

# **Distant cities, travelling tales and segmented young lives: making and remaking youth exclusion across time and place**

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## **Abstract**

A substantial body of research suggests that incipient moral anxiety is growing in relation to excluded youth, and is manifestly cross-national in nature. Whilst these anxieties are often assumed to be most evident in recent times, historians of childhood and youth persistently remind us of the long history of anxiety recorded in the public record about disadvantaged urban youth (e.g., Gleason 2013). However, the degree and nature of local differentiation in the forms of moral anxiety being generated has yet to be systematically researched in relation to youth exclusion in diverse city spaces. There is also limited research on how senior members living in the same city spaces, many of whom were excluded as young people, remember and re-represent - through individual and collective memory - what it was like to be young in the past (Cubbit 2007). Drawing on cross national studies and diverse sources, including oral history accounts, media representations, and interviews with young people this article explores the perspectives of low income young people living at the fringe of two different urban centres and who identified as having experienced varying degrees of educational and/or social exclusion. We argue that such multi-layered analyses challenge the binaries often invoked about inclusion, exclusion and marginalized youth, particularly concerning questions about history, memory, and the bordering and classification practices of individuals (see Balibar 2009a; Rumsford 2011). More specifically, the article analyses representations of exclusion, in the present and past, in reference to what Balibar (2009a) has termed 'borderwork.' Overall, we argue that narratives of risk, forms of border anxiety (Newmann 2009) and the consequent moralizing claims made about economically disadvantaged youth are crucial in understanding how youth exclusion is represented and remembered, and made and remade across time and place.

## Introduction

Much recent youth studies scholarship has documented the effects of moral anxieties about young people, noting an intensification in the circulation of narratives of panic and risk management in relation to socially excluded youth. These mobile narratives are reconfiguring the nature of youth cultural activities on a global scale, as well as young people's localised experiences of everyday exclusions in the 'global city' (Dillabough and Kennelly 2010; Rumford 2011 2013; Sassen 2010). Increasingly sophisticated visual, electronic and print media transmit fears as well as strategies for risk management at regional, national and global scales (e.g. Levi & Wall 2004; Lyon 2004). The protagonists of these perceived risks are typically viewed as deeply disaffected and 'out of school' youth, members of youth gangs, and as often coming from ethnic or religious minorities (see Australian Council of Social Services 2012). Such young people are often narrated in the public record as a threat to the nation – as representing a form of 'stranger danger'. Yet, simultaneously, these same young people remain chained, through longstanding forms of stigmatization, to some of the most socially marginalised corners of the nation. Since 9/11 in the US, 7/7 in the UK, the Arab Spring, Occupy, the recent UK riots and other episodes of political unrest involving young people, such threats have typically been understood as transnational in character. This is aided by the reach of social media, with the potential of these fears to transcend the borders of their making. However, in the midst of considerable discussions about the impact of transnationalism and global processes on young people's lives, it remains essential to grasp local articulations and the juxtaposition and tracing of movements associated with these mobile narratives across time and place.<sup>1</sup>

In this article, we argue that narratives of risk, threat and the consequent moralizing claims made about economically disadvantaged youth are crucial in understanding how youth exclusion is made and remade across time and place. In particular, we explore reflections from both young people and community members on their experiences and perceptions of what it has been like, historically and in the present, to be a young person growing up and living in stigmatised urban areas. In so doing, we work from an understanding of 'social exclusion' not as a set of institutional events – expulsion from school, for example – or a simple binary movement which merely transitions from 'inclusion' to exclusion, but as a practice and process that is always mobile and historically situated in relation to circulating narratives of borders and security. We seek to develop and juxtapose different perspectives on representations and experiences of youth exclusion – across two national settings and across generations. We argue that representations of youth exclusion, while transnational and mobile are, of course, not evenly spread across places, but carry instead strong local influences, and emerge in clearly delineated urban spaces (McLeod 2009). The questions addressed in this paper are: How might we conceptualise the varied yet sometimes overlapping dimensions of youth and exclusion in the city, and in particular the convergences of institutionalized fear and threats thought to be posed by young people who are navigating the fringes of education and social life? How are different accounts of moral anxiety about such young people manifested in the public record, including oral histories and young people's own representations of exclusion in different contexts across time? Drawing on the notion of 'seeing like a border' (see Rumford 2013, Balibar 2004, 2009a, 2009b; Balibar and Wallerstein 1991), we seek to better understand the relationship of young people to moralizing border anxieties, and the role these might play in continuing to force such young people to the peripheries of social life.

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<sup>1</sup> See Dillabough and Gardner (forthcoming) and Terrance Davies' documentary photomontage, *Distant Voices, Still Lives*.

## Contextualizing Nation, Place and Region: Melbourne, Australia and Vancouver, Canada

As part of our collaborative initiatives, our goals were to examine how national imaginaries and imaginaries of place shape ideas about excluded young people across time. The discussion here is based on a series of research projects undertaken in demonised and socially disadvantaged areas of two globalizing cities (see Sassen 2010): Melbourne in Australia and Vancouver in Canada. We draw on a range of different but related sources derived from our own individual empirical research projects, a joint research project (McLeod and Dillabough 2007) and the public record. Research in Vancouver was part of a larger cross-national project (see Dillabough and Kennelly 2010) based in an area near a former industrial port that is deemed the *poorest postal code* in Canada. The research in Melbourne was conducted in an inner-city suburb that also began as an industrial hub in the nineteenth century, and while it is now more socially diversified it retains a large public housing estate where much of the research with young people was based (McLeod 2012).

Both sites have experienced waves of immigration, high unemployment and have some notoriety – in the public record and through daily media accounts – for their associations with alcoholism, drug use, street work, crime and violence. They have also been subject to pressures on housing availability in recent years, with gentrification evident in both neighbourhoods, giving rise to inflated property prices, and urban policy planning initiatives that bear particularly upon economically disadvantaged youth and families (Campaign 2012; Australian Council of Social Service [ACOSS] 2012). These two urban communities were also selected for comparative study because of the high concentration of economically disadvantaged and culturally diverse youth, as well as the high numbers of working class seniors. While neither city is represented in the top ten global cities of the Global World Index, both exhibit characteristics of the globalizing city, with signs of increasingly polarised pockets of wealth and poverty, alongside the rise of global nodes and hub companies which are regional in character (see ACOSS 2012). They also share the characteristics of Soja's (2009) understanding of a *global-city-region*, such that the regional developments taking place in each site are similarly characterized by the movement of local industries to other parts of the globe whilst simultaneously retaining localized branding for music, film and other creative industries such as fashion, art and design. Beyond the impact of advanced of global regionalism, the political geography of each city is dominated by highly specific concerns and anxieties.

Developing temporalised accounts of social exclusion which can be juxtaposed across place entails looking at the 'historicization of the locality' (Gille & O Riain 2002). It also requires an eclectic methodological approach and, in this case, we draw upon a variety of sources, including oral history and semi-structured narrative interviews. In both sites, open-ended interviews and visual methodologies were used with young people who had either experienced formal school exclusions and suspensions or were only intermittently in schools, including alternative or 'second-chance' schools. Additionally, oral history interviews were conducted with senior members in the same communities, as well as interviews with social workers. Our hope in combining different sources was that we might obtain a more meaningful, layered understanding of how exclusion has been represented in the present or experienced and narrated through memory (see Ricoeur, 1976). Are past representations of exclusion, as Raphael (1996) might argue, a meta-fiction or a 'plaything' in the present? We sought to assess the historically-sedimented, changing and sometimes re-appropriated accounts of youth exclusion and place, and their lasting impact through symbolic expressions, myths, rhetorics and ideals. Oral history accounts, for example, are an individual's recollection of past time through memory (Gardner 2010), and can offer insight into the temporal

and territorialized scales of anxiety that circulate about youth people. In conjunction with other sources, these memories allow for considerations of change in the national imaginary over time. This forms part of the rationale for juxtaposing accounts from young people with oral histories from senior members in the two communities, who were asked to reflect on growing up and their perceptions of young people in their communities today. Here we are not seeking to compare in the traditional sense but rather to juxtapose and examine diverse narratives of youth exclusion. This rationale moves us beyond any straightforward comparison and towards a looser notion of travelling ideas that are both sustained and interrupted by wider social changes, local and regional transformations and the transitional movement of ideas, which are both distant yet near. This rationale represents in part an [historical](#) technique which attempts to assess and question some of the commonly understood beliefs about excluded youth by accounting for the scope and breadth of associated ideas about young people within and across time periods and places in question, as opposed to focusing on a singular ideological account of exclusion.

### **Theoretical Starting Points: Borders, Temporality, and Narrating Exclusion**

We draw upon a range of theoretical sources to help illuminate the ways in which young people are represented in social texts across time and place, particularly in relation to the binary constructions of inclusion and exclusion. The first vantage point emerges from the combined conceptual work of Etienne Balibar (2004 2009a), Chris Rumford (2013) and Paul Ricoeur (1976 2009). Here we seek to address the multi-layered and temporally configured meanings about youth through what Ricoeur (2009) calls 'the *social imaginary* – that body of collective stories, histories and ideologies which informs our modes of socio-political actions'. This moves our focus away from only narrations of the present to consider how memories draw on deeper inherited collective stories, signs, symbols, myths and metaphors from history and fiction. In drawing upon Ricoeur's (1976) concept of the narrative, Dillabough and Gardner (2014) argue that, the action of temporalization renders ethnographic narratives 'as always the bearers of meanings which must necessarily' [] 'exceed their own frontiers' (Ricoeur in Kearney 2004: 137) – as the surplus meaning inscribed within texts and actions from the past, offering a realization of narrative continuity through memory.

Balibar (2009a) and Rumford's (2013) notions of 'border narratives' and 'seeing like a border' are especially useful here, helping us to see practices of inclusion and exclusion in a new light. According to Rumsford (2013), 'border anxiety' refers to the ways in which nationalism, securitization, policing and a focus on controlling borders and people shape the everyday meanings generated about young people in both an ephemeral and timeless sense. These meanings often emerge as everyday practices which bridge fear and contempt and operate at micro-local levels. Here, the border emerges as both an abstract and invisible entity but is also embodied and deeply felt and practised by individuals. Borders refer not only to national demarcations, but also to borders within already bounded local or regional communities, and in this case, something akin to lines of exclusion within already existing marginalised urban spaces. We further argue that border narratives operate through individuals and groups who engage in constructing ideal truths about young people, creating forms of social contempt and moralizing claims that underpin shifting meanings of youth exclusion and inclusion. Rumford (2013) writes: "borders can be highly selective and work so as to render them invisible to the majority of the population. 'Seeing like a border' leads to the discovery that some borders are designed not to be seen'" (p. 4), and that exclusion is also sometimes designed not to be seen. Once the border is understood in such narrative terms it is no longer possible to argue that one is included or excluded in any fixed sense. Rather, the border becomes a metaphor for the embodiment and mark of exclusion or inclusion in that it represents forms of self-surveillance and policing that are

drawn upon to self-regulate others. These borders are both symbolic and practical in that they shore up socio-spatial powers and are used to further people's own needs and responses to wider anxieties (Rumsford 2013). This means that narratives relating to stigmatized youth can be understood as a function of bordering, acting to reproduce inequality even if this is not understood by those who enact borders. Here borders are understood in part in a Bourdieu-ian sense, such that object classifications of marginalized groups serve to draw lines between groups of young people as more or less legitimate in the same way that official classifications of citizenship erect a kind of border control which can be embodied by human actors.

### **Mobile Narratives of Disadvantaged Youth Across Time**

It will come as no surprise to sociologists, historians of childhood or media studies experts that the terms morality, exclusion and youth are often held together by a complex set of cultural tensions that are tied to narratives of the nation. There is also little doubt that such terms are mobile in the sense that national narratives, while always 'chained to a place' and operating locally, nevertheless also travel. This mobile travel occurs through global media narratives about youth, youth representations in virtual space, academic circles, medical and/or legal accounts of young people, and through the convergence of particular social welfare, economic and educational policies. However, while we know these representations are mobile, they can be difficult to track across place and time as they do not necessarily travel as a neat package of truths in a straightforward way from one place to another. This is particularly so when the object of focus is not an individual (and their movements) but abstract ideas and concepts. In this way, conflated narratives of morality and youth exclusion carry with them historicized and often collective anxieties that have the power to transcend individual and national narratives and may press upon the narratives of other nations and peoples.

### **Border Travel: Intermediary zones of youth exclusion across place and time**

*That's the way Collingwood's never changed, it's always been a bit ratty (Belinda)*

We begin our analysis by drawing upon the notion of 'imaginary representations' and the proposition that 'seeing like a border' can evoke particular kinds of geo-political and temporalized responses to youth exclusion. By using the term imaginary representation we are not suggesting that what people remember about being young or representations of young people are imaginary in that they never existed. Rather, we are interested in how people remember and imagine youth exclusion in both the past and present, and how such memories reveal, in Balibar's (2009a 2009b) terms, embodied understandings of 'seeing like a border' as well as nostalgic narratives of a lost time (Dillabough and Kennelly 2010; McLeod 2012; Wright and McLeod 2012). Putting this differently, we ask: how do memories and representations of youth represent border narratives that stretch across time and place? We seek to show how the practices of bordering through narration suggest new ways of understanding youth exclusion. We also hope to highlight the ways in which scales of territory and temporality shift both the moral and practical limits placed upon excluded youth and the bordering processes used to define and re-define inclusion and legitimacy.

In the first instance we draw upon oral histories with senior community members and community workers who have lived and/or worked in the two sites, focussing in particular on the oral histories with older residents in the Melbourne site. In Vancouver, interviews were held with youth and community workers and older residents who were key figures in community activism, for which the area is well known. These people had extensive experience of living or working in these areas,



over periods of around 40 years. Data are also drawn from interviews with young people involved in Dillabough and Kennelly's (2010) ethnographic study in Vancouver. For the Melbourne site, we draw on materials from another strand of research in which the first and second author were involved, using interview data with social workers and oral history interviews and focus groups conducted with older residents who grew up in the adjacent inner-city areas of Abbotsford and Collingwood, where some of the joint research took place. Participants were invited to reflect on what it was like to be young in the past when compared to the present and any changes in youth exclusion they had witnessed over their lives, using memory as a means of accessing an absent past. We first consider local imaginaries of space and place, before turning to representations of youth exclusion across the two different cities. Second, we consider the testimonies of the senior members of the Australian community and juxtapose these with young participant narratives and accounts of long-standing residents and community workers in the Vancouver site.

### *City space and youth exclusion: past and present*

The older residents in Melbourne had lived in their local community almost all of their lives and, not surprisingly, expressed strong views about the nature of the area, often conveying nostalgia for earlier days along with ambivalence about its character in the present. Many depicted the area as a complex, tightly bounded territory with substantial neighbourhood tensions. Replicating, in part, what has been documented in other marginal urban areas, such as the French banlieues (Wacquant 2006), these areas were often described by senior participants in terms of being seen as an unwanted and immoral space of 'embodied disgust' (Skeggs 2004). They remembered their neighbourhood as being outside the urban boundaries of legitimacy and associated with immorality by those living outside the area. When talking of Collingwood, for instance, seniors remembered that *'it got a sort of bad name'* and *'we became known as the slobs on the door'* in comparison to neighbouring areas, such as Clifton Hill, which is *'the snobby part'*. Here urban divisions are central in senior's narratives about place and the young people who inhabited these spaces. Soja (2009) refers to this conflation of identity and space as spatial exclusion, with subtle nationalist intimations of border control that operates beyond the school gates or narrow institutional constructions of exclusion.

The seniors spoke of Collingwood's poor reputation, a narrative imaginary that endured over time, with it seen as *'always [being] a bit ratty'*. The conflation of moralizing metaphors of animalistic creatures and abject references ('slobs', for example) to a collective understanding of young people was common in this time and place. As Betty, a senior observed: *'when you say you're from Collingwood their language changes [...] people start swearing but I don't swear [...] They think they are better than us...'* and *'From the outside they think we're not good enough'* and *'years ago they used to say oh Collingwood, fancy living over there. It's a bit iffy around ere, all the outlaws and stuff'*. Such fearful notions of the outlaw were not an uncommon conflation of youth identity and urban space in the periods of childhood being remembered (1930s and 1940s). These also resonated with security narratives expressed in housing, and health and safety policies that represented such communities as, for example, 'sites of lawlessness' and 'no-go' areas (Brown 1988). Some senior participants were quick to say that they had lived in the adjacent suburb of Abbotsford, a small inner suburban pocket understood by local residents to be separated from and less stigmatised than Collingwood, yet it is an area so close by Collingwood that is not readily distinguished by outsiders to this community. Put simply, such demarcations make clear the potent and everyday dimensions of territorial bordering and associated lines of social exclusion as a spatial entity.

Similar strains of territoriality, fear and bordering were also represented in accounts from the community youth workers and seniors in Vancouver, where narratives of insecurity were

especially strong. Within Vancouver, particular regions of Strathcona, Hastings, and Gas Town were referred to in highly localised ways, as places where inhabitants felt safer only within their own patch. Many seniors, including those who had been homeless in the area as young people, spoke of sexual and physical abuse and endless fears about encounters with police: 'they were everywhere and undercover and they were as bad as some of the boys on the street'. Young people within these borders were narrated as encapsulated within highly defined geographies, with youth workers maintaining that young people rarely moved beyond tightly circumscribed geographies, largely due to the nature and character of urban social divisions and the degree to which their identities had been highly stigmatized. When urban transformation came about, such as the opening of the East Side centreplace, the exclusion of young people emerged as a border practice in a very real sense:

*'But just getting the kids in this part of the city to go up to the East Side Centreplace, was something [Yeah. Yeah]. I don't know if that answers your question, but I really feel there was a lot of segmentation (Brian, Youth Worker and Longstanding Resident).*

Deep anxieties seeped over into neighbouring but unfamiliar areas, as a longstanding Vancouver resident went on to say:

*Again there was a ...fear and it was a...and it wasn't as safe, and it was...it wasn't our territory. It wasn't what you grew up with and you knew, and you were familiar with...*

As Harvey (2008) has suggested, exclusion emerges here as a denial of urban access, as an inability to access rights to the city for those who are not schooled in the normative sense. It represents a denial of opportunities to remake oneself and others through a remaking of the city. Harvey writes:

*The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city [...] a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization. The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is [...] one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights (Harvey 2008: 1).*

Across both sites, the highly territorialised and bounded worlds of urban space were maintained through intra-city hostilities. Within accounts of the past by the Australian seniors, regional segregation – another bordering practice – was reflected upon in terms of inter-neighbourhood tensions and associated language forms dating back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Australian landscape referring to young people as louts or hoodlums. For instance, a senior described: *'The larrikins of Richmond would come up to the larrikins of Collingwood'* for fights, reflecting localised class-based hostilities similar to that identified by Cohen (1999) in his work on the role of mass media in shaping public anxieties about the 'folk devil' of particular periods, but with particular references to youth subcultures who were seen as a threat to the social order of the nation. In Vancouver, however, such regional differentiation also had a racialised dimension of exclusion, which can be traced back to representations of a city deeply bordered along ethnic, class and racial lines. A community youth worker reflected on how the young people navigated these borders:

*there was all this covert racism even though.... They (the kids) never went to China Town, like they would never try that...right there was separate worlds and how did we integrate the worlds?*

Importantly, too, the affective dimensions of urban space were experienced as small and imprisoning. Brian, a longstanding resident and youth worker from the area referred to the Vancouver space as shrinking, and that available living spaces were getting smaller and more heavily policed. Evidence of chaos, disruption and alienation was also pervasive. Similarly, in their accounts, the Australian seniors conveyed their early experiences of feeling confined and stuck, unable to escape via the conventional means of social mobility; many referred to the local education system as a one-way street to unemployment. More recently, in both sites, feelings of narrowness and confinement in the bordered worlds were experienced as exacerbated and reproduced through urban gentrification.

Notably, both the seniors in Australia, and the youth and seniors in Canada, expressed deep ambivalence about their neighbourhood security. Simultaneously, things were seen to be safe yet dangerous, familiar yet strange, frightening but home. Fears of being 'out of place' loomed large. Such themes were repeated across interviews – among the younger and older groups in both communities – suggesting the persistence of concerns about security across time and place. As Brian (a Vancouver resident and youth worker) reported, *'some would like to stay here, people love it and hate it, [but] they can be accepted here. The things they hate they hate and are scared by them, but the things they love are what you don't get in other places. A whole way of being with each other. People in [this space] know there's history there, they absorb that, they know that it's a place of worth even while it is stigmatized'*.

#### **Youth perspectives – then and now**

In looking to how those who were involved in our oral histories thought of their own youth and growing up, we found normative notions of gendered childhoods resonating across time, with recollections of hard lives pitted against ultimately middle class ideals of a perfect girlhood or boyhood. In particular, there were remarkably consistent representations of how childhood and inclusion should be and considerable anxiety about any deviation from norms. In both sites, stories emerged of young people growing up in foster care, Catholic girls' homes, as immigrants, or as alcoholic, and being in and out of rehabilitation or mental health services, with little or no access to social support. Many participants in both sites had not completed school, had been employed in factories, or low-skilled jobs such as cleaning or sewing and boot factories, and some had experienced homelessness or street work. Poverty was rife and life was hard for both men and women, old and young. In Australia, *'Money was a novelty in most houses then'* and *'so I worked all day and the two boys were at school and my mother got a job at night because women had to go to work, so I went home to mind the two boys'*. Wendy, another senior woman from Australia, recalled working in an Australian nursing home for elderly as *'mentally hard with the old girls bashing your ear all day'*. In Vancouver, a local support worker and longstanding resident in Vancouver recounted *experiences of drug use and abuse, little or no money, of being homeless for extended periods and struggling to stay clean and find good work*.

Despite these obvious hardships, the oral history accounts also expressed ideal visions of past childhoods and especially so in juxtaposition to contemporary youth experience. This double-move of nostalgia and critique of the present (see Wright and McLeod 2012) was more profoundly felt in the Australian context. Richard, an Australian senior, speaks to these ambivalences in the ways in which memory entwines with the present. His thoughts on the economic depression are powerful: *'we hardly ever had food, people couldn't get a job' [but] 'we had a really hard time but we were happy, and 'so we had it hard. But I didn't think it was hard, I thought it was great, but the parents didn't, the parents didn't burden us with things like...'*



Commonalities in narratives across past and present were however, disrupted in other nostalgic memories of childhood in which moral qualities associated with that 'hard' life were displaced by a perceived shift to 'easier' lives for young people today. These displacements can be interpreted as temporalized moralizing borders, which create, albeit inadvertently, new patterns of exclusion across the generations. Narratives shared by senior women in Collingwood, who came from impoverished backgrounds and had never been to secondary school, emphasised past poverty as a moral, aesthetic poverty that encouraged people to pull together: *'we all used to help one another but that's gone'* and another reflected: *'Yeah, everyone loved everyone else I think. I had a lovely childhood – even though I didn't eat too good, I had a lovely time when I was young'*. Although living in relatively confined inner-urban environments, space seemed to them to be more expansive than today and was associated with an imagined, albeit modest, sense of freedom and less damaging social exclusion, a kind of counter-memory to socio-spatial marginalisation: *'I think the kids had a better time in my time, we used to swim around the river...we were out all the time, we never had any money but we enjoyed ourselves'*. These counter-memories, however, also carried the burden of social fears and moralizing discourses about others living in adjacent spaces:

*when I was sixteen, we used to go to dances and [...] the girls would all band together [...] and we'd walk down Victoria Street [in nearby suburb of Richmond] and all the prostitutes would be on one side, and we used to hurry by, oh they'd glare at you, you know, we'd say quick, hurry up.'*

Memories of their earlier confident and expansive use of space contrasts with their imaginings of present day young people's occupation of space: as Belinda observed: *'the kids of today, they're never happy unless they're at a computer or they're inside'*. This sentiment was echoed elsewhere: *"Now kids are always inside. I think they've got it easier than us"*.

Themes of nostalgia for a past time and place resonated with associated border narratives of decline in urban life and also expressed notions of a 'diseased neighbourhood' in which the border narrative takes on a medicalized quality. We witnessed a sense of loss of a particular kind of childhood, one largely concerned with greater solidarity and working-class values of hard work and effort. While the memories derived from oral histories embody anxieties associated with the loss of key values, such felt losses served to entrap contemporary youth in a 'time-space continuum' devoid of morality and value. Such assessments of youth in the present also coincided with a marked deterioration in the quality of the built environment. Sandra, a Vancouver based community worker and longstanding resident, recalled the development of the emerging night time economy of rooming houses and single night dwellings. Representations of youth exclusion in relation to these changes were linked to discourses of filth, social fears and disgust: *I can't imagine why they're still standing now, because they were so cockroach infested ....[ ] the area used to be pleasant and full of restaurants (because of Expo 86): 'I used to go shopping there. [...]. But now it's like just totally drug infested, run'*. Seniors also talked about a media inflation of such images of lost youth on the street and addicted; another community worker referred to the 1997 HIV panic, where this part of Vancouver became the epi-centre of all evil in the city, localising a globalised panic about a 'festering sore'.

### Interpreting changes across time and space

The narration of change within our Australian accounts was one of deterioration. Cathy, for example, described her experiences growing up in terms of blatant social marginalisation – paralleling the demise of the welfare state – which led to chronic stress and strains in young lives and, in her case, alcoholism. Yet she still maintained that *'I'm glad I'm not a teenager today,*

*there's too much temptation, too many rave parties and things like that. If I'd been a teenager now I'd probably [have] been a junkie'. She noted that the youth exclusions that she remembered were associated with the alteration of buildings or slum clearances, the wreckages associated with urban regeneration, and the widening of roads. Reflections from seniors in both cities pointed to shifts from residential to retail space or gentrification processes, in which some were forced out of homes and lost their houses due to compulsory purchase: 'it took all our businesses away' and 'then all the houses gone, no customers, very few customers, it was too hard.' Betty remembers when the flats [public housing estates] were established: 'The high rise, yeah I do, oh that was years ago, and we all said oh that's a bad thing. [...] Yeah I was only a kid when they went up, we just couldn't believe it, 'cause they're not suitable to live in really, I wouldn't like it.' Changes were noted in shops 'cause they now sell imported goods', but many shop units were for sale or lease; as Betty continued 'because the rents are so high I suppose'. Many too focused on young people being priced out of the market, and the rebuilt environment emerging as a new and exclusive border of the growing metropolis, reflecting the movement of global capital. One man observed 'It was everything for business after that.'*

Crucially, within the two sites, there were differences in how similar losses accrued over time were narrated. In Australia, among the seniors, the deterioration was not seen as a loss of spatial justice (Harvey 2008) or the depletion of social resources in the city. Rather, the loss of key values was explained as an individualized effect of young people's desires and intentions, a move that pathologised young people as troublesome and as lacking values and a sense of purpose. It is perhaps here that we witness an illustration of Balibar's notion of 'seeing like a border' as well as the making of invisible borders of exclusion across the generations. Betty maintained, for example, 'They've got it so easy today and they want more, more, more.' Much of this blame very subtly fell upon an old gendered and highly bordered dichotomy of family and childhood in a dying industrialized nation state, where the solidarity necessary for the success of the welfare state was slowly eroding. In particular, the anticipated intentions of young women perceived as abusing their reproductive role was highlighted. Belinda states:

*For them to have a baby, what is it \$5000 for the plasma babies now? That's what they're calling them now, 'cause they buy their plasma TV.[...] Yeah that's what they call them now the ones that are not married, the plasma babies, have another baby and get \$5000 [an allowance 'baby bonus' from the Federal government], they forget they've got to look after it too though.'*

This was not always the case, however. For Cathy, the demands on young people unable to secure local housing were seen to be more difficult: 'That's not fair, what happened to childhood?' she reflected. But for Belinda and Anna, this change is seen as a result of wilful intent:

*A: They don't want a job...'*

*B: I think they get [money] from the government*

*I: like the dole?*

*A: mmm. They don't think for the future [...]*

*B: You see them day after day ... – you know for years they don't have a job, they don't want to work.[...] Their parents, their parents, they should say in the morning get up out of bed and go to work.*

*A: Too much money*

*B: Too spoilt, too spoilt [...]*

*A: When they brought in the dole for everybody [...], I think that's when the kids didn't want to work anymore, get money too easy.*

*B: But they enjoy going and breaking into everyone's houses and pinching all their stuff.*

Bordering narratives in the form of creating 'stranger danger' were also apparent and existed across the generations in both sites. The Australian seniors discussed their relationships with post-war European migrants (predominantly Greeks and Italians), who they felt were more inclined to an Australian lifestyle in contrast to the more recent waves of immigrants from Asia and Africa. Some of the seniors were from immigrant backgrounds themselves, and described initial experiences of racism; yet these have since faded, as Susan observed: *'they became good friends, our children marry their children, but you know we are alright now, we're all family, Australians, Italians, we're very happy.'* Charlie felt that he had worked hard and contributed to the country, but his own experience of racism does not stop him extending racist sentiments towards new immigrants, evident in his references to *'the muslim'* or to the Vietnamese migrants who, he says, *'usually stick by themselves'*. Although Charlie talked about his attempts to communicate with more recent immigrants, he conveyed a strong sense of separation, even alienation from them, evident in his constructions of their embodied otherness

*'there's quite a few - what do you call the women who dress like nuns? You sort of smile at them and say hello and you can't tell if they're smiling or not, they just nod their heads, they don't speak to you'.*

Betty similarly enacted explicit bordering practices in her antagonism towards migrant families, who she thought were deceiving the system:

*Well we get Vietnamese coming in and you've got three lots that live up top but they don't live here, they just store their stuff here which is wrong, they just come back to get the mail.[...] Which I've been against all the time because we've had to wait on waiting lists, it's really wrong. [...] I reported it over there [...], you know for older people waiting to get in. Three of them up there paying pensioner rate, not on.*

Other narratives presented strong anti-Islamic sentiments, suggesting fears of a loss of Australian and Christian identity – particularly felt among European immigrants – and re-constituting forms of bordered exclusions (see Rigouste, 2005). As Belinda observed:

*like the Greeks always said they'd take over, yeah, but they didn't and now they're sort of inclined to be [an] Australian way now. But this lot [African and Islamic families] will never, ever, never, ever – I won't even get in a taxi now, cause they don't know where they're going, they're rude and they're horrible. And I don't want to sound racist, I'm not, it's just I'm just so concerned about my own country, what's happening. I always say I wouldn't like to be bringing up kids now, you don't know what's going to happen with all these black gowns, who's going to say it's not a bloke under there.*

Such feelings are magnified by changes in the urban landscape that chimed with national security fears about terrorism, as Belinda explained:

*'You're not safe like you were.[...] No everywhere. You look at all the big buildings and stuff and you think oh God I wonder if it'll ever happen there, it's always behind you, what's happened in America.*

In the fringe neighbourhood in Vancouver we see a similar pessimism about the present alongside a milder form of nostalgia for the past, rooted in similar concerns about the contemporary rise of blended or dysfunctional families and a worsening drug culture. This was the case among a younger generation of adults working as community youth workers. Suzie, a community worker and long time resident, states, *'I am glad that [drug culture] wasn't around when I was a young person'*. And another community worker and local resident, Karen, tells us that *'the numbers of homeless have risen and the majority of people have disabilities...illiteracy, manic depression, you name it, bi-polar, like A to Z'*. The accounts from adult community workers in Vancouver were, somewhat unsurprisingly given their occupations, quite attuned to the structural limitations of youth and childhood. Some of the workers were particularly critical of the kinds of symbolic, regulatory and narrative borders being erected to manage how young excluded groups were represented in the present. Brian, for example, like the Australian seniors, was nostalgic for the freedoms of the past, but in contrast to the older Australians, he expressed sympathy with young people today: *'when we were kids, we could roam around outside prying eyes of adults. Adults don't like teenagers, it's hard to be a teenager in the city'*. And the past was considered a time where there were choices and possibilities for escape that now appeared to be beyond the reach of many young people. As Brian went on to remark:

*But generally in terms of placement of people, and housing, and getting...allowing two or three people to share housing, and to get a place, and to have an alternative school that they can go to, an alternative school to help them...It seemed to me that there was...there was more hope offered. And that's not to say that everybody took it...Some people did abuse it but there was choices. (Brian CW)*

These narratives stressed a complete loss of hope in the present; whereas poverty in the past was understood to be partially surmountable because of greater choices and welfare provision. The change from community solidarity lamented by senior Australians is narrated in the Vancouver interviews as a consequence of the rise of neo-liberal flexible working arrangements. In the case of Vancouver, Brian discussed how police in the past might have fostered a sense of community, but they were now a transient workforce, and engaged in various forms of youth surveillance, with no long-term connections to the neighbourhood, a situation exacerbated by the increase in private security services. The nostalgia here is for a more supportive state, one that at least in memory, enabled a shift in people's opportunities and trajectories to occur. Brian observed that:

*In those days I never remember housing being so huge.... We would find an apartment for somebody, for two or three kids to live in, and it was 250, 80 bucks each and they could...on social assistance [...] handle that and start to go to school, and start to...Your basic hygiene stuff was dealt with and you could start to [...] deal with some of the basics if they had somewhere to go. [...] if they are going to say no to their old friends and try to stay...But they have a ghost chance now of that happening.*

The attitudes and memories of community workers are no doubt connected to their professions and its formation and orientation toward an understanding of the social-structural circumstances shaping young lives. However, what is of interest here is a shared sense across the generations that the present is understood in terms of loss and decline against greater solidarity in the past, and a perception that social exclusions have intensified for young people

Turning now to accounts from young people living within the urban fringes of Vancouver, many of whom were in alternative education or in and out of school, we identified some sedimented and rather static representations of youth exclusion across time and space. As in the accounts from the

older generations, there is a similar self-consciousness about inhabiting an area that has a poor reputation. Young people refer to their own exclusion and fear by describing their local neighbourhoods as 'sinful', 'full of bums', and that 'drug dealers are everywhere'. Their accounts also resonate with the Australian seniors' concerns for the quality of space they inhabit, with both young and older members feeling confined and contained.

Other similarities converged across time and space in relation to the idea of young people's isolation. Of interest here are the similar concerns about being judged by others because of where they lived. A Cambodian Canadian girl in the Vancouver study referred to the social stigma attached to the location which creates a sense of shame, as she described: *'like prostitutes are around the corner and sometimes I'm embarrassed to tell people where I live too'*. The area is associated with disease and contagion, linking certain spaces with high degrees of moral anxiety. The community workers' accounts in Vancouver referred to the space, as stated earlier, as a 'festering sore'. Similar themes of disgust were found within young people's own accounts of where they live which drew upon the metaphor of a medical register emphasizing sickness and disease (see Rigouste 2005). Renaldo, for instance, a young lad who was struggling to stay in school, talked disparagingly about the homeless people in the neighbourhood:

*Renaldo: Yeah. I don't want a disease. What if they sneeze or something?*

*Interviewer: Mmmm. Do you think people who are homeless carry diseases?*

*Renaldo: Yes. [...] They live on the streets when it's raining and they go like give, they get sick or something and they take cocaine. [...] You get diseases from that.*

Another girl, who attended school very irregularly, noted that her neighbourhood was perceived by outsiders as lacking, even though she personally felt it was friendly and safer than others. The neighbourhood was also conflated with particular youth identities, such as 'First Nations' youth:

*Saphia: Yeah. It's good. Everyone's friendly. But I hear like that at others schools it's more harder so they say this is the dumb school.*

*Int: You hear that about the (name of school)?*

*Saphia: That's what other people say. That the reputation of [the school] is not that great. They say there's mostly First Nations here.*

*Int: When people say it's a dumb school what do you think about that?*

*Saphia: It makes me feel like I'm not getting a good education but I think it's a pretty good school. Compared to other schools, it's not that corrupted as other schools I hear from other people.*

Saphia's account suggests a sense of ambivalence towards place, with contradictory feelings of both belonging and loyalty, yet an awareness of alienation and exclusion. Both seniors in Australia, and younger people in Canada expressed feeling safe in their neighbourhood, whilst also invoking fears about 'stranger danger' from within, not only outside, the community. Such ambivalent feelings towards stigmatised places appear to travel across time and space. Stigmatized sites were deemed OK, or sinful even as participants reported that they 'love' living there and where 'poverty was or is not that bad'. As in the senior's accounts, intra-city tensions were reported, although in young people's accounts, these were often tied to ethnic and racial borders. For example, groupings according to racial and ethnic styles were rife, as another East end girl from Vancouver explains:



*Like if there are Vietnamese or something and they call them 'Nammers' because they wear this kind of spandex...have you seen those? ...They are a type of people, 'nammers', Vietnamese with like blonde hair and eyebrows and lots of makeup.*

One young person talked about their attempts to move beyond these groupings, despite the border anxieties in operation:

*There is obviously some racial stuff going on in the school because the majority of the school is 95% Asian, oriental, it feels like when we walk down the hallway, you'll see the more European people will hang out in little clusters, that's being my friends right now. There are people who are opening up, some of the oriental people open up, they are cool people. Some people would say stick with your own group of friends and they taunt me...what are you doing...what do you think you are doing?*

While the threat of violence is present in these accounts they emerge in different forms. In Saphia's account, for example, an absence of violence is noted at school, yet she refers to the place itself as frightening. She lived in a subsidised social housing project, which she described as 'kind of dangerous, well scary 'cause I live near [...] Street in the project area'. When asked to describe where she would like to live, she described, 'A rich place. A nicer place [...] a nice clean area that is quiet, cause where I live is noisy and it's disturbing'. Renaldo, a former refugee from South America, felt 'unsafe' and 'scared' and described the neighbourhood as 'too dangerous,' with 'too many drugs'. He continued, 'during the day here when I'm going to school or at lunchtime if you go out and people smoking and people drinking, doing crack,' and at night, 'When I go home after like basketball practice, soccer practice, it's pretty late. The bums, they start yelling or start moving a little.' Nevertheless he goes on to describe his own identity as 'hard-core, loud' and describes his experience as a fighter, 'because once you show other guys that you know you're a fighter you won't get, they won't pick on you more.' Renaldo repeatedly maintained that he felt no fear or anxiety within the neighbourhood. Although referring to a sense of mutual surveillance in the space, his assessment of the homeless is projected into blame:

*Renaldo: The bums I see, or the homeless people I see are like, you look at them and they're like, "What are you looking at?" So.*  
*Int: Yeah. Do you feel a bit scared by it because of the way they look?*  
*Renaldo: No. I feel like what the hell is wrong with them.*

And whereas Renaldo was keen to stress that he did not fear the urban environment, school spaces in general were associated with more violence:

*F: Every school [around here] is getting violent. Like we're having boxing matches here. Like in a [secret] location. []. It was fun.*  
*Interviewer: So who would do that?*  
*F: huh?*  
*I: Like who is 'we': who are the people or groups of people who are doing this?*  
*F: The Guys []*  
*I: And then the people bet on who is going to win? How did that happen? []*  
*F: There is somebody who controls the money...*

The excitement associated with divisions in the school body was interpreted positively by another 15-year old Chinese Canadian boy as 'pretty funny. They're like cool! They're fighting.' This was

one justification for involvement as bordering and classification struggles were inevitable and demanded a response: *'Some people call us CHINKS and stuff like that...the Natives. They're like get off our land and stuff land that...'*

## Concluding comments

In this paper we have brought together different data sources to explore temporal and juxtaposed elements of youth exclusion, asking whether these representations trouble, mirror or reproduce anxiety about young people in the city. We have argued that Balibar's (2009a, 2009b) and Rumsford's (2013) insights into border conflicts and seeing in everyday ways are helpful for understanding the representation of youth exclusion in memories and contemporary accounts. While abstract conceptions of youth exclusion do not travel in any direct sense, we have highlighted some of the ways in which travelling border narratives do indeed speak to ongoing fears about young people who are excluded from normative citizenship as well as to moral discourses surrounding conceptualizations of childhood and youth. We have also identified themes in the oral testimonies suggesting that the roots of contemporary moral anxieties are associated with stigmatized city spaces, which are seen in the public record as devoid of moral value and beyond the boundaries of legitimate citizenship. In some people's accounts, we saw a troubling of official discourses – a subtle critique representing the ambivalences most participants felt about their neighbourhoods, which reflects a contradictory set of reflections rather than a wholesale reproduction of moral anxiety. Perhaps for seniors their ambivalence about place can be understood within the context of memories of a long distant past. They may narrate the youth of today as problematic, but at the same time, their own experiences when young, which were difficult and deeply challenging, are relegated to a distant memory in a reimagined nostalgic collective past. It is precisely this kind of urban imaginary that weaves together past and present carrying elements of both 'truth' and 'fiction' entwined in a storied self (Dune 1996).

The emerging findings from this work underscore the need to develop ways of properly embedding diverse and polyvalent meanings from the past more explicitly within contemporary youth research, as well as seeking to be responsible to memories of exclusion in past time. Such temporal reflexivity calls upon us to 'know something about the past made present' or that 'absent cause' (Ricoeur 2009) which has been lost through the very practices of presentism. Such work is best done, we suggest, through an interdisciplinary bridging which takes as axiomatic that exclusion cannot be understood only as something grounded in the experiences of schooling narrowly defined or expulsion; these constructs alone are insufficient for understanding the socio-spatial injustices experienced by young people. Intellectual and cultural histories are also needed of how young people who have lived on the margins of urban life are represented in everyday life and official memory.

Following Kearney (2004), we propose that it is only when we distance ourselves from the present that we can recover a new sense of how ideas and ideological understandings about youth and exclusion shift and change. The bridging of past and present leads to an enlarged and decentered way of viewing how youth exclusion might be experienced and understood in different times and places. History, memory, and time and place are just a sample of the conceptual resources we have drawn upon as we seek to better understand how young people navigate urban marginalization in deeply divided cities. It is in the juxtaposition of these diverse representations of past and present that we can identify how memory and contemporary accounts of hardship serve as forms of survival and of reconstruction (Cubbit 2007). Together they provide a window of illumination into the storied self who must necessarily seek to understand the other, those bordered others as they are embodied by us and those who we may have never known. Perhaps

these narrations operate in part as a means to survival and the need for reconstructing lost time whilst living at the margins of the city and losing the rights to its making (Harvey 2008).

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