

Week 1 Summary

- The existence of a youth population in society is not just a function of biology, if it were. All societies would be the same (Bessant 1998).
- Expected to break the rules – but also, not really to be trusted.
- In non-Western tradition-based cultures a gap between childhood and adulthood was non-existent.
 - o In some cultures, puberty marked the start of adulthood rather than the beginning of the stage we currently refer to as youth.
- Decision making is pragmatic and based on imperfect knowledge, with the risks and responsibilities resting on individuals.
- If youth is a state of becoming, adulthood is the arrival.
- Theory is necessary because we cannot avoid drawing assumptions to create order, but order is indefinable, because theoretical work is never finished, findings are never absolute and research is imperfect.
- Modernity:
 - o First Modernity: Nation-state societies that exist in a clear territorial sense and exercise control over their dominions.
 - o Second Modernity: Involved the fragmentation of collective ways of life based on the nation state and, through globalising processes, on the undermining of the possibilities for nation states to control social conditions (EG: Provide for full employment).
- Individualisation: a process that makes risky social processes and structures invisible and vests individuals with the responsibility for bearing these risks.
- History:
 - o Concept of childhood as a socially distinct category developed sometime during the seventeenth century.
 - Only in the upper classes, where young people were expected to spend time being educated.
 - Education has now become a way of distinguishing between youth and adult.
 - o Children fortunate to make it past the age of 6 or 7 were viewed as miniature adults.
 - Tried in the same courts and afforded the same sanctions as adults.
 - o Major social changes throughout the 19th century forced society to re-examine the concept of childhood and what it meant regarding the expectations and treatment of children.
 - o The growing public concern over the problem behaviours exhibited by children in the industrial revolution led to the social invention of the concept adolescence – emerged as a new interim social status between children and adulthood.
 - o 1950s: Young people as social deviants.
 - o Prior to industrial revolution, children were seen as property.
 - Not so emotionally connected.
 - Fear connection – many children died before the age of 4.
 - o Change through 19th century – re-examine concept of childhood.
 - Children out of factories, onto streets = Juvenile delinquent came about.
- Youth: Culturally constructed category with different meanings in different cultures and historical times (Philippe Aries (1962).
 - o Stands between childhood and adulthood.
 - o Broader than adolescence.
 - o Definition of young people does not have a single simple universal definition (Cohen 1997); it can change, dependent upon wider developments taking place in society (Pearson 1983).
 - o How we treat our young people depends on how ideas about young people have developed within that society.
 - o Constructed differently across time and between societies.
 - o Relational stage (Wyn and White 1997).

- Very much individuals in their own right, developing through a sequence of critical transitions from childhood to adult life (Mudaly 1999).
- Youthfulness is excess; it is an implicit or incipient disorder; for society it is a problem that requires handling, control, cooperation or channelling in socially approved directions (Berger).
- Complaints of youth is every present throughout society.
- Adolescence:
 - Marked by a 'lack of emotional steadiness, violent impulses, and unreasonable conduct', yet, he felt this stage was one of maturation where youth could be shaped and moulded into responsible adults (Stanley G Hall).
 - A stormy period of internal conflict, when young people should be protected from adult temptation and responsibilities (Hall 1904).
 - Seen as essentially traumatic.
 - A period when psychosexual conflicts could cause emotional upheaval, inconsistent behaviour and vulnerability to deviant activity (Sigmund Freud).
 - Susceptible to worldly temptations and therefore, had to be protected from the adult world, ideally in high school.
- Young People: Those up to the age of 18 (UN Definition).
 - Government policies consider youth to be from 13 to 25 (Wyn and White 1997).
 - Seen as being less than adult and as having no real place except at some time in the future when they become 'real people'.
 - No accorded full human status within society (Davies and Banks).
- Teenager: Emerged in the late 1940s and was reinforced through Western Consumer cultures.
 - Emerged post WWII.
 - Encouraged to buy into popular culture.
 - Determination to establish separate identities and to demonstrate their independence from their parents' world often brands them as potential trouble makers in the public mind.