status Indian boy turning 16 in 1976 had a 70 percent chance of having at least one stay in prison by the age of 25. The corresponding figure for non-Aboriginal boys was 8 percent (Bell, 1999: 73).

[47] The *Inquiry* argued that addressing chronic unemployment and promoting more cultural, social and recreational opportunities would reduce crime among those deemed at risk (Mallea, 1999: 12).

Prevention and access to opportunities are the two prescriptions offered for reducing offences by young people.[48] Criminologists have highlighted the link between the two – restricted opportunities create conditions that can influence criminal behaviour. For instance, young people unable to find a job may find that crime is an adequate substitute, providing them with access to consumer goods and a lifestyle of leisure which they would not otherwise be able to afford (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997: 91). Access to citizenship for young people could therefore be a key element of this prescription.

Box 16
Highlights: Just Treatment and Juvenile Justice

- Only a small number of youths under 18 commit serious or recurrent criminal offences.
- Juvenile delinquency is nonetheless being redefined as "youth crime," with new legislation that shifts from a child welfare approach to a more punitive stance.
- Many authors argue that under current legislation, rights are being taken away from young people, or not addressed, while responsibilities are added.
- Aboriginal youth are over-represented in the penal system in Canada.
- Studies reveal both systemic and individual racism within the justice system.
- There are connections between criminal behaviour among youth and restricted opportunities that are characteristic of poor communities, including unemployment and a lack of access to recreation.

Access to Health Services

Young people have the right to access public services to meet their needs in a manner that is free from discrimination. Studies on youth and health point to several problem areas where this right is denied, sometimes based on age but also on other factors such as not having a home, inadequate family income, or being a gay man or a lesbian. Some young people are experiencing immense difficulties as a result of lack of access to services or insufficient levels of social assistance. Discrimination on the basis of homelessness and of parenthood, and lack of access to reproductive health care services are all addressed in the following sections.

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[48] The gaps between social norms, young people's aspirations, and differential access to opportunities can lead some youth to engage in criminal activities. By studying delinquency among the young unemployed, Furlong and Cartmel find that "crime rises as a consequence of the discontent and frustration which is the inevitable consequence of economic marginalization" (1997: 90). They also note that "being denied access to the financial rewards of working life and forced into greater dependency on their families, young people may become involved in crime as a way to gain access to consumer culture or simply as part of the quest for excitement or kicks that has long been central to lives of young people" (1997: 83).

The number of homeless people in Canada rose during the 1990s, doubling from 1992 to 1998 in Toronto and Calgary (Hwang, 2001: 229).[49] Young people may become homeless as part of a family, particularly in Toronto or Ottawa, where families occupy 42 and 35 percent of shelter beds respectively.[50] Other young people arrive on the streets (at a mean age of 15) to escape physical or sexual abuse in the family (Hwang, 2001: 229). In 1993, a street youth organization estimated that 4,000 youth live on the street in Montreal (Haley, *et al.*, 1998, citing Comité sur les jeunes de la rue). One public health unit estimated that 10,000 youth in Canada are homeless (Harwick and Patychuk, 1999).

Mortality rates for street youth are significantly higher than for the general youth population. In Montreal, male street youth die at a rate that is 9 times higher than all Quebec youth. Homeless female youth have a mortality rate that is 31 times higher (Hwang, 2001: 229). Morbidity is also high among the homeless population. Young homeless people experience all of the following conditions at above average rates: HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, teen births, mental health and substance abuse problems, poor dental health, Hepatitis B, social inequality, and criminal violence.

Terry Albert and Gregory Williams' study of HIV/AIDS found that "among young Canadians, socially and economically marginalized youth are at greatest risk, including young gay men, street-involved youth and Aboriginals" (1998: 13). The prevalence of HIV infection has been recorded as 700 times higher for street-involved youth than the general population (Albert and Williams, 1998: 14). Prostitution, multiple sexual partners, inconsistent use of condoms, and injection drug use contribute to high HIV and sexually transmitted disease rates. A study by G. Wells and colleagues in 1992 found that young people who dropped out of school and took up life on the street were very sexually active, but not sufficiently educated to protect themselves against infection by sexually transmitted diseases (cited in Albert and Williams, 1998: 14).

For homeless youth and homeless Canadians of all ages, basic human rights to food, shelter and a decent standard of living are absent. Access to welfare is denied for youth unable to show a rent stub as proof of housing and meet other eligibility requirements. Subsisting almost entirely outside the social safety net, street youth are neither protected from harm nor given the means to survive through work or social assistance. Moreover, they do not have equal access to health care services.

A study in which street-involved youth were asked to identify health concerns and needs found that the majority associated a better life with the ability to meet basic needs (Dematteo, *et al.*, 1999). After food, housing is the single most pressing need. Other needs include: meeting emotional needs; social support and societal respect; employment, training or educational opportunities; and access to medical services. Aboriginal youth were found significantly more likely to have problems meeting basic needs (Dematteo, *et al.*, 1999).

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[49] Aboriginal peoples are also over-represented in the homeless population of Canadian cities (Hwang, 2001).

[50] Variables such as poverty, high housing costs, and a shortage of subsidized public housing are thought to be factors that lead to differences in homeless rates between cities.

An evaluation study of a Hepatitis B outreach program to immunize street youth in Montreal found that young people were concerned about their health, wanted to protect themselves, and would readily participate in health programs that were user-friendly (Haley, *et al.*, 1998). To facilitate the right to health for street youth, these authors recommended accessible, low-hassle medical clinics close to their environment, as well as adapted counselling and support services (Haley, *et al.*, 1998).

A study of homeless, unemployed and new immigrant teens in North York, Ontario found that disadvantaged teens – the homeless in particular –had poor dental health. Clarke and colleagues (1996) also report that the provincial program designed to provide access to dental care for low-income children is based on age, and available only to elementary school students if their parents declare financial hardship. As a result, only those youth whose parents have private insurance coverage through good jobs, or who can afford private dental fees, have access to dental care after Grade 8. The authors note that the age and class division of youth dependent upon parental income for health services means that the public health principle to help those *most* in need is not being met (Clarke, *et al.*, 1996).

Turning to another group, a study of Toronto gay and lesbian youth in need of addiction services found that the right to access appropriate health care and social services, free from discrimination, was denied. Participants in a survey reported a "context of harassment, prejudice and disdain" in which they were "marginalized, silenced, harassed and seen through the lens of myths and stereotypes," instead of being treated with respect (Travers and Schneider, 1996: 372). Denial of a quality of service that was equal to that which heterosexuals receive undermined the treatment itself. Addiction service providers and treatment settings "tended to both mirror and reinforce the conditions that contributed to substance abuse in the first instance" (Travers and Schneider, 1996: 372).

It is clear that there are some major differences among youth in terms of citizenship status. Those who are "different" by virtue of sexual orientation and those who cannot rely upon the private wealth of parents for housing and uninsured health and social services have more difficulty exercising their right to health services than others do.

Box 17
Highlights: Access to Health Services

- The citizenship status of homeless youth is extremely precarious. Street kids do not have access to the basic needs necessary to survival and health maintenance.
- Food and shelter are a particular problem for homeless Aboriginal youth. The high incidence of HIV/AIDS and STD infection in this population is also cause for alarm.
- Age discrimination disqualifying youth from targeted programs exemplifies how access to uninsured health care such as dental care is dependent upon parental income.
- Homophobia in the provision of health services denies equal treatment to gay and lesbian youth.

Access to Social Services

Young people also face barriers accessing the state safety net due to discrimination on the basis of age and parenthood. Too old to receive state support as dependent children but not old or independent enough to be counted as an adult, youth "have never had a secure foothold in the state welfare system" (de Singly, 2000: 17; G. Jones, 1995: 11). Age distinctions that are used to require different qualifications are also inconsistent. For example, support for youth in foster care is terminated at the age of 18, which is now far younger than the age most young people leave home (Human Resources Development Canada, 1998). On the other hand, obligations are imposed in exchange for social assistance for citizens under 25.

Following the trend in how youth are treated in the justice system – that is, decreasing rights and increasing responsibilities – social assistance eligibility has been tightening since the late 1990s. On the basis of age alone, youth are denied the right to social assistance. In Ontario, all recipients must have a home address, and young people under 16 or 18 (depending on the jurisdiction) require parental consent to obtain support. For 16- and 17-years-olds to qualify for social assistance, they must be in school and be in regular contact with a "responsible adult" (Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, 2000). Similar conditions apply in Quebec, where 18- to 24-year-olds on social assistance are required to participate in "workfare" employability programs. If they refuse, their social assistance cheque is docked $75 per month. Moreover, Quebeckers on social assistance who are under the age of 25 receive greater supervision from welfare workers and employment officers. As some researchers observe, the issues surrounding workfare are part of a larger debate about citizenship, social inclusion and social rights (Panet-Raymond and Shragge, 1997).

Unequal access for young people to the social safety net has become more explicit in Britain as well. Novak argues that the British government is redefining adult status by denying individuals under 25 any right to be considered an adult (Novak, 1997, 21). Indeed, since 1988, 16- and 17-year-olds have had no right to social assistance. While they are eligible for a guaranteed place in training schemes, the training allowances are low and do not provide an acceptable standard of living (Novak, 1997: 22). Those aged 18 to 24 receive lower social assistance and unemployment insurance benefits than do those over 25, and they, too, have to take part in workfare programs. The same changes are occurring in France, where citizens under 25 do not have the right to the minimum basic income (*revenu minimum d'insertion*), forcing them to seek out any other benefits available (Molgat, 2000: 83).[51]

Young female parents are also singled out for differential treatment. Recently, Ontario and New Brunswick have made social assistance for single mothers under 18 who have not completed high school conditional upon attending a parenting course (Mahon, 2001). With similarities to workfare, a course must be taken in order to "earn" the right to survival, which is part of the erosion of rights in which social assistance is defined as a privilege of the deserving, rather than a right of citizenship (Little, 1995). This requirement also discriminates on the basis of age, implying that age determines the ability to parent.

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[51] However, France does distinguish itself from Germany, Quebec and Spain with a housing policy that gives young people access to housing supports (Molgat, 2000: 83).

The level of social assistance benefits provided to young people who do qualify for support is also problematic. Inadequate welfare rates across the country deprive young parents of the basic needs necessary for survival, such as access to food, suitable and affordable housing, education, health care and transportation (Sauvé, 1999). A study of young mothers in Toronto found that 80 percent of teen mothers are sole providers for their children, many on a form of social assistance that left them well below the poverty level.[52] A study in Simcoe County, Ontario (1997:6) found:

> Teen parenting is predominantly an issue of gender and poverty. Teen parents are almost always young women living alone in poverty and struggling to meet their basic needs. To be effective parents and productive citizens, they need a comprehensive array of supports to be able to continue their education and make a successful transition to work and parenting.

The study also found that teenaged mothers in Simcoe County who were receiving social assistance could not afford birth control, bus fare, or counselling,[53] and many had to choose each month between paying rent and buying food. They also needed information on array of legal rights related to housing; social assistance applications; custody, support and access; being abused or stalked; choosing baby's last name; and threats and accusations (Simcoe County, 1997: 39). The urgency of immediate financial issues "left little room for longer term planning." Social services in Ontario were also found to be inadequate in that pregnant and parenting youth "didn't fit anywhere. Youth services didn't serve parents, and programs for parents didn't serve teens" (Simcoe County, 1997: 11). Lack of adequate, affordable child care in many provinces is another problem often faced by young parents, which acts as a barrier to education and employment.

Numerous studies in the United Kingdom have concluded that young people have become an easy target for cuts in social spending (Novak, 1997: 23; Kempson, 1996; Hudson and Liddiard, 1997). Often, such cuts are accompanied by a discourse justifying this action based on the argument that young people can or should rely on the family for support, and that the government should not be encouraging welfare "dependency" at an early age (de Singly, 2000: 17). As Novak (1997: 23) observes:

> The assault on young people has spearheaded an assault on a generation that has become the target for the imposition of new work disciplines, lower expectations in terms both of social security benefits and job security, pay and conditions, and a sexual, social and moral agenda that the New Right under the governments of both Thatcher and Major has pursued in the face of both uncertain evidence and immense hardship to some of the most vulnerable of the young.

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[52] One of the few studies on fathers of teenage mothers' children found that, although they were usually older men, they were unable to financially support their families. Most had low levels of educational attainment, poor jobs and low incomes (Gullotta, Adams and Markstrom, 2000: 311).

[53] The young mothers were either under or over the age range specified for free counselling service.

Adding to a precarious youth citizenship status is the age discrimination blocking young people from accessing welfare state programs. When accessed, the level of support is reported to be inadequate, forcing lone mothers and other poor young people to rely upon private forms of charity and welfare (such as food banks) and on gambling at bingo to top-up income levels (Little, 1995). This is one of four elements of economic independence that have direct consequences for citizenship (G. Jones, 1995: 9). Another implication for citizenship is that the social stigma applied to early and single parenthood limits the ability of young parents to have a sense of belonging that is based on holding a legitimate place in the community.

Box 18
Highlights: Access to Social Services

- Qualifying for social assistance varies by age and jurisdiction.
- Youth have been hit especially hard by tighter eligibility requirements for social assistance. Unlike older people, youth are required to fulfill obligations in order to receive social assistance.
- For those who do qualify, social assistance rates have been found to be inadequate. This leaves young parents with incomes below the poverty line, without access to sufficient food, appropriate housing, education, health care or transportation.
- The notion that young people can or should rely on the family for support fails to acknowledge issues of equality. Those who cannot rely on family have less access to economic independence, which is a cornerstone of full citizenship.

Sexual and Reproductive Rights

Another area of discrimination with respect to health care services are the barriers young people face accessing contraceptives and, for women, exercising the right to terminate a pregnancy. Although the ability of women and men to exercise reproductive rights has steadily improved over the last 30 years, youth currently experience discrimination in access to contraception and abortion on two grounds – civil rights and social rights.

It should first be noted that ages of consent to sex are inconsistent. Canada's *Criminal Code* stipulates that an adolescent of 14 has the capacity to consent to sexual relations with an adult, and that a 12-year-old can consent to sexual relations with another no more than two years older. "Sexual relations" are not defined, except to specify that anal intercourse is illegal for youth under 18, even if consensual. Treating one type of sexual activity differently from another based on age is a form of discrimination. Moreover, a consequence of Canada's laws on reproductive rights is that the legal right to have vaginal intercourse is granted far earlier than the legal right to have contraception prescribed without parental consent, or to consent to medical intervention to terminate a pregnancy.

About 4 percent of women under 20 become pregnant each year (Bala and Bala, 1996). When pregnancy is desired, young women have the right to become parents regardless of age. When pregnancy is unwanted, women of all ages have the right to termination of the pregnancy. This was established in 1988 when the Supreme Court struck down the section of the *Criminal Code* regulating therapeutic abortions.[54] Two barriers exist related to the ability of young women to exercise this right. The first emerges from primarily age-based rules governing medical intervention, which vary by jurisdiction. The second is a product of a federal-provincial jurisdictional divide, whereby health care insurance is established by federal legislation but is managed and delivered by the provinces.

More than half the provinces and territories have no legislation establishing an age of consent to medical treatment. Rules of professional conduct are followed, whereby consent can be given by a minor if she or he is judged by the physician to be "mature," meaning capable of understanding the information about a treatment and appreciating the risks and likely consequences (Bala and Bala, 1996). Some provinces, however, do have legislation on the age of consent to treatment, as follows: Prince Edward Island –18 or married; New Brunswick – 16 or by physician opinion of maturity; Quebec – 14; Saskatchewan – 18 or married; and British Columbia – 16, if consent from parents is attempted and a second physician approval is obtained (Canadian Abortion Rights Action League, 1999).

These rules apply to consent to surgery in public hospitals and do not apply to clinics, but they may be relied upon when young people request contraception from their doctors. Young women of all ages can consent to an abortion without parental consent, if it is clear that the woman understands what she is doing (Canadian Abortion Rights Action League, 1999). However, young women who will not or cannot obtain parental consent or physician approval to an abortion at a hospital *in provinces where this is required* are forced to continue their pregnancies. In this way, age-based and gender-based discrimination infringes upon young women's rights (Ward, 1995: 144).

Moreover, access to abortion services is uneven and varies by province and region. The number of hospitals providing the procedure has declined by 16 percent since 1988 (Tatalovich and Haussman, 2000: 3). This limits the places where women can access a needed medical service, and it has financial implications since most provinces only fully fund the procedure in hospitals, not in clinics. Depending on the province, abortions performed in clinics may be fully covered, partially covered, or not covered at all, leading to direct user fees (Canadian Abortion Rights Action League, 2000).

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[54] In 1969, the *Criminal Code* was amended to legalize abortions performed by a qualified physician in an approved or accredited hospital, if approved by a committee of physicians (a Therapeutic Abortion Committee). All other abortions were illegal. Canada's Supreme Court then struck down the criminalization of abortion. It based this ruling on the grounds that the existing *Code* was an infringement of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* provision that women have the right to "life, liberty and the security of the person." The denial of pregnancy termination was ruled to be "a violation of her security of person" (O'Connor, Orloff and Shaver, 1999: 167). As a result, the ability to abort was no longer dependent upon the approval of a hospital committee but became a decision that could be made by the pregnant woman herself (Jenson, 1997).

No services to terminate pregnancies exist in prince Edward Island, and only Newfoundland, Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia fully cover clinic costs (Canadian Abortion Rights Action League, 2000). The ability of provinces to determine what, where and for whom medical services are insured thus undermines the substantive right to exercise a civil right.

Another problem is that coverage of pregnancy termination is not portable. The exclusion of this service from many provincial reciprocal billing lists means that women who require an abortion in a province other than their home province are denied access (O'Connor, Orloff and Shaver, 1999: 174). The Canadian Abortion Rights Action League stated in 1998 that the five principles of the *Canada Health Act* (1984) – accessibility, universality, portability, comprehensiveness, and public administration – "have been blatantly disregarded and fundamentally contravened with respect to abortion services, with virtual impunity for the provincial governments that are entrusted to maintain them. For its part, the federal government has abdicated its obligation to enforce them" (cited in Tatalovich and Haussman, 2000: 13). Although the federal government has the power to enforce the *Canada Health Act* by withholding funding from provinces that contravene the principles of the *Act*, it has failed to do so. Only recently has Health Minister Alan Rock announced that the federal government intends to penalize provinces failing to uphold the *Health Canada Act*.

Without an independent source of income, means of transportation and free mobility from family and school, young (and poor) women – particularly those who live in under-serviced areas – are affected by access problems more than older women. Youth who live in "one-doctor" towns are also at a disadvantage compared to urban youth. If a young women knows or fears that her doctor will require parental consent, she faces a real barrier to accessing contraception, pregnancy testing or abortion referral (Canadian Abortion Rights Action League, 1999).

Research on sexual health also points to gender relations, access to affordable contraceptives and emergency contraception as problems youth encounter. One study found that gender power relations, which reify male "needs" at the expense of women's pleasure and safety resulted in problems for young women in their ability to negotiate male condom use (Holland, *et al.*, 1990).

This study and other research showing low use of condoms (as discussed in Section 3.2) suggest that the dynamics of teenage romantic and sexual relationships influence the capacity of young people to be in control of their sexual health.[55] The cost of birth control is also prohibitive for many youth with low incomes (Simcoe County, 1997: 39).

Young people also have a right to reproductive health services that are well advertized, accessible, informal and confidential (United Nations Population Fund, 1999). Jennifer Tipper argues that societal double standards for male and female sexuality inhibit access to birth control "because of the negative stigma attached to young women who plan to have sex" (Tipper, 1997: 33). Respect, decision-making authority, and freedom from judgement are among the demands of organizations lobbying for youth rights.

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[55] In practice, "ease of use" of contraception for youth depends upon factors such as the method, access to a doctor willing to prescribe, and family relations (as they relate to values shared between generations). For example, proper use of the birth control pill is eased by the ability to be open with parents. The influence of these variables on contraceptive use is an area of research yet to be fully explored.

Young women, and all women, have a right to emergency contraception. Two methods of this type of pregnancy prevention are currently available – an oral contraceptive that must be taken within 72 hours of intercourse and an intrauterine method that must be used five days after sex. No surveys on the availability of this medical service in Canada were found. A study in the United Kingdom found that knowledge of emergency contraceptive methods was low (National Health Service, 1997: 7). Following recent moves to make "morning after" contraceptive technologies more available, publicity and education about these methods is increasing. The Yukon government distributes information directly to youth about emergency contraception on its Web site, advertizing confidential access to both methods in Whitehorse. British Columbia recently granted pharmacists the ability to prescribe the oral contraceptive in order to increase access within 72 hours, and Saskatchewan appears to be moving in this direction as well.

Despite the moral panic about teen pregnancy, health care services that enable youth of all ages to exercise their reproductive rights are not universally available in Canada. On grounds that do not appear to be legal, young women are denied the resources needed to exercise their rights. This form of gender discrimination can be interpreted as a barrier blocking some female youth from access to citizenship equality.

Box 19
Highlights: Sexual and Reproductive Rights

- The legal ages for sexual relations and for access to pregnancy termination services are inconsistent.
- Youth face barriers to accessing contraception based on cost, availability, and gender discrimination within relationships.
- The right to emergency contraception is highly variable by jurisdiction. Knowledge about and access to these methods are low overall.
- Young women are more vulnerable than other women to the general denial of reliable access to abortion services in Canada. User fees, lack of portability, and poor availability are general access issues that are compounded by the possibility of being forced to obtain parental consent or physician approval if under the age of consent in that jurisdiction.

Box 20
Citizenship Implications: Justice and Freedom from Discrimination

Literature on youth points to several areas in which young people's citizenship status is infringed upon, in terms of justice and freedom from discrimination. If youth come into contact with the criminal justice system, harsh treatment is likely as a result of the shift to a more punitive approach.

Youth encounter discrimination when they enter the labour force a tier lower than their older, more established co-workers. Such measures disproportionately affect young people because they represent the majority of new entrants to the labour market.

Not having a home or material wealth to rely on from parents can contribute to a weakened citizenship status due to problems in accessing health and social services. Youth are not treated equally with respect to social assistance requirements. For young people, receipt of this entitlement is conditional upon obligations such as workfare or training. In matters of reproductive health, contraception may be difficult for young people to obtain, and there are significant barriers for young women in accessing health care services should they seek to terminate a pregnancy.

In several policy spheres, the treatment of young people can be seen as inconsistent – youth are both treated as adults and as children. Rights and responsibilities are not granted in tandem but, instead, are uneven and inconsistent. There is also considerable variation across Canadian jurisdictions in the age restrictions set for accessing services.

3.5 Personal Security and Well-being in the Community

Literature on youth health problems and participation in leisure activities shed light on a different dimension of youth citizenship status. Participation in community recreation activities contributes to a sense of belonging. Full membership in a society also depends upon the right of youth, along with all citizens, to be protected from harm. The main health problem of older citizens is chronic disease, leading to a focus on the citizenship right to health care. By contrast, the predominant health problem of youth is injury, the prevention of which requires learning "smart risk-taking" and the provision of a safe environment.

Given the evidence of mortality and morbidity caused by injury for youth, the right of young people to a safe environment free from both unintentional and intentional violence is not always present. Reducing unintentional injury requires safe roadways and education for smart risk-taking. The physical environment associated with the automobile, cycling and the use of off-road vehicles also presents a health problem for young people. Egalitarian gender relations, skills to cope with stressful situations, adequate income, and hopeful life prospects are all aspects of citizenship related to intentional injury that are important to the right to health and well-being for youth. In addition, the literature suggests that male youth are not adequately upholding the responsibility not to harm others.

The two kinds of injury examined follow the definitions used by Health Canada: *unintentional injuries* received through the physical and social environment in which youth live, and *intentional injuries* that result from violence against oneself or others with the intent to harm (Health Canada, 1997: 6).[56] This section then turns to a review of the literature on leisure and recreation among youth.

Freedom from Unintentional Injury – Secure Environment

Canada has one of the highest rates of injury related deaths for children and youth (Health Canada, 1997: 56).[57] Among 15- to 19-year-olds who died between 1996 and 1997, 75 percent of males and 66 percent of females died of injury (Canadian Institute of Child Health, 2000: 139). Motor vehicle crashes and suicides are the leading causes of death for youth (Health Canada, 1997: 14). According to the most recent data available, among all causes of death, traffic injuries stood at 50 percent for both 10- to 14-year-olds and 15- to 19-year-olds. This is despite an overall decline in such deaths by more than 50 percent from a peak in the early 1970s (Health Canada 1997: 20, 77).[58]

The transportation system in North America, which is designed to support automobile use, thus poses a major threat to the right of youth to a safe environment. Seat belt legislation and air bag regulations have reduced the risk of mortality and morbidity, but the seat belts are used only by an estimated 60 percent of the population. Speeding and alcohol consumption are major contributing factors, with 20- to 25-year-olds driving under the influence of alcohol more frequently than 16- to 19-year-olds (Health Canada, 1997: 83). Nonetheless, what is more significant for teenagers are the driving skills learned in the first few years of driving. Novice drivers with less than two years' experience have a significantly higher risk of crashing than do those with five years of driving experience.

Rates of road related injuries and suicides reveal no income-based differences. For other forms of injury and death, however, children and youth from disadvantaged socioeconomic settings and Aboriginal populations experience higher levels of injury than their peers. Overall, the lowest income quintile shows a 40 percent higher rate of injury related deaths for young people under 20 than for the highest quintile. This rate varies, however, according to the cause of death. For instance, low-income youth are much more likely to die by fire, homicide, a fall, or drowning (Health Canada, 1997: 53).

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[56] Note that researchers in this field avoid the term "accident" because of its definition as "an act of fate." As injury prevention workers, their view is that, like illness, injury can be studied, its occurrence predicted, and it can be prevented altogether or at least by degree of severity. Injury is therefore within, not beyond, human control. Also, mortality statistics are used in this review more than hospitalization statistics to safeguard against an inaccurate picture of morbidity due to variant hospital admission and discharge policies.

[57] From 1990 to 1992, the average annual death rate for Canadians from birth to age 19 was 5,097 (Health Canada 1997: 16). The death rate for 1990 and 1995 in the Yukon and Northwest Territories was significantly higher than in most provinces, but Prince Edward Island also recorded a higher than average death rate (Canadian Institute of Child Health, 2000: 138). For youth aged 10 to 19, injuries are the leading cause of death and the second most frequent cause of hospitalization after respiratory diseases. Almost one death in three and one hospitalization in six is injury related (Health Canada 1997: 16).

[58] Cause of death among 10- to 14- and 15- to 19-year-olds were, respectively: as motor vehicle occupants – 53 and 80 percent; as pedestrians – 18 and 8 percent; as cyclists – 16 and 3 percent; and as motorized cycle passengers – 12 and 9 percent (Health Canada, 1997: 60).

As children become teenagers, falls and collisions during sports are responsible for an increasing number of hospitalizations. Reflecting the gender imbalance in sports participation, 68 percent of sports and recreation injury victims are boys (Health Canada, 1997: 221).[59]

Debate within the research community about the causes of different kinds of injury (individual behaviour, fate, society, or the physical environment) poses a challenge to viewing unintentional injury through the lens of citizenship. Along with health education and public awareness, regulation of highway construction and of consumer goods and usage aim to prevent unintentional injury. Thus, legislation and regulation represent two ways that the state can act to protect citizens from intentional injury and improve the right to security.

Box 21
Highlights: Freedom from Unintentional Injury

- ☐ Unintentional injuries pose a serious threat to the lives of young people.
- ☐ Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among young people aged 10-19, causing 50 percent of all deaths, with no difference in death rates based on economic circumstances.
- ☐ Youth from low-income families and Aboriginal families, however, have a 40 percent higher overall rate of death from injury than do youth from high-income families.
- ☐ Injuries related to sports and recreation increase in the teen years, especially among boys.

Freedom from Intentional Injury – Personal Safety

The ability to be full citizens, actively engaging in society, is dependent upon freedom from violence. Youth have a right to safety and protection from harm, in accordance with the law, and they have the responsibility not to cause harm to others. Although Paglia and Room (1997) note that an encounter with violence is a common experience of youth, research on personal safety for this age group is far from comprehensive. Statistical studies show that one-quarter of injury related deaths for children and youth under 20 are caused by an intentional act such as suicide or homicide (Health Canada, 1997: 20).[60]

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[59] Boys are also injured more often than girls on farms while using agricultural machinery and while playing ice hockey, basketball, soccer and football.

[60] Of total injury related deaths, suicide accounts for 14.2 percent and homicide 4.7 percent for 10- to 14-year-olds and, for 15- to 19-year-olds, 27 percent of injury related deaths are from suicide and 4.7 percent are from homicide (Health Canada, 1997: 20).

Mica Nava (1992) contends that young women and young men have different experiences in acquiring citizenship status. She criticizes research that relies upon the category of "youth" on the grounds that it renders invisible gender differences and gender relations. Her view is that it is important to recognize the relational dynamics *between youth* that result in different encounters with violence for girls and boys, and thus different pathways to full citizenship (Nava, 1992: 80). The evidence available supports this theory, showing violence to have a clear gender division.

Both male and female youth are victims of physical violence. The difference is that male youth are not subjected to sexual violence to anywhere near the same degree as their female counterparts. Studies consistently show that sexual violence against women is a major problem in Canada, which also has implications for rates of depression and suicide among women (Health Canada, 1999: 67). Although prevalence at a national or provincial scale is unknown, isolated studies indicate that violence against women is a serious problem for female youth. One study of post-secondary school courtship found that the sexual and psychological victimization of heterosexual women is common in Canada. It is not adults, but young men, who perpetrate this violence (DeKeseredy, 1996: 313). Based only on their primary or secondary school activities, 1.0 percent of male students report having threatened to use physical force to make partners engage in sexual activities, 2.3 percent used physical force to make women engage in sexual activities, 33.4 percent emotionally hurt their dates, and 1.4 percent physically hurt their dates (DeKeseredy, 1996: 316).[61] This study was exclusive to heterosexual relationships and did not ask questions regarding females as perpetrators or males as victims.

A study of Alberta high schools found that events of sexual assault and harassment were not distributed randomly. Of the approximately 20 percent of young women who reported having experienced sexual assault (indecent exposure, verbal assault or harassment, or touching), a minority were subjected to such events "often" (Bagley, Bolitho and Bertrand, 1997: 361).

Damage to the mental and emotional health of female youth led them to be more than five times as likely to have engaged in suicidal gestures and attempts in the previous six months than those who had experienced assault "once" or "never" (Bagley, Bolitho and Bertrand, 1997: 364). Males were also subjected to sexual harassment, but rates were much lower and connections to mental health problems were much weaker.

A qualitative study exploring teen dating relationships and aggression found evidence that violence is present in the sexual relationships of even very young adolescents. Physical abuse, death threats, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, social control, indifference, threats of separation and reprisals, damage to reputations, and harassment after separation were forms of violence reported (Lavoie, Robitaille and Hébert, 2000). Girls appeared to adapt to the male dominated characteristic of relationships by forming value judgements of each other's response to male violence, and rationalizing rather than criticizing male violence (Lavoie, Robitaille and Hébert, 2000).

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[61] Asked corresponding questions, 8.3 percent of women reported that their partners had threatened to physically force them to engage in sexual activities, 14.5 percent reported that their dates had physically forced them to engage in sex acts, 49.7 percent reported having been emotionally hurt, and 9.1 percent reported that their partners had hurt them physically (DeKeseredy, 1996: 316).

Two studies on male youth found that patriarchal attitudes contribute to violence against women (DeKeseredy, 1996; Totten, 2000). A study that probed more deeply into why marginalized young men commit acts of violence against girlfriends and strangers identified gender socialization as a significant contributor. Mark Totten's study of the relationship between marginalization and violence among male youth in urban centres found "the degree of adherence to patriarchal authoritarian models of family and gender" to be a key predictor of youth violence (2000: 31). In response to the feelings of inadequacy and the frustration regarding their lack of economic opportunities that were expressed by participants in the study, Totten argues that "youth must be given concrete proof that there is reason to be hopeful about their futures" through the provision of jobs (2000: 30).

Within families, girls are the victims of 79 percent of sexual assault and 56 percent of physical assaults (Health Canada, 1999: 67). It is during puberty, between the ages of 12 and 15, when young women most often experience sexual assault by a family member. For boys, this is likely to occur between the ages of 4 and 8. In 98 percent of physical and sexual abuse cases within families, fathers perpetrate the crime (Health Canada, 1999: 67).

When home is not a safe haven, one response young people take is to escape. Research on street youth in British Columbia found that 98 percent of female street youth, compared to 32 percent of females in school, had experienced some form of physical or sexual abuse. Males on the street similarly reported far more abuse than did those in school, at 59 versus 15 percent (Canadian Institute of Child Health, 2000: 129). Youth in foster care have also been found to be victims of violence or abuse. Recent investigations into physical and sexual abuse in foster homes, correctional facilities, and other state institutions contends that Canadian politicians and bureaucrats bear responsibility for violence against children and youth under state care (West, 1991: 93).

Leaving home is a strategy that may bring an end to family violence, but it does not always result in freedom from violence. Without a source of income or social support, young women and, to a lesser extent, young men are targets of prostitution rings.[62] It is only recently that children and youth who have been sexually exploited in the sex trade have been able to speak up on this issue (Save the Children Canada, 1998: 26-28). Recurring themes in their lives are poverty, homelessness, running away from home, abuse, pregnancy, low self-esteem, drug addiction, lack of education (including human rights education), recruitment by pimps, and double lives (one when with family or at school, and the other at night). Studies have found a host of medical problems over-represented in sexually exploited females on the street, compared with females in school. International attempts to reduce the sexual exploitation of children and youth call for more outreach workers, housing, education, legislation and advocacy (Teissedre, 1998: 25). Aboriginal young people who are commercially sexually exploited call for a right to resources, laws to protect rather than to punish, public education, and government, community and societal accountability (Kingsley, Krawczyk and Mark, 2000: 77). Canadian provincial authorities have attempted to address this problem through legislative and educational strategies.

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[62] Another study of British Columbia youth, however, found that the most sexually exploited youth were in school, not on the street, and that the average age of entry into the sex trade was 13 (Canadian Institute of Child Health, 2000: 130).

In a youth participation project called Hearing the Voices of Youth, the issue of crime and violence was frequently mentioned as a primary concern (Caputo, 2000: 6). Violence was encountered by youth in relationships, families and peer groups. Sexual harassment and gay bashing were also reported. Immediate strategies for coping with violence were to avoid unfamiliar neighbourhoods and adopt "cool" behaviour. Young women took special precautions to avoid violence by, for example, travelling in groups or staying at home (Caputo, 2000: 18). From a citizenship perspective, the ability of young people to participate in society is diminished by threat of violence, particularly when they do not have safe access to the streets and public spaces of the community because of the fear of violence.

Youth gangs are also a problem in large Canadian cities. Gangs provide members with resources such as money, power, friendship, excitement and a sense of protection and belonging. This appeals to youth for whom these needs are not satisfied in families or school (Caputo, 2000: 19). Attractive alternatives such as employment, money (social assistance was not considered sufficient), and shelter were seen as necessary to support youth who want to leave gangs.

Although the prevalence of violence at schools is unclear, youth have reported being physically threatened, beaten-up, robbed, verbally harassed, and picked-on. More than half of all juvenile victimization incidents happen in schools or on school property (Bell, 1999, 90). In the project Hearing the Voices of Youth, some youth stated that school officials do not take violence seriously enough (Caputo, 2000: 20).

Whether the criminal justice and social service system is protecting youth from illegal criminal acts of violence is a question not addressed in the literature. Research is needed on variations in such experiences among youth, and on the dynamics of youth relationships. Research is also needed on how encounters with violence influence the exercise of citizenship by youth, and thereby affect the acquisition of full citizenship status.

Box 22
Highlights: Freedom from Intentional Injury

- ☐ There is a clear gender division with respect to violence which may affect pathways to full citizenship.
- ☐ Studies indicate that sexual violence is a major problem for female youth. The perpetrators of violence against them are overwhelmingly male adults and male youth. Youth-to-youth, male against female violence has been associated with patriarchal attitudes.
- ☐ Sexual abuse contributes to youth homelessness and has been found to be a problem in state institutions as well as families.
- ☐ Gang activity, physical threats, gay bashing and harassment are serious problems for some youth.

Suicide

Suicide is the polar opposite of the engagement and empowerment of full citizenship. Yet, suicide was the second leading cause of injury related deaths for 15- to 19-year-olds, at 27.3 percent, and for 10- to 14-year-olds, at 14.2 percent (Health Canada, 1997: 20). Rates vary significantly, however, by gender. Young men aged 15 to 19 die of suicide at a rate more than four times higher than young women the same age (Health Canada, 1997: 271), and since 1960, the suicide rate for young men has increased four-fold (Canadian Institute of Child Health, 1994: 97). Teenaged women are hospitalized for attempted suicide at a rate twice that of young men (Canadian Institute of Child Health, 1994: 97). This indicates that boys do not necessarily try to commit suicide more than girls do but, rather, boys succeed more often.

Studies investigating the environmental causes of youth suicide identify low levels of family income and education, family divorce or relocation, and financial uncertainty related to unemployment as contributing factors. Loss of personal and cultural identity, social isolation and violent family situations, including a family history of suicide are other factors associated with suicide. As well, negative life circumstances (like illnesses such as AIDS), fears associated with pregnancy, and physical or sexual abuse often precipitate youth suicide events (Health Canada, 1997: 271).

Marginalized young people, such as street youth or gay and lesbian youth, are at higher risk for suicidal behaviours. Fully 44 percent of male youth on the street report having suicidal thoughts, versus 12 percent of males in school. For female street youth, these rates rose to 58 percent versus 21 percent of females in school. Moreover, female street youth had the highest rates of actual suicide attempts and related injuries (Canadian Institute of Child Health, 2000: 130). Research conducted in 1999 also found that 46 percent of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth had attempted suicide at least once. The reasons given for attempting suicide were feeling lonely and isolated, having problems with parents, and worries about sexual orientation (Canadian Institute of Child Health, 2000: 122).

Aboriginal communities have suicide rates for children and youth under 20 years of age that are fully five times higher than all Canadians. This suicide rate is among the highest for any culturally identifiable group in the world (Kirmayer, 1994, cited in Chandler and Lalonde, 1998: 192). Some Aboriginal communities with high youth suicide rates also experience low socioeconomic status and lack of opportunity, high rates of alcohol and drug abuse, and acculturation problems. Healthy communities where culture is preserved and rehabilitated, and whose members are more active as citizens, correlate with dramatically lower youth suicide rates (Chandler and Lalonde, 1998: 215). In a study of 111 of British Columbia's Aboriginal communities over a five-year period, Chandler and Lalonde concluded that "personal and cultural continuity" was the best means to account for the extreme variation in youth suicide rates. Rates varied from zero in healthy communities to 800 times the national average in others (1998: 192).[63]

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[63] Variation in youth suicide rates was found to be strongly associated with the degree of engagement in community practices interpreted as "collective efforts to rehabilitate and vouchsafe the cultural continuity of these groups." Markers of cultural continuity were the progress on self-government, land claims, education, health services, cultural facilities, and police and fire services. Of the 111 bands that were studied over a five-

Box 23
Highlights: Suicide

- Suicide is the second leading cause of death for youth under 19.
- The rate at which male youth die of suicide is far higher than female youth and has increased dramatically since 1960.
- Suicide is a major cause of death among Aboriginal youth, with rates five times the national average. There is, however, extreme variation between communities.
- Lack of opportunities, substance abuse, the loss of identity, unemployment, and social isolation all contribute to the conditions that precipitate youth suicide attempts.
- Homeless youth, especially young homeless women, and gay and lesbian youth have high rates of attempted suicide.

Recreation and Leisure

Positive social relations also contribute to citizenship. A sense of belonging to a community is believed to develop through participation in recreational and cultural activities (Laidlaw Foundation, 2000*a*; Health Canada, and the Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council, 1998).[64] Recreation and physical activity among youth are seen as ways to reduce the risk behaviour problems and to encourage smarter risk-taking. The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association reports that recreation and physical activity is associated with lower levels of depression, stress, anxiety, loneliness, self-destructive behaviour, and juvenile delinquency (1999: 3).

Leisure activities appear to provide important opportunities for young people to develop their identities and establish friendships, often in a mixed gender environment.[65] Many authors emphasize the importance of friendship among young people in order to maintain school motivation, find support during difficult times, or to reduce boredom (Paré, 1997: 82; Hendry, *et al.*, 1993; Furlong and Cartmel, 1997; Pronovost, 2000).

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year period, every band that had taken all of these protective measures had a youth suicide rate of zero. Bands in which all of these markers were missing had youth suicide rates that were 5 to 100 times the provincial average (Chandler and Lalonde, 1998: 215).

[64] See also Offord, Lipman and Duku (1998) and Cowie Bonne (2000). The National Recreational Roundtable lists the benefits of physical activity as physical, mental, social, familial and educational (Health Canada, and the Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council, 1998). Tipper and Avard (1999) note that recreation helps in the transition to adulthood. They see direct links between recreation for children and the development of identity and belonging to a group.

[65] Hendry and colleagues identify three age-related stages of leisure among young people: (1) *organized leisure* such as participation in sport groups, which is most important for those aged 13 and 14; (2) *casual leisure* that begins around age 15 or 16 and includes hanging around with friends; and (3) *commercial leisure* that becomes predominant around age 16 and includes going to cinemas, bars and pubs. During the *commercial leisure* stage, young people start to spend greater amounts of time in mixed gender environments (Hendry, *et al.*, 1993).

However, despite the fact that young people spend more time doing physical and cultural activities than any other age group (Pronovost, 2000: 35),[66] the physical health of young people, especially young women, has increasingly become a cause for concern. Only about 40 percent of Canadian children and youth engage in adequate amounts of physically activity (Advisory Committee on Population Health, 2000). The leisure and recreation activities of young people are restricted by a lack of spending power, a general lack of transportation, and by parental limitations (Hendry, *et al.*, 1993: 34).[67]

Males and females from all social classes have more free time and tend to engage in more leisure than ever, but gender divisions remain. Furlong and Cartmel note that young women continue to spend a significant amount of time helping with domestic household chores, and tend to return home earlier in the evening than do young men. Moreover, they tend to have fewer resources to help enrich leisure time. They have lower wages, and thus less disposable income, and generally have higher self-maintenance cost than young men (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997, 55). In Quebec, when compared to men of the same age, young women more frequently indicated that they were "workaholics" and generally lacked time to engage in leisure activities (Pronovost, 2000: 36).

A study by Kino-Québec found that young men aged 12 to 21 were more than twice as likely to be physically active as women of the same age. Young men exercised an average of 9 hours per week, compared to only 4 for women (Kino-Québec, 1998: 16). Furlong and Cartmel claim that lower rates of physical activity among young women may reflect "concerns relating to the compatibility of sport with their perceptions of womanhood" (1997: 55). Hence, the perceived need to conform to masculine and feminine roles still represents a major challenge for physical educators.

There are also class and race-based differences in rates of physical activity. Differences can depend on culture, but also on the financial situation of families and their place of residence. Hay and Shephard (1998) compared Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in southwestern Ontario and found that Mohawk/Cayuga students were less physically active and had less positive self-perceptions of physical activity than their peers. Within the Aboriginal population, they found that female students were less active and had less positive perceptions of exercise than males.[68]

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[66] Pronovost also found that young people use the Internet more than every other age group, and for reasons other than work or studies (2000: 39).

[67] Although material and societal constraints are of great importance, psychological constraints may actually be of even greater relevance. Hendry and colleagues cite Mannell (1984) in illustrating some of these constraints, which include perceived incompetence, attitudinal variables (including motives and needs), and socio-cultural factors (Hendry, *et al.*, 1993: 34-5).

[68] Hay and Shephard (1998) report that Aboriginal people who are living a sedentary life have a high prevalence of chronic diseases associated with physical inactivity, such as diabetes, obesity, and cardiovascular disease. For these reasons, they contend that educational institutions need to design physical activity programs to train young people to exercise regularly.

Leisure pursuits and recreation also reflect differences in class and material resources (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997: 59; Advisory Committee on Population Health, 2000). Access to extracurricular sports may vary between schools and school districts. Off-campus sports and recreation activities have become increasingly expensive as a result of user fees and the cost of travel and equipment. Young people with better educated and wealthier parents show more diversity in their sporting practices due to access to expensive leisure beyond their immediate neighbourhood (Paré, 1997: 74). Middle-class youth are also more culturally active then those from working-class families. A study prepared for Canadian Heritage showed that Canadians with higher levels of education have a more positive attitude toward the arts than other Canadians (Environics Research Group Limited, 2000: 61).

Occupational status also has powerful effects on young people's leisure pursuits during late adolescence. Furlong and Cartmel note that youth who were experiencing "extended education and delays in entering full-time [post-secondary] education tended to report the highest overall level of leisure activity, while those who were unemployed participated in the fewest activities" (1997: 52).

While the impact of recreation and leisure activities on physical health is fairly well understood, its links to issues surrounding citizenship have not been extensively analyzed. Youth represents a key time when young people develop friendships, are often involved in mixed gender activities, and develop a general sense of belonging, all of which are important to the development of full citizenship. The period of youth is also important in that lifestyle habits are often formed during those years. However, physical education classes in school are generally only compulsory until Grades 9 or 10, which is perhaps insufficient to establish healthy lifestyle habits for many young people (Advisory Committee on Population Health, 2000).

Box 24
Highlights: Recreation and Leisure

- Male youth are far more physically active than female youth. Aboriginal youth are less physically active than their peers.
- Young women have less opportunity to participate in recreation due to family obligations, fewer material resources, and lack of time.
- Greater levels of parental education and income contribute to greater participation in cultural and recreational activities among youth.
- Youth with less money, lack of transportation, and restricted freedom from parental limitations are less able to access recreational activities.

Box 25
Citizenship Implications: Personal Security and Well-being in the Community

The ways that youth interact with their environment has an important relationship to their citizenship status. The literature on youth and health indicates that the right of youth to protection from harm is infringed upon most by the transportation system and societal problems related to gender, poverty and marginalization.

At the most fundamental level, youth morbidity and mortality is highly affected by injuries in motor vehicle crashes, sports, and intentional violence. Systemic discrimination against young women and Aboriginal youth has a disproportionate effect on the rates of sexual violence and suicide they experience.

These findings suggest that the context in which youth live put certain young people in a position of lacking access to basic citizenship rights such as personal and environmental security. Research also reveals that young people may be the perpetrators of violence. As such, they fail to uphold the citizenship responsibilities to obey the law and refrain from causing harm to others.

Youth participation in recreation is a form of engagement in the community. It, too, is mediated by differential access since income, transportation and parental rules serve as barriers to participation. There is a significant difference in leisure activities between male and female youth, and among some youth of colour. Opportunities for extracurricular activities in sports and culture also vary significantly by school or school district, and by young people's access to material resources. The introduction of user fees and the high cost of recreation equipment have made class differences increasingly significant. Inadequate physical activity among young people may undermine their access to health and well-being in the future, as well as in the present.

3.6 Identity, Belonging, and Participation

Over time, a discourse has emerged around the weak electoral participation of youth.[69] It is characterized in general by the concern that young people lack interest in conventional politics. However, in the debate among different authors, there is no consensus as to whether there is a problem or not, and why youth do or do not participate. Two studies done in 1997 found a difference of 11 percent and 25 percent in voter turnout for under 25-year-olds (Pammet, 2001: 14). For those who accept a life-cycle explanation, this is not a problem. Young people will participate to a greater extent when politics affect their family or work. For others, this fact implies lost opportunities and possibly even societal problems (Pammet, 2001: 15).

This section will address issues of identity, belonging and political participation by asking several related questions. What are the identity attachments of youth? What is the reality of youth involvement in politics, broadly defined? If they are indeed uninterested, is this the result of their sense that they have little voice in influencing the public debate and public policy? Or do youth express their politics in ways other than voting?

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[69] As early as 1974, there was public concern about the apparent lack of interest young people expressed about politics. Similarly, in a 1983 Canadian Senate Study, the authors reported that less than one in ten young Canadians who were interviewed saw political engagement as important (Gauthier, 1999*b*).

Belonging and Participating

Identity and belonging are multifaceted concepts. Both can be shaped by a combination of many factors such as the local community, national or ethnic identity, religious affiliation, class relations, or political philosophy.

Some individuals experience tension in trying to reconcile different feelings of belonging, whereas others do not.[70] For instance, some young people in Canada may feel torn between their affiliation to their family identity and to the identity of the dominant White society when the two are different. They see the conflict of identity as a reflection of the exclusion of non-White people in images of Canadian and national history. Others insist that people of colour make a point of seeing themselves as Canadian. They argue that Canadian identity is defined for the majority by dual-heritage (Scottish-Canadian, African-Canadian, Chinese-Canadian, and so on), and that non-White citizens need to claim their entitlement to be included.

In a study of youth from different countries, Jocelyn Létourneau and colleagues found that, despite the popular notion of the "global village," most youths continue to identify primarily with the environment in which they were socialized.[71] A recent study of immigrant youth undertaken by the Canadian Council on Social Development found that the majority of these young people enjoyed the same freedoms as other young Canadians, and felt that they had integrated reasonably well into the mainstream society. However, many of them indicated that religious faith played a major role in their daily lives and they often felt isolated and alienated by a culture celebrating consumer capitalism and the accumulation of material goods. Language barriers, in combination with their "visible" difference in a predominantly White society, also made it difficult for many to feel totally accepted as Canadians (Canadian Council on Social Development, 2000).

Similarly, many Latin American youth in metropolitan Toronto (and likely elsewhere in Canada) struggle to maintain a positive "Latino" identity in a society that often portrays Latin American youth as dangerous, and involved in crime and gang activity. Alan Simmons and Luis Carrillos found that "Latin American youth develop diverse personal and collective strategies for dealing with negative stereotypes" (1999: 1). At a community level, the authors found that the strategies Latin Americans use to promote their cultural identity are anti-racist, positive about Latino ideals, and seek to build bridges with other communities (Simmons and Carrillos, 1999: 13).

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[70] Discussion at the "Colloquium Citizenship 2000," organized by the McGill University Institute for Canadian Studies, Montreal, 20 October 2000.

[71] Discussion at the workshop "La citoyenneté vue par les enfants et les jeunes," at the Colloquium Citizenship 2000, organized by the McGill University Institute for Canadian Studies, Montreal, 20 October 2000.

Some Aboriginal youth also have similar struggles around identity. Peter Gabor and colleagues remind us that mainstream Canadian society continues to hold many stereotypes about Aboriginal people (Gabor, Thibodeau and Manychief, 1996: 88). Aboriginal youth struggle with conflicts between their values and those of the broader society. The problem is especially acute for those who leave a reserve and move to urban areas because they must maintain their identity and cultural values as an ethnocultural minority. These authors note that Aboriginal youth who are relatively successful in maintaining their cultural values tend to have higher self-esteem and are able to adjust better psychologically than those who become disconnected from their heritage (Gabor, Thibodeau and Manychief, 1996: 88).

If young people still identify with their culture, then how do we explain the apparent disinterest they exhibit with respect to public participation? Is there a trend of growing disinterest in social affairs, or are young people simply finding it difficult to participate in the political process?

A great deal of political socialization takes place while people are young. This socialization often serves to promote acceptance of the status quo and of the prevailing social order. Thus, observers have found young people to be quite respectful of political institutions. Jean Crête (1994) argues that young people tend to accept the dominant Canadian values and ideals. As youth move into economic independence, so does their affiliation with the issues and political views of older members of society. However, given that it is taking increasingly long for young people to become economically independent, their acceptance of the concerns shared by other adults is taking longer to achieve and is occurring later in life (Hudon and Fournier, 1994: 1).

Although young people are given the formal rights to vote and to run for office at age 18, young people may face structural barriers in trying to fully exercise this right. In some democratic countries, citizens have to register to vote and, generally speaking, young people have the lowest level of voter registration (Muxel, 1994: 182; Furlong and Cartmel, 1997: 101). In France, roughly 40 percent of all non-registered but eligible voters are between the ages of 18 and 25.

Muxel observes that higher rates of non-registration for young people can in part be explained by factors of social exclusion. These youths often live in urban areas, are having a difficult time entering the labour market, and do not always have fixed addresses (since many young people move frequently, especially students). As well, differences in political participation are evident among different classes. Youth from working-class families tend to be less politically active than youth from middle-class families (Muxel, 1994: 183; Furlong and Cartmel, 1997).

Many authors have found that the difference in political behaviour between young and old is largely explained by their position in the labour market (Duchesneau, Landry and Crête, 1994: 38). Furlong and Cartmel note that voting rates in Britain are higher among the professional classes, somewhat lower in the manual labour classes, and lowest for those who are unemployed or who have never been employed (1997: 101). Being unemployed reduces the potential for collective action by strengthening individualist sentiment, and political and social alienation (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997: 104).

Alan France (1998) found that marginal work, unemployment and poverty can lead young people to feel alienated from the larger community, and ultimately cause them to withdraw from participating in it. This withdrawal goes well beyond failing to vote in elections. Examining an economically depressed neighbourhood in Sheffield, England, he found that coming from an impoverished area was a major influence in the choice of young people *not* to participate. Blaming the community for their feelings of hopelessness, these young people believed that putting effort into the community was a waste of time (France, 1998: 105-06). France drew two conclusions from the study. First, the relationship between responsibilities and rights is important. A perceived lack of rights may undermine a young person's desire to undertake social responsibilities. Second, lack of participation can reflect dissatisfaction with the world that young people are inheriting (France, 1998: 109).

Turcotte and Assogba reached similar findings in their study of unemployed youth in the Outaouais (1996). They found that the behaviour of youth in the labour market indicated that they were aware of their precarious position. Often, they would accept opportunities only warily, and would be quick to give up if they were presented with obstacles. This behaviour was deemed by the observers to reflect a means by which the youth tried to protect themselves from new disappointments. Moreover, they found that the youth studied felt they had little control over what happened to them and, as a result, would participate only in activities that required a minimum of investment and brought them visible benefits. They tended to avoid getting involved in activities in which the outcome was uncertain or which involved a prolonged attachment or commitment (Turcotte and Assogba, 1996: 76).

From another perspective, the literature on youth subcultures reports that the formation of alternative identities correlates to periods and places in which young people have difficulty identifying with adult norms. Subcultures are often a means by which young people actively resist or criticize the dominant culture – by dressing differently and by listening to or creating "deviant" forms of music and other cultural forms.

Some observers have argued that the British punk movement of the mid- to late-1970s was a "working-class response to decay" led by youth, in reaction to the economic crisis of the 1970s and the breakdown of the post-war consensus (Frith and Horn, 1987: 61). Julian Tanner (1978: 70) contends that:

> The scene was set for the development of a rock music form capable of resonating more closely with the feelings and experiences associated with the dole queue and the dead-end job. In this regard, punk rock has provided its participants with a set of shared meanings – a sense of community based upon an active, albeit symbolic, resistance to declining life-chances.[72]

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[72] With respect to punk rock, much of its lyrical content spoke directly to disenfranchised youth. For instance, The Clash's song *Career Opportunities* addressed the powerlessness of those who found themselves in the most menial of jobs, and provided an anarchist critique of the work ethic. The bleak future of British youth was pointed out in the Sex Pistols' *God Save the Queen*, in which Jonny Rotten wails that "England's dreaming" and it holds "no future for me, no future for you." A similar argument can be made about the rise of rap music in the 1980s and 1990s, its popularity in part being a cultural and race-based response to African-American marginalization under the Reagan administration. In describing Public Enemy, one of rap music's most controversial rap bands of the 1980s, one music critic noted their lyrics "never aimed for anything less than a

Evidence has also shown that systemic discrimination on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, class, or other variables leads to the formation of "deviant" subcultures. One study found that programs for English as a Second Language can marginalize and stigmatize minority children by segregating them from the majority (Henry, *et al.*, 1995). Peter McLaren documented a case where young girls who suffered from poverty, racism, and sexual and physical abuse established a distinct subculture of resistance to schooling that attempted to make the girls "into passive, pliable, docile, tidy, neat and diligent workers" (McLaren, 1989). Perceptions that the girls were at fault for poor educational achievement led to their marginalization, which the girls resisted. Notably, however, their alternative identity was a double-edge sword, empowering yet self-blaming.

Experiences in the labour market also have an important effect on young people's feelings of belonging. Access to quality employment provides young people with professional status and the financial means to participate in the broader society. Exclusion from academic opportunities and poor labour market attachment weaken the citizenship status of young people.

As discussed earlier, street youth are marginalized by their lack of access to adequate social services or health care, as well as to food, education or money. Living without a home, and without attendance at school or attachment to a workplace, means that these young people exist outside mainstream society. Symbolic of their exclusion, street youth are often without identification. Albert and Williams (1998: 14) report that:

> The disappearance of high-wage low-skill jobs, the high rates of unemployment and low wages for those who do work, combined with the high costs of housing in urban areas and cutbacks in social services and transfers all conspire to push young people to the streets and into despair.

This group does not have the resources, capacity or opportunity to participate in the formal political, social, and economic areas of life. It can therefore be assumed that street youth have little or no access to participation in mainstream politics. Although provisions have recently been made to allow the homeless to vote in elections, where participation requires money (for membership fees, for example, to belong to political parties or non-governmental organizations), homeless youth cannot participate.

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comprehensive view of contemporary black America" (Light, 1990). Their lyrics were usually overtly political, urging listeners to "get involved." As well, they promoted a pro-Black consciousness, and often dealt with social issues, particularly those affecting the African-American community. Public Enemy's lyrics – "rhymes for the mind" in rapper Chuck D's words – challenged their listeners to think, and the band caused a bit of a stir when they claimed rap music was "the CNN of Black America." Indeed, forms of protest in popular music have a long history, taking root well before the arrival of punk and rap. For instance, the late 1960s spawned a number of artists who sought to promote social consciousness (primarily directed against the Vietnam War), including Bob Dylan, Neil Young, The Beatles, and Frank Zappa, among others.

Box 26
Highlights: Belonging and Participating

- Non-White youth can experience tension in holding multiple identities. Feelings that they do not belong emerge from negative stereotypes or from conflicts between family identity and the identity of the dominant White society.
- Political participation is associated with social inclusion. Difficulty in becoming economically independent, particularly because of unemployment, delays young people's identification with adult norms held in the broader society.
- Poverty, homelessness and hopelessness can lead to dissatisfaction with the world young people are inheriting. A sense of control over life circumstances is important to political participation.
- When youth experience a real or perceived lack of rights, they are less inclined to participate in their community or take on social responsibilities.
- Subcultures form when youths forge an alternative identity in response to social marginalization and declining life-chances.

Depoliticization or Alternative Politics?

Relatively low rates of youth participation in politics were reported in the previous section. It may be the case, however, that young people have little interest in conventional political participation because their issues are not addressed in mainstream politics. For instance, the dominant issue in the federal election of 2000 was tax cuts. Yet, the vast majority of young people do not earn enough for tax cuts to be an issue of relevance to them.[73]

Young people "despair about the ability of the political system to respond to their interests and represent their concerns, or to care about youth." This was a finding of a Canadian Teachers Federation study of female high school students, which also found that topics of concern to this population focused on global issues such as the environment, poverty and racial discrimination (1990: 2). Rather than a lack of interest in political affairs, it would appear that issues of importance to young people rarely register on the political radar, possibly due to the relatively small size of youth as a cohort.

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[73] To the extent that the Liberal Party had a youth agenda, their 2000 "Red Book" made only scant and vague reference to "empowering youth." This came under the rubric of tapping into the "entrepreneurial spirit" of young people and honing their "e-business" skills for the "new economy" (Liberal Party of Canada, 2000: 13).

Some researchers argue that it is not that today's youth have less interest in politics than did generations past but, rather, that they face more issues and their smaller numbers as a cohort often make their political activities "less visible" (Guay and Nadeau, 1994: 221-22; Foot and Stoffman, 2000). Indeed, a study undertaken in 1991 by the Ministry of Education in Quebec showed that almost half of students aged 12 to 17 years were involved in organizations linked to student life. Gauthier (1999*b*) also notes that, in 1996, the *Conseil permanent de la Jeunesse* counted 1,550 youth organizations (*organismes jeunesses*).

Other contributors to the debate on youth political participation remind us, however, that political indifference is expressed by older cohorts as well (Hudon and Fournier, 1994: 1). The issue may be more a reflection of a general decline in the public's confidence in democratic institutions, regardless of age, then lack of an opportunity to participate politically.[74]

The finding that youth participate less in political activity may partially reflect the manner in which political interest and involvement is measured. While there may be fewer young people who are active within political parties, and a general disinterest in the dominant political agenda, there does not appear to be strong evidence to suggest that youth have become depoliticized. Furlong and Cartmel contend that "young people can express an interest in politics without being active in the formal institutions of party politics." Moreover, "they may be involved in political action while not voting or expressing a strong party affiliation, or may be knowledgeable about political issues while remaining cynical about their ability to influence the public agenda" (1997: 97).

Political cynicism and political abstention sometimes reflect political protest rather than a lack of interest. While there may be differences with respect to the participation rate in elections, Crête notes that, during the 1988 election, young people were just as likely to talk about politics as their parents (Crête, 1994: 218). Hudon and Fournier (1994) add that youth are increasingly cynical, not increasingly apolitical. In other words, the argument in this literature is that generally antagonistic behaviour towards politics should not be misinterpreted as a disinterest in political questions. It might be better understood as a reaction towards a political system that is increasingly seen as undemocratic. In fact, one study of Black law students in the United States showed that the most cynical students were often the most politically active (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997: 101)

There is other evidence that young people are active in social movements. Young people have recently been at the forefront of protests on anti-globalization, rising tuition rates, and genetically modified foods. An underlying theme linking these issues is the rise in the power of corporations, and the move towards commercializing and privatizing a wide array of things, ranging from genes to public institutions.

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[74] Indeed, one need only look at the steadily declining voter turnout rates in Western democracies in general. In Canada's last federal election, only two in five eligible voters bothered to cast a ballot, the lowest voter turnout since 1925. This low turnout rate was so alarming that Elections Canada reportedly suggested that voting should be made mandatory. Similarly, in the most recent American election, fully half of all eligible voters opted not to go to the polls (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 2000).

This form of power is seen as a threat to the areas of life in which youth have a vested interest, such as democracy, accessible education, and the environment. In response, youth have participated in protests in Seattle, Vancouver, Montreal, Toronto, Windsor, Washington, Prague, Davos and Quebec City. While the protesters included people of all ages, and the proportion of young people is unknown, the visible presence of youth in such demonstrations refutes the view that youth are politically apathetic.

Haid and colleagues contend that the apparent youth apathy towards politics may reflect the sense that many youth feel politically marginalized by a culture that does not value what they have to say (Haid, Marques and Brown, 1999: 1). In addition, some literature that advocates for the explicit inclusion of youth also expresses the fear that the assumption that young people have little interest in politics may engender a self-fulfilling prophecy. This assumption can be a subtle barrier to encouraging or actively promoting the means by which youth might participate. Yet, in response to concern over the lack of youth involvement in formal politics, various organizations and jurisdictions are gradually articulating the view that, in order to promote a healthy and vibrant democracy, youth must be provided with opportunities to become more socially active (Laidlaw Foundation, 2000*b*).[75]

The Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement promotes the notion that young people have something to offer for the betterment of Canadian society.[76] Health Canada has also argued that young people should have the opportunity to participate in decisions about their healthy development.[77] This is consistent with the perspectives expressed in the United Nations International Year of Youth in 1995 and in the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.* Both stressed the importance of promoting the involvement of youth in decisions that have an effect on their lives (Laidlaw Foundation, 2000*b*: 7). The Quebec government, using European and American programs as models, has developed a “politique jeunesse” in the hopes of promoting improved citizenship among Quebec’s young people and to ensure coherence in government programs directed at young people.

If the literature on changing political forms is correct, youth willingness to participate may depend on addressing the root causes of their lack of participation. Whether youth political participation in mainstream politics requires specifically targeted efforts or could simply rise by the inclusion of youth issues on the political agenda remains open to question. Research is needed to more clearly delineate the relationship between identity, belonging and political participation. The evidence that marginalization affects the ability to exercise citizenship rights is also an issue that needs to be further explored.

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[75] The Saskatchewan Council on Children notes that it is important to involve youth, not only as a matter of right but also to foster their development as citizens. Youth empowerment is also identified as a key concern in the Atlantic provinces (Mahon, 2001).

[76] For more information on the Centre of Excellence For Youth Engagement, see: http://www.hc.gc.ca/hppb/childhood-youth/centres/e_youth.html

[77] The program Opportunity of Adolescence: The Health Sector Contribution provides an example of this new position. See: http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/childhood-youth/

Box 27
Highlights: Depoliticization or Alternative Politics?

- Issues that concern youth– the environment, poverty, racial discrimination, globalization, and access to education – are not addressed in mainstream politics.
- Rather than being depoliticized, youth may be participating in politics in different ways – in schools, in youth organizations, and through political protests.
- Some authors suggest that youth are increasingly cynical about the degree of representation and responsiveness of the political system. Therefore, it may be necessary to create more opportunities for participation. Some organizations and jurisdictions are moving in this direction.

Box 28
Citizenship Implications: Identity, Belonging, and Participation

Youth citizenship is about identifying with and feeling a sense of belonging to one's community. This would logically translate into political participation at all levels of government. However, the literature examining this aspect of young people's lives identifies areas in which young people feel excluded and do not fully participate.

While there are several research gaps in this literature from a citizenship perspective, the context in which young people live their lives emerges as an important factor accounting for patterns of participation. Societal problems such as racial discrimination and unemployment affect the outlook of youth. Having hope for the future and feelings of belonging influence both youth participation in mainstream politics and their resistance to marginalization through the formation of subcultures and via political protest.

4.0 Conclusion – What is the Citizenship Status of Young People Today?

This survey of the literature has found that youth possess a citizenship status that might best be characterized as *precarious*. Many young people are arriving at full citizenship, enjoying its fruits, and contributing to their communities. Nonetheless, the picture is not equally positive for all youth. Problems still remain, and this conclusion will focus on areas in which Canadians still need to think about improvements to ensure that *all* young people first can aspire to, and then achieve full citizenship in our society.

For young people who have passed the age of majority and therefore have attained "citizenship," precariousness in this status comes from the gap between formal and substantive rights. Many youths have not attained full citizenship, because they have not yet achieved *independence*. For younger Canadians, their citizenship rights are limited by their age, to be sure, but we have also observed that there are frequently contradictions between the responsibilities expected of young people and the rights conferred on them.

Moreover, for both older and younger groups, we have found significant patterns of inequality related to the economic, social, and cultural circumstances of youth subgroups. Therefore, the notion of *precariousness* best captures the experience of youth citizenship with respect to the exercise of rights and responsibilities, as well as access and belonging.

4.1 The Labour Market – A Key to Access to Independence for Youth?

Access to quality employment is identified by many authors as the "key" that unlocks the door to independence and, therefore, it serves as a major prerequisite to full citizenship. Yet many young people are in a precarious position with respect to the labour market. Recent changes to the labour market disproportionately affect youth because they are new entrants and the first to experience new trends, for better or worse. Indeed, it appears as though it is becoming increasingly difficult for young people to establish economic independence. Access to employment is of paramount importance in young people's ability to move out of the family home to form their own autonomous household. It is also needed to provide sufficient economic resources to support children, and to enable young people's capacity to meaningfully participate in society.

New patterns in the school-to-work transition are also making it more difficult for youth to achieve independence. Increasing numbers of young people are staying in school longer, but rising debt loads and the lengthening of the school-to-work transition period results in the formation of autonomous households later in life than in the past. This is due to both the increased cost of schooling and the relatively lower wages that young educated workers now command in comparison to previous generations. In other words, although education is necessary to do well, the pay-off is no longer as great as it once was.

While the labour market appears to have weakened for most if not all youth, some are better equipped to deal with these obstacles than others. Young people from wealthier backgrounds are much more likely to attend institutions of higher learning and emerge without debt. Similarly, there is a correlation between being poor and dropping out of school.

As a result, more well-off youth will be in a stronger position to succeed in the labour market vis-à-vis those who come from poorer families. The finding that drop-out rates are higher among young people from poorer families and Aboriginal families suggests that an intergenerational transmission of marginalization and poverty may be occurring.

With "employment flexibility" having become the order of the day, we are in effect expecting young people to accept this state of affairs as normal. However, little attention is paid to the consequences of this trend. For young people, being adaptive often comes with financial insecurity. Job stability and quality pay are increasingly elusive. The age at which young people are able to draw upon their own resources and to participate in society has been postponed.

4.2 The Retreat of the State – Are We Abandoning Youth Citizenship to the Market?

The literature reveals that an increasing number of young people are experiencing a citizenship status that is precarious due to various "holes" in the policy environment. The abandonment of the nominal commitment to full employment, increased difficulties in accessing higher education because of tuition hikes, a lack of affordable housing, limited access to health and social services, and cutbacks to social assistance are all increasing the number of gaps through which young people may fall. Many youths are therefore en route to exclusion.

For a number of authors, these problems are linked to an observed retreat of the state. Today's conventional wisdom is that a lean state is a good state, therefore individuals, families and communities are expected to take increased responsibility for themselves and others. However, when families lack adequate resources to help young people integrate into society, there is less of a safety net to which they can turn in difficult times. In addition, some jurisdictions are denying young people social assistance or limiting their access to it. Moreover, housing markets are tight in many of Canada's larger cities, a situation worsened by the removal of rent controls and by the capping of social housing expenditures, leading to a decline in affordable housing. Therefore, although young people are legally deemed to be adults at the age of 18, economic independence occurs later in life, and families are increasingly forced to help support their children well into their twenties.

One of the major outcomes of the retreat of the state and the increased reliance upon market forces is polarization among youth. The inability to claim citizenship rights means that private resources and access to social capital increasingly determine who has access and who does not. Policies that formerly ensured equal opportunity to full citizenship have eroded, with the result that the capacity of youth to achieve independence is increasingly conditioned by their relationship to their parents and less by their relationship to the state. Hence, those who come from wealthier backgrounds have more resources to draw upon – primarily provided by their parents. This divides youth into "haves" and "have-nots" based on family background.

In short, the intergenerational reproduction of social inequalities results in different opportunities and constraints for youth. In the current vacuum in which youth issues are not even on the political agenda, there is a possibility that the *de facto* policy is to allow citizenship rights to be determined by the market.

4.3 Youth Citizenship Status – More than Economics

Despite the importance of economic security to youth, placing too much emphasis on the state of the labour market can lead to a form of economic determinism, whereby economic independence and employment become mistaken for the acquisition of full citizenship. If this were indeed the case, a solution to majority of the problems youth face would be a simple return to a policy of full employment.

While access to employment is certainly important, this literature review has clearly shown that there are other factors that must also be considered. Full citizenship status includes the right to be free from discrimination, to have adequate access to health care and social services, and to have the ability to be politically active. These non-economic issues have yet to be given adequate attention in the literature on citizenship. As this paper has highlighted, today's young people face increasingly complex challenges on the road to full citizenship within these other dimensions.

Citizenship involves a relationship between the individual and the state. Feelings of alienation from one's community can often result in people having a lack of interest in or desire to improve and better the community in which they live. In this vein, it might be worth considering what the community can do to support the movement of young people into independence. While access to the labour market is extremely important, the family and community also have important roles to play in facilitating young people's move into independent citizenship (Copeland, Armitage and Rutman, 1996: 274).

In terms of justice, as well as for access to social services and health care, the literature shows that the ages for acquiring different rights are varied and inconsistent. This appears to weaken young people's rights. Entitlements become privileges that are accessible only on the condition that young people fulfill obligations that do not apply to others. The citizenship status of youth is also weakened for those who belong to groups that face discrimination in society – gay and lesbian youth, the homeless, young mothers, youth seeking contraception, pregnant women who wish to terminate a pregnancy, and young low-income parents. In many instances, young people are too old to receive services targeted to children, and too young to qualify for those provided to adults. Youth are blamed when they veer from the norm but at the same time, they are denied equal access to the means needed to achieve independence, act responsibly, and fully participate in society.

We have also seen that "younger" youths have restricted opportunities to influence decisions that concern them. Even though we know that participation is a key component of citizenship education, this is not what curricula across the country tend to emphasize. One effect of citizenship education without meaningful participation could be to emphasize the responsibilities of citizens earlier in life without addressing the corresponding rights. Empowering youth to make healthy choices also appears to be missing in health education, where youth want more complex and inclusive discussions. The desires or dilemmas youth face regarding sexuality or substance use are not reflected in educational messages to delay or abstain from such activities.

Direct and systemic discrimination in schools is also a problem for many youth on the basis of race, sexual orientation, ability and class. The possible presence of a "hidden curriculum" for girls at school can encourage the persistence of "gendered" choices in careers, with respect to participation in recreation, and so on.

This literature review has also shown that violence is a problem for many young people, resulting in intentional or unintentional injuries and deaths. Automobile crashes are the primary cause of youth mortality, but other causes of injury abound. Many young people are not protected from violence, and young women experience a greater incidence of sexual violence although both sexes are victimized. Disturbingly high rates of youth suicide occur in Aboriginal communities in which young people suffer disproportionately from poor socioeconomic conditions and the loss of cultural identity. High levels of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, and the lack of food or shelter available to street youth illustrate other ways in which marginalization affects human capital and citizenship status.

4.4 The Implications of New Trends on Full Citizenship

What was in the past a relatively smooth and intersecting set of changes over the life course has become more disjointed and prolonged for many young people today. The extension of the period called "youth" can have major implications for young people's capacity to become full citizens. The lengthening of the "transition" of youth to adulthood by 10 to 15 years often comes at the cost of postponing the process of leaving home, obtaining a first secure job, purchasing a first home and, if desired, the arrival of a baby.

The first implication of this lack of independence is that it can possibly delay parenthood for those who wish to have children. Young women require many years of education to attain a salary equal to men and high enough to form an "autonomous household" – to pay off high student debt loads, rent or purchase a home, and support a family. Due to labour market conditions, obtaining secure employment with the right to parental leave is not likely to be acquired until a woman is in her late twenties or her thirties, if at all.

This situation raises several issues. First, it suggests that teen pregnancy may not be the most significant reproductive problem of youth. Second, it raises the question of the "legitimate" age for childbearing. The central issue with respect to parenthood thus revolves around young people's right to have and raise children in an environment free from poverty, and within a reasonable timeframe (that is, before women reach 36 to 42 years of age, when their fertility declines). The links to socioeconomic status in much of the research – pushing some women to choose to have children before they are economically stable *and* forcing others to postpone childbearing – indicate that *independence* is the important variable, not *age*.

This example shows us that "youth issues" need to be seen in the context of overall societal shifts. For example, teen pregnancy rates need to be placed in the context of broader trends such as older ages for marriage, more co-habitation, decline in lower-skilled jobs for high school graduates, declining wages, unequal sexual relationships, and challenges in negotiating safe sex. Similarly, youth crime occurs within a context of changing family patterns, declining community services, reduced investments in recreation, diminishing social resources (which vary by province), a lack of support for youth in care once they reach age 18, and so on.

The prolongation of "youth" also raises some questions about intergenerational equity. While issues such as health care for the ageing population are important, they risk overshadowing issues confronting the needs of young people. The dominant political agenda stresses issues affecting older people, such as retirement, health care, and taxes. This could alienate young people, who are more concerned about access to education, employment and housing, and in the prevention of illness and injury. The concerns of youth seldom register on the political radar, although calls for their increased participation in political processes are on the rise.

Some authors observe that unions, employers and older workers also need to become more conscious and sensitive of the difficulties that many young people are experiencing as they try to enter into the world of full-time work. While there has been a great deal of attention paid to issues facing those trying to exit the labour market (such as retirement), the issues that are of primary concern to those trying to enter the labour market have received very little attention.

4.5 Youths Who Face Particular Barriers in Accessing Full Citizenship

There is often a tendency in the literature to treat youth as a homogeneous group. However, as this paper has illustrated, young people come from diverse backgrounds and, as a result, face many different challenges. While all young people are, in theory, capable of succeeding and attaining full citizenship, some face more onerous challenges than others. Indeed, a young person's socioeconomic class, race, gender, place of residence, and age all have important consequences for their citizenship status. Physical ability (which can change over the life course) and sexual orientation are also important to the attainment of citizenship, and discrimination on these grounds may hinder it.

This paper has also identified the absence of basic human rights for segments of the youth population who are lacking private resources. Without the necessities of life and with barriers to health faced by certain groups – the homeless in particular, followed by Aboriginal youth and those subject to discrimination – some youth enter into a process of exclusion that directs them further and further away from full citizenship. Unemployed youth, young people of Aboriginal descent, youth from low-income families, and immigrant youth are often reported to have particular difficulty in accessing full citizenship and often have a very tenuous citizenship status, if any at all.

When a range of different issues are looked at as a whole, it is clear that there are inequalities among young people that preclude the possibility that all youth will have an equal opportunity to acquire full citizenship status. As this paper has shown, young people seem to be caught between statuses. Somewhere between childhood and adulthood, youth are "citizens-in-becoming" – in search of equality and independence, but whose citizenship status is, at best, precarious.

4.6 Areas for Further Research

In this paper, we have applied a citizenship framework to the current literature about youth to determine the citizenship status of youth today and the capacity of older youth to become full citizens. There is a good deal of Canadian information documenting social trends about changes in the labour market, for example, and there are many specific studies of youth problems. However, there is relatively little research linking these findings to citizenship. Rarely did authors make a connection between the literature on youth and the concept of citizenship. It was a link we made, guided by the two fundamental principles of independence and equality.

In comparison to Western European research dealing with youth and its links to citizenship, North American research lags far behind. It appears as though only in Quebec is there a practice of seeing youth "as a separate social and political class" (Haid, Marques and Brown, 1999: 2). Therefore, further research is clearly in order. The gaps in the literature are numerous, providing many possible avenues for future exploration. Some of the questions that point to various research agendas are presented below. These have been divided into the following categories: Youth-State Relations and the Global Economy; Independence; Justice; Identity; Equality; Belonging; Health and Safety; Youth-to-Youth; and Environments.

We feel that the question of young people and their citizenship status is extremely important, and we hope that this review inspires in-depth research projects and public dialogue on these issues. The issues presented below reflect gaps identified by the authors based on the literature review itself. Roundtable participants also identified additional research gaps, which are outlined separately in Appendix A.

Youth-State Relations and the Global Economy

- What changes in government policy have affected the citizenship status of youth? How do current policy changes affect young people's citizenship and their capacity to become full citizens?
- What role can governments play in assisting youth in their journey towards full citizenship?
- How can we design a youth policy that takes into account the interrelations between all the elements of youth citizenship status?
- What lessons do the experiences of youth in other industrialized countries have to offer Canada? What might Canada do differently?
- What are the opportunities and constraints for policy makers and for youth that result from international trade agreements and other changes in the international political economy? Do we need to build these dimensions into analyses, which have thus far focussed primarily on national circumstances?

Independence

- How does economic and social polarization affect young people? Are there more inequalities between youth than before? Do new groups face difficulties that were not evident 20 years ago? What groups are most at risk of failing to achieve full citizen status?
- Are current trends in the labour market (some of which have been at play for at least two decades) likely to disappear as the labour force ages or economic conditions improve, or are these new and permanent features of the labour market? To what extent are young people likely to "catch up" to older cohorts over the life course? Studies are needed to track the situation as the labour market turns up, and in order to identify opportunities for youth.
- Are declining investments in social housing having a disproportionate effect on young people? What is the economic cost of the lack of affordable housing for youth? What can be done by governments to alleviate the housing crisis that young people in many Canadian cities are currently facing? What lessons might we learn from other countries?
- In a context of reduction of state support, what are the consequences of family breakdowns to young people's citizenship and their access to independence? Do the changes to family structures affect the capacity of youth to be full citizens? Studies are needed to identify the types of family supports, programs for youth in care, and support for street youth that would allow young people to survive family breakdown.
- How are changes in young people's circumstances affecting decisions about childbearing and parenting? What policies are needed to enable parenting when one is still young?
- Material conditions influence decisions about childbearing. What impact does the need to save or spend money on children have on decisions to attend post-secondary school? What impact does educational achievement have on the capacity to have children? What is the relationship between parenting and lifelong learning? One way to approach these questions would be to undertake a comparative study examining the impact of different supports and different forms of labour market attachment on parenting decisions in Europe versus Canada.
- The evidence that young people do not have access to social assistance and that parents on social assistance are struggling to make ends meet calls for a review of youth access to the means to survive. A broader survey of access and levels across the country could be followed by a study of what impact reliance on social assistance has on youth in the present as well as over time.

Justice

- What responsibilities are we expecting from youth? Do they coincide with their rights? This question could be asked in regard to the revision of the youth justice system, as well as social protection and education.
- What program interventions work best to foster good citizenship and discourage criminal behaviour? Analysis of the effects of access to recreation, mentoring, schooling, and so on would address this question.

Identity

- What are the aspirations of youth towards citizenship? We do not know what youth think about citizenship, what they define as citizenship, or what being a full citizen means to them.
- How youth see and understand their relationship with the state is at the heart of the notion of citizenship. Are current changes such as globalization affecting how youth perceive their relationship with the state? Are young people creating their own sense of citizenship in a context of globalization? Detailed dialogue about values and expectations would be useful to answer these questions, and to supplement public opinion poll data.

Equality

- A barrier to better knowledge of the impact of class and social differences on youth is the lack of statistics on socioeconomic status based on the family and later on individuals. Similarly, small studies indicate that newcomer and Aboriginal youth are not equal in some measures to other youth. The absence of statistics recording race and ethnicity hide these differences, however, preventing a comprehensive understanding of how youth of different backgrounds are fairing in terms of education and employment. Therefore, research including creation of new measures and indicators is needed to fill this gap.
- Despite the emphasis on the Canadian diversity model, there is serious lack of research and data on youth immigrants and different aspects of their citizenship status.
- Some youth lack access to the resources of citizenship on the basis of age or factors such as sexual orientation, family income, or gender. How can we improve equality of opportunity among youth? How do youth overcome the difficulties of marginalization? Answering this will require research into youth "who make it" and achieve full citizenship through the acquisition of economic independence and freedom from discrimination.

Belonging

- Given that the notion of citizenship is itself a "liberal" concept, and as such has tended to place the individual at the forefront of analysis, there might be some merit in moving the emphasis away from the individual and focussing more on communities as the unit of analysis. One area that requires attention for example is to examine how the environment and culture of the community impacts citizenship in terms of harm prevention.
- Are current trends leading young people to increasingly rely upon one another? Research might examine the living arrangements of young people who are or are not romantically involved but who form dependencies in order to pool resources and lower costs.
- What contributions do participation in recreation and leisure make to fostering citizenship?

Health and Safety

- What variation exists in health curricula across the country? It would be valuable to know what proportion of time is spent in such programs on specialized information (preventing addictions, sexuality, mental health, coping with negative life events, and so on) versus basic life skills (finances, nutrition, and so on).
- The violence youth encounter in the form of suicide attempts or intentional harm inflicted by others bears a relationship to the life circumstances in which young people live, circumstances that are often beyond their control. Further study of this major health problem is needed.
- Additional research is needed on patterns of hard drug use among youth.

Youth-to-Youth

- This literature review found that youth are not consistently practising safe sex, and the dynamics of relationships are important factor in this regard. Research is needed on equality within youth relationships, including how young people communicate with one other to protect their own health. What can be done to overcome unequal gender structures in these relationships so that all young people can exercise control over their health?
- How do youth adopt, adapt, reject or otherwise react to sexism? What impact do different experiences have on young people's present citizenship status? For young women who are victims of violence, how does interaction with (or lack of protection from) the justice system influence their citizenship status?

Environments

- Literature on youth health demonstrates that unintentional injuries have a disproportionate impact on youth. To reduce deaths by automobiles, we need to better knowledge of what regulations reduce fatalities. A comparative study of differences in European and North America jurisdictions could lead to recommendations that would improve the protection of youth from premature mortality.

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Appendix A
Roundtable Summary

The participants in the Roundtable found the draft paper to be a good review of the literature on youth, as read through a citizenship framework. They described this as an original reading of a large literature. Academic experts in the field confirmed this originality, despite the existence of a number of other literature reviews addressing, for example, youth at risk.

The day was divided into two, albeit unequal, parts. Each reflected one of CPRN's two goals in conducting this literature review: to assess the state of play in the field and to determine whether there is need for further research. Thus, the Roundtable's first objective was to assess the adequacy of the paper, *as a review of the relevant literature*. The second was to brainstorm in order to identify possible directions of research for each of CPRN's Networks, that is Family, Health and Work as well as the corporate program on citizen engagement.

Throughout the day participants made a number of key points that will be listed and expanded upon below, categorized by these two purposes. The goal is not to produce a verbatim account. Rather, it is to classify and organize the comments, so as to reflect the general spirit of the discussion and the ways that participants addressed CPRN's two objectives over the course of the whole day.

General Impressions of the Literature Review

A number of participants characterized the paper as "conventional," by which they meant that it reflected the current state of the literature on youth and their situation. In particular, because there has been a paradigm shift in recent decades, analyses of young people's concerns and needs tend to focus on a series of crises about youth, such as teen pregnancy and youth delinquency. One participant characterized the paradigm shift as a move away from the tendency in the 1960s to see youth as a social movement to the current treatment of youth as a problem. Others pointed out that this shift means young people are treated as a sociological category. However, the reality of their situation is often poorly presented. Hence the characterization of the literature as "conventional."

Participants first identified three major ways in which such treatment of youth in the academic literature, as reflected in this paper, is an inadequate reflection of the realities of most young people's lives. A recurring theme was the lack of "youth voice" in the review. In other words, what is written *about* youth is usually written *by* adults.

In general, the literature reviewed did not contain "voices of youth," which are often more engaged and active than the academic literature would lead one to expect. The difference between what young people say about themselves and how the academic literature describes them leads to a disjuncture and an inability to understand what the actual issues are. Young people are confronting new circumstances such as globalization, participation in social movements, new sources of knowledge and communication (i.e., the Internet), and changing identities. Youth were also identified as the target of global advertizing that promotes consumerism.

Given the lack of material produced by young people, there was deemed to be a "pathological bias" in the analysis of youth. This gives a very negative and even discouraging cast to this paper, although it does reflect the current state of the literature available and reviewed. Participants were hungry for more positive stories and reports about the successes of youth, in particular with respect to cultural and community participation. This type of information was thought to be a key to a better understanding of citizenship, and social and political participation. Others called for a focus on young people as agents of their own lives, rather than only as subjects of structural change.

The absence of voices of youth in the literature means that young people's own definitions and understanding of citizenship could not be highlighted, an unavoidable limitation of the literature review methodology. Here, a number of participants stressed the need to distinguish between agencies that are *youth driven* and those that are *youth serving*.

Participants were aware, of course, that the reality of young people's lives is often one of difficulty. In particular they identified the following areas of concern:

- Several participants agreed that the various sections of the paper gave short shrift to the particular needs of some social categories. There was not enough attention to the racism encountered by people of colour, in particular Black youth, and second and third generation immigrants.
- Other participants were concerned that too little attention was given in the literature and the paper to naming the problem as one of "poverty" and "exclusion." Perhaps it is a mistake to say that the problem is youth, when it is more likely caused by structural factors such as income polarization and labour market changes, and political ones such as re-designed welfare states and social programs that do not meet young people's needs. Examples given included child protection and programs for young parents.
- There were also questions raised about using a conceptual framework that stresses "independence" and puts a great deal of emphasis on labour market participation. Some participants were not comfortable connecting economic autonomy with independence. While participants recognized that the paper does reflect the literature, there was some concern that independence may be a culturally loaded concept. Different ethnocultural groups may define citizenship in fundamentally different ways.

Finally, it was observed that the lack of a "magic dividing line" between childhood, youth and adulthood is a problem characteristic of the literature on youth. There was a general discussion of the appropriate categories for defining "youth." Some participants pointed out that there was a lack of literature from the discipline of psychology. The concepts of autonomy and independence are understood in different ways in the psychological literature. Moreover, an argument was made for greater recognition of differences based on age and particular points in the life course within the youth category. Others acknowledged that the de-synchronization described in the paper, and in the sociological and economic literature, makes a wider age band appropriate.

Specific Comments on the Literature Review – Small Group Discussions

The three small groups each addressed two sections of the report. The rapporteurs brought back a summary of the discussion to the plenary session. Despite focusing on only particular sections, there was actually a good deal of overlap among the three breakout groups and in the general plenary discussion. Therefore, the main themes are presented here, but not identified with a particular group.

Identifying Youth and their Circumstances

This theme came up with respect to the need for improved age categories, in order to reflect the different stages of life experienced as "youth." There are different concerns for 15-year-olds compared to youth aged 25, for example. The "pathological bias" in the literature (described previously) leaves the experiences of the "healthy middle" silent. Participants stressed the need to analyze their situation as well. In particular, the tendency of observers, whether academics or policy makers, to reason in terms of "crises" – which critics consider false crises – produces a sense of unease and renders successes invisible. Youth disengage, but they also engage in other, albeit sometimes rebellious, ways.

Attention was drawn to differences in accessing social and cultural support for youth living in rural areas versus urban areas. Other issues not covered include the impact of virtual communities on the Internet, and the impact of migration, particularly among Aboriginal youth who move between communities in Western Canada. Concern was raised that barriers to accessing resources contribute to the isolation and disconnection that are consistent variables (across race, class and gender) among youth in need. Other participants identified the absence of attention in the paper to the family system as a source of difficulties in really identifying the situations young people confront.

Education

Education and educational institutions received a good deal of attention. The distinction made is the important one between "education as curriculum" and "education as an institutional setting" in which a number of processes affecting young people's lives occur.

With respect to curriculum, discussion turned primarily on values education, in particular teaching certain values as the underpinning of citizenship. Some participants perceived that the objective of teaching citizenship is to promote compliance, not engagement. Participants were skeptical that the focus of many public authorities on citizenship education as a basis for social cohesion and stability would actually strengthen schools' capacity to foster key citizenship practices, including democratic participation. In light of this concern, the undemocratic nature of school organization was also mentioned. Here some attention was also given to health education, beyond sexuality education, and the need to pay attention to anti-violence teaching to combat bullying.

With respect to the institutional setting of education, there was concern again about the citizenship "messages" school organizations might be sending via the hidden curriculum. Another issue was how to cope with the diversity of values characterizing Canadian society, and the need to identify a sub-set of these, which might be termed "citizenship values."

Work and Employment

As in the first session, there were a number of comments focussing on the issue of labour market participation, restructuring and globalization. In particular, the experience of many young people was described as one of "multiple marginalizations" – associated with growing up in poverty, in care, without completing an education, and so on. However, political discourse and policy makers seemed to prefer to address factors of marginalization piecemeal, rather than holistically. Gender differences were also frequently raised, both with respect to earnings and types of work, and with respect to differing cultural values for gender relations. "Adult" organizations such as unions were identified as needing to take a more active role in engaging youth.

Youth Activism

Following up on the theme of "youth voices," there were several calls for attention to young people's activism, and the values underpinning their vision of citizenship. What motivates their opposition to current forms of free trade and globalization? What attachments lead to youth involvement and activism? When and under what conditions do some young people take on their citizen responsibility to participate? The importance of agency again came to the fore.

In particular, the media were singled out as too often demonizing young people and denying youth a voice. Other participants criticized the definition of participation used in the literature and the paper as too narrow, focussing too much on the political. They called for more attention to other forms of activism and the organizational life of youth in clubs, teams and religious groups. There was also interest in examining how youth Internet participation may be changing the definition of community.

Looking Forward – Suggestions for Research

Participants made a number of imaginative and highly constructive suggestions for future research directions that CPRN might follow.

- First among these suggestions was the need to listen to the voices of youth. Young people need to be built into research projects and provided with the opportunity to construct their own research projects – ones that would allow them to define their notions of citizenship, to identify their citizenship practices, to locate real barriers, and to put to rest common assumptions made about youth. This suggestion arose in all three segments of the Roundtable and was voiced by many participants, no matter their chronological age.
- Participants also recommended comparing the "haves" to the "have nots" among youth to examine the extent to which access to resources influences different kinds and degrees of civic participation.

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- Another suggestion was to locate the discussion of young people and youth in an intergenerational framework, one that would allow for evidence-based discussion of intergenerational solidarity, including not only parents and children but also grandparents and grandchildren. Adult attitudes were pointed to as possibly the greatest barriers to youth participation and decision-making. To learn about youth, adult views also need to be examined. This notion linked to another research item – that of demographic change, and the consequences the ageing society will have for employment prospects and possibilities as well as for the sharing of resources in the coming decades.

- A number of participants called for research on governance, albeit framing their research concerns in a variety of ways. Here there was mention of the question of how to involve and engage youth in areas that are important to them, such as policing. Effectiveness of engagement was also a key concern, and participants were especially attentive to the need for such participation in governance to be meaningful, not token. Again the notion of best practices was mentioned, as was the need to address the contribution of adults and youth to youth-run organizations.

- Another research question related to governance was that of jurisdiction. Several participants pointed to the need for further research about local levels of government. Too much attention is paid to provincial or federal governments, while municipalities and other local authorities deliver a large number of the programs for young people and their families.

- Attention to the local level was frequently, but not exclusively, linked to the need for greater information about what policies and programs actually work. The list of such programs ranged from citizenship education and teaching values to those for labour market inclusion. Concern was expressed that research was not addressing the situation of the most vulnerable. While several participants sought to have best practices identified, others called for research that would locate Canadian practices vis à vis other jurisdictions.

- There was a call for research on citizenship education to move beyond simple advocacy. Participants spoke about a lack of knowledge on what is being taught, on how people learn values, and on identifying what works and what does not with respect to increasing civic participation.

- Participants frequently mentioned the need for research on some of the "forgotten categories" of young people such as youth with disabilities, those living with HIV/AIDS, young people from ethnocultural communities, participants in the sex trade, rural youth, and youth who are parenting. The links between citizenship and health could be further explored. There was also a mention that young people's participation in organized religion and views of spirituality is too little researched.

- Social policy and particularly child protection remains a researchable area, despite the attention already given to it. In particular, research on mental health needs and policy were called for, as were studies of the consequences of cost reductions and rising demand across the health and social services generally.

Appendix B
Roundtable Participants

Friday, April 27, 2001 – Youth and Citizenship

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