

City as Lens: (Re)Imagining Youth in Glasgow and Hong Kong

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Abstract

In recent years, a paradox has emerged in the study of youth. On the one hand, in the context of the processes of globalization, neoliberalism and precarity, the patterning of leisure and work for young people is becoming increasingly convergent across time and space. On the other hand, it is clear that young people's habits and dispositions remain deeply tied to local places, with global processes filtered and refracted through specific cultural contexts. Against this backdrop, drawing on an Economic and Social Research Council/Research Grants Council (ESRC/RGC)-funded study of contemporary youth in Glasgow and Hong Kong, this article seeks to explore the role of the city as a mediating lens between global forces and local impacts. Utilizing both historical and contemporary data, the article argues that despite parallels in the impact of global forces on the structure of everyday life and work, young people's leisure habits remain rooted in the fates and fortunes of their respective cities.

Keywords

Youth, globalization, space, social change, cities, comparative methods

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Introduction

In 1967, the sociologist Pearl Jephcott published the now-classic book *Time of One's Own*, a pioneering study of youth leisure, public space and free time in 1960s Scotland. The work was grounded in the everyday lives of Scottish youth as they grew through a period now associated with radical shifts in politics and culture, catching the social and leisure habits of 15- to 19-year-olds at a unique point in social history. Not long after, Jephcott travelled to Hong Kong on behalf of UNICEF, collating statistics on housing, work and public space alongside interviews and observations with young people. The subsequent report (Jephcott, 1971) similarly captured the experiences of young people at a critical point in Hong Kong's history, in the hiatus between the 1967 youth riots and a wide-ranging programme of reforms in the 1970s (Cheung, 2009). While Jephcott has been for many years an unsung hero of twentieth-century sociology, there is increasing recognition of the influence and prescience of her work (Goodwin and O'Connor, 2015). In this article, we seek to draw on her fieldwork in Glasgow and Hong Kong as both landmarks and benchmarks against which to explore debates relating to youth, globalization and social change.

The article is based on a 2-year comparative study of youth leisure in contemporary Glasgow and Hong Kong, which set out to bring Jephcott's historical work into dialogue with the present. The first section will introduce the notion of 'city as lens', a theoretical approach designed to take seriously the role of urban and cultural history in the shaping of contemporary patterns of youth leisure. The second section describes the methodological approach employed in the study, which sought to retain the spirit of Jephcott's original studies while 'reimagining' her work for a contemporary context. The third and fourth sections examine the contemporary leisure lives of participants in Glasgow and Hong Kong within the context of the historical trajectory of these respective cities. As we will argue, while processes of globalization, neoliberalism and precarity have exerted pressure from above, these forces have been filtered and refracted through distinctive urban histories, with locale retaining a constitutive role in youthful identity.

City as Lens: Global Routes, Local Roots

In recent years, the 'global' question has become central to debate in the social sciences. For some, the processes of globalization have created increased homogeneity of culture in geographically diverse communities; for others, the effects of globalization are both heterogeneous and unpredictable, as global and local cultures conflict and merge (Appadurai, 1996). Nonetheless, while certain structural and cultural forces are increasingly global in reach, leading to increased convergences in lifestyles and behaviours in distal communities, the strength and resilience of local cultures often lead to friction, hybridity and divergence (Robertson, 1995; Tsing, 2005). Against this backdrop, contemporary youth scholarship has increasingly sought out new vocabularies and methodologies with which to understand continuity and change in a global context. Within this literature, a central conundrum relates to the extent to which contemporary youth culture is routed through *global* resources for

identity formation (Bennett and Robards, 2014; Smith and Hetherington, 2013)—such as digital technology, cultural flow and online networks—or rooted in *local* places, spaces and real-world connections (Leurs, 2015; McQuire, 2008).

On the one hand, young people across the world appear to be facing comparable pressures in the context of work and leisure. A major consequence of a globalized agenda of neoliberalism is a decline in stability and security, exerting a disproportionate impact on young people (Standing, 2011). While recent research suggests that these forms of precarity are not necessarily new (Furlong et al., 2017, forthcoming), it is clear that the experience of work-based precariousness has become an increasing reality for young people around the world (Jones, 2002; MacDonald and Marsh, 2005). Short-term, part-time and unstable jobs—with flexible or zero-hours contracts—have become increasingly prevalent as organizations seek flexibility as a way of ensuring a competitive edge within world markets (Cumbers et al., 2009). In this context, where leisure was once conceived as the antidote to work—a period of structured release to refresh the worker for the next day's toil—in Anglo-American contexts at least, the balance has shifted in the opposite direction, with work viewed instrumentally as a way of attaining funds for leisure (Winlow and Hall, 2006). As Rojek notes, 'most workers relate to paid labour as the means to finance leisure activities rather than the means to forge self worth, distinction and the pursuit of power' (Rojek, 1995: 315). These conditions have created a range of apparent convergences in the patterning of work and leisure for young people in diverse geographical contexts.

On the other hand, however, while the everyday articulations of globalization may be comparable across diverse contexts, it is important to recognize the role of place and cultural context in the contemporary patterning of youth work and leisure. While it is clear that 'spaces of place' are increasingly challenged and reshaped by the 'space of flows' (Castells, 1996), it is equally apparent that for many young people place-based identities remain important. As Castells notes:

the space of flows does not permeate down to the whole realm of human experience in the network society [...] the overwhelming majority of people, in advanced and traditional societies alike, live in places, and so they perceive their space as place-based. (Castells, 1996: 423)

As such, there remain significant cultural variations in the meaning, content and value of 'free' time and space, in the form of leisure (Valentine et al., 1998). These arguments are all the more prescient in non-Western settings, as post-colonial perspectives challenge Western analyses of culture and identity (Connell, 2007; Said, 1978; Spivak, 1999). A central theoretical and methodological challenge, therefore, is to grasp the emergent nature of social reality in a way that is both grounded and comparative, yet sensitized to the contingent and contested nature of 'multiple modernities' (Appadurai, 1996; Beck, 1999). In this article, we suggest the optic of the city—specifically, that of urban and cultural history—as a mediating lens through which to understand the connections between global forces and local habits. To make sense of youthful responses to globalization, we contend, requires a careful appreciation of the generative historical structures through which young people's approach to work and leisure is constituted. This approach, which we term 'city as lens', draws together theorization of the impact of economic globalization on cities

(Friedmann, 1986, 1995; Sassen, 1995, 2001, 2007) with that of embedded habits and routines (Bourdieu, 1984, 2005).

One consequence of economic globalization has been the concentration of financial services and related industries in a small number of 'global' cities—New York, Paris, London and Tokyo—that play a disproportionate role in the global economy. Such cities act as hubs for the 'servicing, managing and financing of international trade, investment and headquarter operations' (Sassen, 2007: 99), and consequently attract disproportionate levels of investments, jobs and incentives. These cities, while rooted in the national contexts in which they are situated, are nonetheless structured by the 'spaces of flows' (Castells, 2000) that compose the global financial markets. As economic strength is consolidated in a small number of urban contexts, however, others are subject to decline—globalization creates both 'winners' and 'losers' in the global hierarchy of cities. As Sassen summarizes:

Alongside these new global and regional hierarchies of cities is a vast territory that has become increasingly peripheral, increasingly excluded from the major processes that fund economic growth in the new global economy. Many formerly important manufacturing centers and port cities have lost functions and are in decline, not only in the less-developed countries but also in the most advanced economies...marginalized people must find their voice and make claims on the city to survive. (Sassen, 2007: 101, 112)

Hong Kong has developed as a 'Chinese Global City' (Chiu and Lui, 2009), but other cities in the region—notably Manila and Jakarta (Cheah, 2009)—have been less successful. Similarly, as London has consolidated economic strength, the former 'Second City' of Glasgow has become increasingly peripheral to the functioning of the global economy, fulfilling service functions such as call centres and tourism. In this context, the 'space of place' inhabited by young people becomes structured by the 'space of flows' through which networks of global capital operate (Castells, 2000). In conceptualizing the city as a lens through which global forces are filtered and refracted, the intention is to understand the role of local place, space and history in young people's leisure habits. This approach recognizes that globalization is 'a deeply historical, uneven, and even *localizing* process' (Appadurai, 1996: 17) that recognizes the path dependencies of urban contexts of cities in the Global North and South.

In this context, work building on Bourdieu's notion of habitus (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992) stresses the importance of embedded, place-based class dispositions in the habits and behaviours of young people (Farrugia et al., 2015; Fraser, 2013, 2015). From this perspective, despite claims to an apparently 'globalized' youth culture, the role of place remains central to young people's choices, habits and behaviours. Habitus, as an embedded set of historically sedimented dispositions, is a 'glacial force' (Appadurai, 1996) that glides over short-run changes to the local area; a deep bass note that reverberates beneath the staccato patter of everyday life in the city (Nilan and Feixa, 2006). In what follows, we set out the methods employed to capture both structural homologies and embedded dispositions between Glasgow and Hong Kong, before outlining some of the deep historical continuities in young people's preferences for leisure in the two fieldsites.

(Re)Imagining Youth in Glasgow and Hong Kong

Adopting a qualitative case study approach, the '(Re)Imagining Youth' research revisited one of the three areas from Jephcott's Scottish study and a Hong Kong fieldsite with similar demographic characteristics.¹ The Scottish fieldsite, Dennistoun, was populated during Glasgow's high point as 'Second City' of the British Empire, through good-quality housing stock designed for workers in local industries. By the time of Jephcott's study in the 1960s, Dennistoun was regarded as a stable locality, comprised of residents living on 'modest but steady' incomes (Jephcott, 1967: 19). Today, Dennistoun retains a reputation for respectability and relative affluence despite containing pockets of severe deprivation, incorporating areas within the 5 per cent 'most deprived' areas in Scotland. Latterly, the area has experienced a period of regeneration and gentrification and is now also home to a community of middle-class students, artists and young professionals. In many ways, in Dennistoun wider processes of industrialization, deindustrialization and regeneration that have defined Glasgow's modern history can be seen in microcosm.

Jephcott's Hong Kong fieldwork was not confined to a single area, but rather constituted an overview of the 'situation of children and youth' in Hong Kong. Data were accessed through administrators, youth organizations, charities and public bodies, as well as through a small number of interviews with young people, with information on housing, education, crime, employment and leisure (Jephcott, 1971). Seeking a focus on young people's lived experience, we opted to replicate the methodology from *Time of One's Own*, incorporating qualitative fieldwork in Yat Tung, a large public housing estate exhibiting similar demographics to Dennistoun: predominantly lower-income, with a mixture of social housing and owner-occupied leases, coupled with high youth populations and perceived 'problem' youth (Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Tung Chung Integrated Service, 2010). Yat Tung also represents in microcosm some of the processes of social change that have occurred in recent years. As Hong Kong has emerged as a mature economic hub, 'New Towns' have been constructed outside of the city to house workers for the new airport. The shift in housing for factory workers in nineteenth-century Dennistoun to that of airport workers in twenty-first-century Hong Kong reflects the shifting patterns of place and space in the global context (Lam, 1995).

Drawing inspiration from qualitative, comparative studies (O'Connor, 2005; Wacquant, 2008), two research teams conducted concurrent data collection in these two case-study locations: Batchelor and Whittaker in Glasgow and Fraser and Li in Hong Kong. Data collection comprised targeted ethnographic observations (6 months in each site, from October 2013 to March 2014), interviews with local stakeholders ($n = 8$ in Glasgow and $n = 7$ in Hong Kong), focus groups with young people ($n = 8$ and $n = 6$, respectively) and interviews with young people ($n = 22$ and $n = 20$). Alongside these traditional place-based approaches, we experimented with visual, mobile and digital methods, including researcher-generated photography, participant photo-diaries, go-along tours, drawing and an online survey. From these methods, we gathered approximately 500 images and 200 online survey responses ($n = 92$ in Glasgow and $n = 95$ in Hong Kong). These visual, mobile and digital methods sought to explore the new spaces and places of youth leisure across both study locations, and allowed us to share material with participants across both research sites. In total,

over 280 young people, aged 16–24 years, took part in the study ($n = 159$ in Glasgow and $n = 125$ in Hong Kong). The empirical material presented in this article is drawn from Phase 2 of the study, which comprised 14 focus groups with 68 young people across the two research sites. Most of these young people were accessed via local youth organizations, schools and colleges, as well as via employers and employment agencies, criminal justice agencies and social work. These access points were chosen to try to ensure coverage and diversity across key variables, including age, gender and work/study status. The key characteristics of the focus group samples are indicated in Tables 1 and 2.

In both study areas, the average age of the focus group samples was lower than our interview samples and comprised a larger proportion of young men. All of the young people in the Glasgow focus group sample were whites, while the majority in the Hong Kong sample were Hong Kong Chinese ($n = 22$). A focus group with South Asian youth was also conducted in Hong Kong ($n = 4$).

Potential participants were first informed about the study by staff and then informed by a member of the research team, who then asked if they would be willing to take part. All young people were provided with a clear and accessible information sheet, before being asked to provide written consent. As the majority of participants were aged 16 years and over, and the research did not cover sensitive issues, we did not seek parental consent.² A guarantee of confidentiality was provided to all research participants, subject to the usual caveat that information about imminent

Table 1. Focus Group Sample, Glasgow ($N = 42$)

	Age				Total
	15 and under	16–19	20–25	26 and over	
Females	4 (9.5%)	9 (21.4%)	1 (2.4%)	—	14 (33.3%)
Males	2 (4.8%)	18 (42.9%)	7 (16.7%)	1 (2.4%)	28 (66.7%)
Total	6 (14.3%)	27 (64.3%)	8 (19.0%)	1 (2.4%)	42 (100%)

Source: Authors' own.

Table 2. Focus Group Sample, Hong Kong ($N = 26$)

	Age				Total
	(data missing for four participants, i.e., $n = 22$)				
	15 and under	16–19	20–25	26 and over	
Females	2 (9.1%)	3 (13.6%)	3 (13.6%)	—	8 (30.8%)
Males	2 (9.1%)	9 (40.1%)	2 (9.1%)	—	18 (69.2%)
Total	4 (18.2%)	12 (54.5%)	5 (13.6%)	—	26 (100%)

Source: Authors' own.

harm would be notified to appropriate authorities. Focus group discussions were digitally recorded and fully transcribed (and, in the case of the Hong Kong data, translated) by professional transcribers, who were required to sign a confidentiality agreement. Anonymity of focus group participants was maintained through the use of pseudonyms in transcripts, with code sheets maintained in a separate password-protected file. We sought written consent to use photographic images in their entirety, in line with the BSA Visual Sociology Group guidelines.

Analysis of this data has involved an ongoing, iterative process that informed our data collection activities in each site. The research team met regularly during the course of the project, most often via Skype, but also in person through study visits to each of the two research sites. Through this approach, overarching analytical themes were developed, through area profiles, literature reviews, interim reports and latterly through presentation at international conferences. We sought to analyze the data set as a whole, drawing on sensitizing concepts and emergent themes elicited from both research sites, including Cantonese and English language concepts. Management and searching of the data involved a combination of hand coding and the use of NVivo. The empirical data presented in this article draw specifically on young people's responses to specific social changes in their local community, which speak directly to the long-run historical processes in their respective cities. As such, in coding these focus group transcripts, we have been sensitized to both the changing places and spaces available for young people in the context of the 'global city' thesis as well as the role of embedded traits, dispositions and 'habitus'. Although we address some of the differing experiences of young men and young women in relation to space, place and mobility, a full discussion of gender issues and these will be the focus of a future paper.

Glasgow: From Second City to Commonwealth Legacy

The city of Glasgow is built on a heritage of shipping, trade and manufacture. The so-called 'Tobacco Lords' and 'Sugar Aristocracy' amassed fortunes through favourable shipping routes as Second City of the expanding colonial Empire in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the nineteenth century, Glasgow became established as a centre of manufacture and industry, with a strong tradition in mining and heavy engineering (Checkland, 1981: 5). In this industrial period, youthful leisure pursuits routinely involved street activity (King, 1987: 144), alcohol and football (Damer, 1990). Indeed, it was during this time that spectator sports, particularly football, became popularized, designed 'to meet the needs of large urban populations with limited time and money and a new legal right to a free Saturday afternoon' (Jephcott, 1967: 14). In the 1920s and 1930s, however, Glasgow lost much of its industry, and with it the dubious honour of being 'Second City of Empire' (Maver, 2000: 204). By the time of Jephcott's study, in the midst of post-war affluence and full employment, the range of leisure opportunities afforded to young people in Glasgow had expanded significantly. Jephcott's could proclaim with confidence that 'the great majority of young people make the vital transition from school to work at 15' (Jephcott, 1967: 3). Dennistoun's close proximity to the city centre meant that

young people were well catered for in terms of commercial leisure, with three cinemas in walking distance and numerous local pubs and cafes (Jephcott, 1967).

Yet there were signs, even then, that things were changing, with the closure of a dance hall and three cinemas in the area in the early 1960s. These changes presaged a significant shift in Glasgow's economy, away from industry and towards a new service economy rooted in retail and tourism. While this process of rebranding created new jobs and economic investment—Glasgow is 'regularly distinguished as a successful model of place-marketing and urban entrepreneurialism' (MacLeod, 2002: 603)—there are many who argue that this shift came at great cost (Danson and Mooney, 1998: 218). As Maver (2000: 203) notes, in spite of successive efforts at regeneration and economic restructuring, 'the scale of Glasgow's structural defects [has] proved impossible to overcome'. Today, Glasgow has the highest rate of youth unemployment in Scotland, and one of the highest figures in the UK for young people 'not in employment, education or training' (Hudson et al., 2012). Reflecting the broader trend towards precarity in youth labour markets, the shift to a service-based economy has created jobs that are 'generally of a much lower quality—in terms of pay, job security and job satisfaction—than those lost in traditional manufacturing activities' (Cumbers et al., 2009: 2). This disproportionately affects young men, especially those not going on to higher education, for whom the norm has become 'a low wage and casualised work environment or an unregulated and degraded training system' (ibid.: 3).

The move to a service economy has also been accompanied by a decline in full-time work. Difficulties brought on by unemployment and underemployment were a prominent theme in focus group discussions with young people. Interestingly, it was clear that manual work remained prominent in the work-based dispositions of many of the young men in our study. Despite this, they found themselves stuck in the 'churn' (MacDonald and Marsh, 2005; Shildrick et al., 2010) between part-time work and unemployment. For those young people who were unemployed at the time of interview (predominantly young men), the search for work dominated discussion—and had important implications in terms of their identities and activities. As one participant commented:

If you say, 'I'm not working, I'm unemployed', people look at you as if you're a piece of shit on their shoe... you wait 20 minutes in there, you get up, they shout your name, straight in, sign the bit of paper, look at the machine and do whatever it is you need to do so your money will go through, and then they say 'see you next time, you'll get your money on Friday'. So you just walk back up and get the bus. (Young man, 23 years, Glasgow focus group 7)

Patterns of unemployment and underemployment had clear consequences for young people's leisure. For some participants, 'free' time was viewed as something of a curse—spent as it was in a constant round of searches for work. As one young man put it: '90% of my free time is work related and job hunting.' 'Leisure', for this group, represented commercial and structured activities that were outside of their reach. Whereas in the 1960s, Jephcott (1967) found that much of young people's leisure time was spent 'hanging out' in public space, or going to local cafés, cinemas and dance halls, the young people in the contemporary study reported that they spent most time in private space—with lack of money cited as one of the key barriers to

participation: 'Everything is money nowadays, so if you are thinking about going oot (out) on a night, if you are thinking about just hanging out, you need money' (Shildrick and MacDonald, 2006).

As Fraser (2015) has argued, precarious working environments, expensive leisure options and too much 'free' time are implicated in the reproduction of street-based leisure activities in Glasgow. For young male participants in particular, these activities demonstrated marked continuities with leisure habits from previous era, characterized as a 'street habitus' revolving around alcohol, football and street culture. Options were by and large confined to home or on the streets, as one participant recounted:

I've still got pals at 21/22 that still, I wouldnae say hang about the streets but they'll still go oot, get drunk, maybe go up like up a side street, up a lane. They'll stand there and drink and a' that. They'll put up wi' the polis and a' that. But at the weekends noo I'll just sit wi' my uncle and get a couple of drinks, as I say, watch Sky Sports News, play a game of Tiger Woods on the PlayStation... 'Cause if you go doon that road all your life you're just going to be stuck just sitting drinking every day. Maybe taking drugs and a' that. You're just going to be stuck in that same lifestyle. That's just not who I want to be. (Young man, 22 years, Glasgow focus group 7)

While this street-based activity was largely male dominated, some young women did participate, particularly during their mid-teens, as part of a larger mixed gender group. In general, however, young women considered hanging about in public space to be 'dangerous', leisure wise, and private space to be 'safe'. As in other research (Batchelor et al., 2001), the threat posed by public space was largely defined as one of sexual violence, although some young women also identified risk to reputation. For both young men and women, however, one consequence of their relative immobility was a strong identification with the local area. These localized networks played an important role in their leisure choices, insofar as participants tended not to consider opportunities beyond their immediate area, or which were different from those engaged in by local peers. As one young woman commented, 'I like staying here and I would not move... It would feel weird going somewhere else. This is just what I know.' For virtually all participants, the converse of their spatial identification was territoriality and the threat of violence. Younger respondents recounted examples of activities or facilities that they could not access in neighbouring areas due to the threat of violence; older respondents, many of whom were newer inhabitants, identified specific pubs that they would avoid due to a reputation for 'trouble' (Jephcott, 1967: 139). Such activities have a clear resonance with the street-based leisure of earlier generations (Fraser, 2015) while also exhibiting a tension with the current economic milieu (Nayak, 2006).

In this context, it is notable that the East End of Glasgow has seen repeated efforts to 'regenerate' public spaces (Paton et al., 2012), most recently in the hosting of the Commonwealth Games in 2014. In a pattern similar to that of mega-events elsewhere, this process involved the colonization of the 'new urban frontier' (Gray and Mooney, 2011)—in the neighbouring district of Dalmarnock, for example, public housing and derelict ground were cleared to make way for Games-related buildings and infrastructure. In the run up to and during the Games, these sites were closed off to local residents via the erection of 8-foot high security fences. While several participants were positive about the role of the Games in their everyday lives—some had

gained part-time work or volunteering experience, while others enjoyed free tickets or improved transport links—there were mixed feelings about its legacy. Some, for example, had had apprenticeships on Commonwealth Games-related construction projects, but ‘got paid off half way through’. In the following excerpt, a group of young men in their early 20s discuss the negative legacy they saw from the Games:

LW: Did anyone go to anything at the Games?

Dylan: No, not interested.

Tony: I found it was shocking that the areas, in terms of where the velodrome and that is, they were told they had a curfew and a’ that, you had to be in by ten o’clock at night, ye had to have passes to get in your hoose. What’s this you’re living in a concentration camp for 2 weeks!

Rylan: And their like, ‘Oh Glasgow’s great, oh look at this wee bit over here’. Don’t look at all the weans running about in their nappies and a’ that, look at that stadium and ‘Isn’t that beautiful’.

Dylan: It’s funny, when you actually put a substantial investment in because the whole world’s gonna be watching. Where that when people actually need it...

Tony: Who needs a big velodrome? Let’s be honest, who needs it? (Glasgow focus group 7)

The Commonwealth Games, in this sense, represents a clear symbol of the shifts in Glasgow’s place in the world, and the impact of this urban history on young people’s work and leisure. Where Glasgow once benefited from the economic heft of the British Empire, the city must compete on a more even playing field with other world cities. While globalized processes of work-based precarity, leisure fragmentation and urban regeneration have doubtlessly been felt by young people in Dennistoun, the impact has been perhaps less significant and generalized as might be anticipated. Work and leisure-based habits, reproduced through a relative stability in the local community, demonstrate a deep layer of sedimented history that is not easily amenable to short-run alteration.

Hong Kong: From ‘Barren Rock’ to Asian Global City

Hong Kong’s history, like Glasgow’s, is intimately bound up with the politics of the Empire. As Carroll (2011) documents, Hong Kong was seized by force from Chinese sovereignty during the Opium Wars in the nineteenth century, a trading entrepot designed to consolidate British strategic interests in the Pearl River Delta. The British government of the time was scathing of its prospects, with Lord Palmerston famously describing the territory as a ‘barren rock with nary a house upon it’. Established as a colony in 1841, with further cessation of land in 1898, the territory was for the majority of the twenty-first century governed according to English law, administrative bureaucracy and custom. In 1966 and 1967, against a backdrop of unrest during the Cultural Revolution in China, Hong Kong saw a series of riots. As Cheung argues, these emerged from extreme inequalities of wealth alongside a lack of social provision, weakness of trade unions and a 60–70-hour working week (Cheung, 2009). In the aftermath of these riots, a series of reforms were introduced,

in the form of the 'Four Pillars' of housing, education, health and social services (Adorjan and Chui, 2013; McLaughlin, 1993).

Jephcott's fieldwork was conducted in the hiatus between the 1967 youth riots and this programme of reforms. In the study, young people were reported as being committed to work, with leisure very peripheral. In her report, Jephcott (1971) noted the ongoing importance of Confucian values of filial piety, alongside a manifest need to earn in a manufacture-based economy. In this period, Hong Kong's economy began to flourish, with flexible manufacturing carried out in the private spaces of public housing.³ The leisure lives of young people in Hong Kong were therefore very restricted, linked to long working hours, a shortage of housing and the lack of availability of open space. Whereas young people in Glasgow were increasingly viewed as a 'threat', in Hong Kong they were regarded as a resource, spending much of their time under the supervision of older adults, at home looking after siblings or in education or work, contributing to the family income. As Jephcott (1971: 34) puts it, 'Hong Kong is essentially a society that as yet has little use for the pleasurable aspects of leisure. It believes in hard work and makes few concessions to childhood or youth.' Hours of employment were long, with children aged 14 working for up to 8 hours a day, 6 days a week. Despite these long hours, young people still found some limited time for leisure, with an emphasis on those activities that offered possibilities for self-improvement ('that could be later turned into cash' [ibid.]). Alternative sources of leisure were to be found in public space, as a result of extremely cramped living conditions, where a majority of young people's free time was spent 'strolling about the streets' (ibid.), not unlike some of their Glasgow peers.

In the contemporary fieldwork, the values of hard work, education and self-reliance continued to predominate. A common theme in focus group discussion was the importance of education, with private tuition being a popular use of 'free' time. Participants would discuss spending up to 9 hours per day studying for important examinations, talking of going 'really crazy' and studying 'super hard'. In the following, a group of teenagers discuss the impact of this workload on their time and aspirations:

LL: Seems that the studying atmosphere in Hong Kong is quite harsh nowadays. Do you have great pressure in study?

Connie: I think so.

LL: Can you explain a bit?

Connie: Because... Afraid of not catching up well with the study progress. That creates a lot of pressure already. Because... We need to get into university.

LL: Getting into university is very important?

Eddie: There are a lot of university students nowadays... If you cannot get into university, how can you compete with others?

Connie: Yes... The competition.

LL: All of you agree with this? Or anyone disagree? Just like Li Ka Shing who did not receive university education but can be very rich?

Connie: But that era has passed already. We cannot build our family by making plastic flowers. (Hong Kong focus group 3)

This hyper-competitiveness for educational places was keenly felt by participants, with corresponding constraints on their leisure time. For those unable to attain high examination scores and go on to further education, the options were severely curtailed. As in Glasgow, for some, the streets become a space in which some degree of autonomy could be achieved—the so-called ‘young night drifters’ who have no private space, and so increasingly use time to create freedom (Groves et al., 2011). For others, a retreat into private space was an alternative route. Like the *hikikomori* phenomenon in Japan, our study uncovered increasing concern over young people becoming socially withdrawn and spending long periods of time in their bedrooms. As one young woman commented, ‘I have a secondary school who hasn’t stepped out of the flat for four years already!’ Another group talked about so-called ‘secluded teenager’ (隱蔽青年) who stayed at home and played computer games all day. The theme of isolation and exclusion was also prominent in discussions beyond these cases. The estate itself, Yat Tung, is geographically removed from the rest of the city, nestled amid a mountainous natural landscape. As a result, Yat Tung was referred to using the phrase ‘Sai Ngoi To Yuen’ (世外桃園)—the phrase comes from a famous Chinese poem and means a place for taking refuge, a retreat away from the turmoil of the world. However, it was also used by participants to denote a negative attitude towards the area from government authorities—less a retreat than an exile. As one young woman commented, making reference to the estate’s origins near the airport:

That’s the original design. I mean the original design of Yat Tung is to set Yat Tung apart from other areas. That’s at the very beginning, when they built the airport...That’s the reason why they built Yat Tung Estate. It’s a large public housing estate to provide low skill labour to the airport. (Hong Kong, focus group 4)

Several of our interviewees had part-time jobs in the airport, which operated a recruitment booth nearby. For many, however, their mobility was restricted to the housing estate, local shopping mall and work in the airport. These mobilities were further limited by financial constraints—entry into the local cinemas and activities was too expensive for many. Crucially, however, while there was some evidence of pride in being an ‘estate boy’ or ‘estate girl’—as well as in involvement with local triad societies—the street culture of Yat Tung was very different to that of Dennistoun. Street drinking was almost non-existent, and violence rare—though some place attachment was in evidence, this was neither as fierce nor as clearly bounded as for young people in Glasgow. This in part reflects the relative brevity of Yat Tung’s history and that of public housing in Hong Kong more broadly—there is far less stability and intergenerational continuity in communities, with a corresponding dearth of community organizations.

There were, however, clear parallels in the experience of economic, spatial and cultural exclusion felt by young people in both communities. In a similar way to their Glasgow counterparts being priced out of commercial leisure activities, young people in Yat Tung were marginalized by the tourist sites on their doorstep. Though several of Hong Kong’s foremost tourist attractions were visible from the estate, young people felt they were ‘not for people like us’. In the context of these changes, young people in Yat Tung felt excluded and powerless. In the following excerpt, a group of young people discuss the impact of this focus on tourists:

LL: Do you all walk around or shop in Citygate?

Sue: Yes in the past, but not now.

LL: Why?

Sue: Because the outlet is not for 'normal' people to do shopping.

LL: Then for what people?

CK: It's occupied by others.

(Hong Kong, focus group 4)

The isolation of the estate in many ways represents a concrete manifestation of the changing urban development and economic strategy of Hong Kong. In a significant shift from the 1960s, Hong Kong now represents the world's eleventh biggest trading economy and sixth biggest foreign exchange market, benefiting from a 'regional and global network of economic ties via organizational and personal linkages through Chinese networks' (Chiu and Lui, 2009: 3). Like Scotland, Hong Kong has undergone substantial sociopolitical and economic changes since this time. This economic growth has been buttressed by a tightly regulated pattern of social regulation in which familial reliance has remained prominent—what McLaughlin has termed the 'ethic of self-reliance and commitment to work' (McLaughlin, 1993: 122)—where influences from both Europe and China hybridize and meld (Sassen, 2001). Hong Kong has developed into a mature a 'Chinese Global City' held out as an exemplar of *laissez-faire* economics.

In this context, a series of large-scale infrastructure projects have been implemented, designed to bring Hong Kong closer to China, both economically and culturally. A bridge linking Hong Kong to Macau and Shenzhen was being built close to Yat Tung during the period of fieldwork, and tourism targeting mainland Chinese visitors has become big business. For young people in Yat Tung, while Hong Kong's social and spatial landscape has been developing apace, their lives have been by and large disconnected from this progress. As one young woman reflected, 'It's just like you are not living in your own place because there are many people passing by the door of your home every day.' As a result, they find themselves in a situation of geographical isolation and spatial constraint despite being in close proximity to the airport of a rapidly globalizing city.

Concluding Discussion

This article has sought to explore youth leisure and social change through the analytical frame of the city, drawing on Sassen's (2007) theorization of the city as a strategic site for understanding transnational and translocal social trends, alongside Bourdieu's (1984) concept of *habitus* to explain the ongoing significance of embedded, place-based habits and dispositions. Utilizing both historical and contemporary data, the article has demonstrated that despite parallels in the impact of global forces on the structure of everyday life and work, young people's leisure habits in Glasgow and Hong Kong remain rooted in the fates and fortunes of their respective cities and the distinctive social, spatial and cultural arrangements that have emerged from

these historical processes. To make sense of youthful responses to globalization, we contend, requires a careful appreciation of the generative historical structures through which young people's approach to work and leisure is constituted.

Since Jephcott's original studies, both Glasgow and Hong Kong have evolved into flexible, advanced economies, reconfigured around service industries from traditional bases in manufacture. In both contexts, however, there have been a great many young people who have been left behind by these transformations. The work that was available for young people without an education in the 1960s—in local manufacturing, food preparation and labour—has evaporated, replaced by work in the service economy of airport retail and shopping malls. Many of these changes are the result of the global financial crisis and its aftermath, alongside the restructuring of the labour market and demand for more educated, flexible workforce (Standing, 2011), with stable manufacturing industries increasingly giving way to insecure and precarious employment. At the same time, in the context of the growth of consumer capitalism, there has been an increasing convergence in the leisure opportunities available to young people in both contexts. Global brands of clothing, technology and retail alongside the growth of new mobile technologies have created greater comparability than during the 1960s. Despite these apparent convergences, however, it is clear that cultural context and urban history remain an important aspect of youthful adaptation to global trends. It is therefore important to excavate the experiences of globalization as they are articulated at a local level.

In both Glasgow and Hong Kong, place has remained a central driver of leisure participation, particularly amongst those young people for whom opportunities for economic and social mobility are limited.⁴ The leisure lives of young people in our study were primarily influenced by local and home-based connections, with clear historical parallels with Jephcott's findings and beyond. In both cities, in the context of limited low-cost or free recreation spaces, young people with limited incomes could not afford to access commercial venues and tended to spend their time close to home, on the streets or, increasingly, retreating indoors. Where processes of globalization were felt, they tended to impact on young people's spatial mobility, in the form of privatization of public space or commercialization of leisure. The feeling that certain spaces were 'not for us' was articulated by focus group participants across both sites, particularly when referring to new, regeneration-led leisure and tourism sites. Despite these similarities, however, it was clear that certain embedded historical traits—in Glasgow, towards 'risky' street-based leisure, in Hong Kong, towards study as a driver of leisure time—remained distinctive. We contend that these responses to comparable economic trends result from a deep-seated, place-based habitus that is rooted in the generative historical structures of these two differing urban locales.

Notes

1. A detailed description of the research design is available on the '(Re)Imagining Youth' website: www.reimaginingyouth.wordpress.com
2. The study was approved by the College of Social Sciences Ethics Committee at the University of Glasgow and the Human Research Ethics Committee for Non-Clinical Faculties at the University of Hong Kong.

3. As Chiu and Lui (2009) argue, industriousness such as this formed a critical foundation in the economic development of Hong Kong in the latter decades of the twentieth century.
4. This emphasis on place is not intended to dismiss the importance of new forms of online interaction and engagement that have emerged in recent years. Though not discussed here, the '(Re)Imagining Youth' findings point to the significance of social media for circumventing traditional place-based inequalities (see Nilan and Feixa, 2006; Woodman and Wyn, 2014).

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