MSc Dissertation

Public Policy

The role of youth work in advancing the political literacy of young people in Scotland

August 2020

University of Edinburgh

THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
School of Social and Political Science

Abstract

The study examines the role of youth work in advancing the political literacy of young people in Scotland. It seeks to understand the benefits and the challenges of youth programmes and policies that aim for advancement of political literacy. Accordingly, it takes into consideration the angle of youth-workers in Scotland. In order to achieve that, it undertakes a documentary analysis of the current youth work policies and primary data analysis. The documentary analysis aims to give the reader insight into the expectations set by the policymakers and society about the required outcomes regarding political literacy. Accordingly, it conducts primary data collection in the form of semi-structured interviews with youth workers in Scotland. The purpose of conducting primary data collection is to gather first-handed expertise and opinions on the implemented programmes addressing political literacy. In doing so, the study aims to frame the broad perception and recognition of the impact youth workers have on topics as crucial as political literacy for young people in Scotland.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my supervisor Helen Packwood for the support and constructive guidance through the process of writing the master dissertation in these challenging times. I would like to express gratitude to Jenni Snell, Sarah Robertson, and the YouthLink Scotland staff for the opportunity to conduct this research within the organisation, for the support in the process and the access to youth workers and youth organisations in Scotland. I also want to thank The Foreign and Commonwealth Office for the Chevening scholarship and the unique opportunity to study at the University of Edinburgh.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for their incredible support and patience during this intense and challenging year of masters in the United Kingdom under the most unpredictable circumstances.

List of figures

List of tables

Abbreviations

EU – European Union

UN – United Nations

YW – Youth Worker

YLS – YouthLink Scotland

NYWS – National Youth Work Strategy

CfE – Curriculum for Excellence

Table of Content

Chapter 1

Introduction

Young people are becoming the mark of many civil movements of the 21st century. BlackLivesMatter (BLM) movement, #MeToo Campaign, the Arabic Spring, Fridays For Future are just a couple of examples. In the highlight of the movements are young people who are the instigators and the supporting body. (Wray-Lake, 2019). On the other side, voting pools subsequently show low numbers of young voters between 18-29. (O'Toole, 2003). The context leads to questioning the different incentives that, on one side, encourage young people participation in civil movements like BLM or #MeToo, but do not empower them to vote. Often it is said youth is the indicator for the future, and their presence or absence at significant civil events is significant. Because of that, their incentives, interests, or contribution to society are discussed and analysed in different studies.

Adolescence is the period when young people learn how to influence the society. (Jans, 2002). Certain authors of the 21st century as Viola B. Georgi (2008) and Furlong and Cartmel (2007) have described young people as 'citizens in the making' by which, in a great sense, diminishes their significance during their youth. On the other hand, other authors like K. Badlan (2016) have said that knowing youth's views constructs the future lens. This view emphasizes the importance of building strong youth that will eventually turn into responsible and civically engaged adults. A precondition of seeing young people as frontrunners in the society is the level of political literacy they have and its usage in the current processes and events. Young people have to be politically literate to have a stance or opinion on civil matters.

Youth work has been addressing social issues from the youth perspectives since its first days, and it is fundamental in enabling politically literate youth. For illustration, the EU considers ‘Space and Participation for All’ as one of the eleven youth goals. (EU, 2018), while the EU Youth Strategy 2010-2018 had ‘Participation’ and ‘Education and Training’ as key initiatives for improvement. Furthermore, the UN in its World Programme for Youth introduces ‘Full and effective participation of youth in the life of society in decision-making' as a priority area. (UN, 2020). These programmes aim towards better informed and engaged youth. Despite the formal ways of engaging young people, these supranational organisations are leaning on the youth organisations as implementors of these programmes.

Youth Work has been one of the key stakeholders in the Scottish third sector since its establishment early in the 19th century. It has developed mainly as a response to the disproportional equality in Scotland. (Sercombe, 2014) During the years, the youth workers have been addressing different issues and have developed a sector with its own national agency and widely recognised policies. As the society evolved, the problems and issues addressed by the youth work sector have been changing according to their relevance in the present. Scotland is among small numbers of countries that have their own National Youth Work Strategy. (Dunne et. al. 2004:98). Due to the increased number of activities, policymakers are looking into 'what works' and the benefits of these initiatives. In Scotland, evidence-based youth work is a priority area which allows the policymakers and practitioners to examine the benefits and downsides of the programmes. (McGregor, 2015)

The challenge arises when youth workers cannot measure the impact of the programmes, for topics as political literacy. The reason behind this challenge lies in the nature of the topic. The programmes addressing political literacy advancement consist of knowledge and engagement in new forms and politics which are hardly measurable according to the old conventional indicators. Consequently, youth workers lack evidence of their work and lose recognition within the society. *Therefore, the study seeks to examine the possible benefits and challenges of youth work practice and the current policies in place tackling advancement of political literacy from the angle of youth-workers*. The reader will delve into the expectations from youth workers in theory and how society perceives them, compared to their practices and the arising difficulties in measuring political literacy programmes' impact. That being said, the research topic will discuss three main areas: 1) the possible benefits of youth work programmes and policies addressing political literacy in Scotland, 2) the recognition of their practice by policymakers and institutions 3) the challenges arising in the work of improving political literacy.

The literature draws on different authors who discuss the political engagement and/or knowledge of young people. Firstly, the literature review will explore the different approaches to political literacy. The purpose of the first part of the review is to define the comprehensive programmes and activities that could be considered an advancement of political literacy. The literature suggests that there is more than one perception of political literacy of young people. (Fox, 2015) Additionally, the perceptions of political literacy have become more complicated with the rise of new politics and radically unpolitical youth. Correspondingly, the literature review will analyse the emergence of evidence-based youth work and its challenges in these

programmes. The importance of youth work in engaging and informing young people has been recognized in various articles. Several studies have suggested a significant correlation between young people political engagement and their voluntary participation in youth organisations. However, few writers have focused on youth work's direct impact on young people's political literacy. Clearly, it becomes under-researched because political literacy is 'something that youth workers just do,' yet policymakers ask for evidence of youth programmes' outcomes. (Fyfe et al., 2018) Finally, a part of the literature will give an overview of the Scottish policy context, which will be additionally discussed in the document review.

This study will undertake documents review and primary data collection in the form of semi-structured interviews with youth workers. These interviews will give specific insight from experts working in the field. Their experience and expertise are considered as first-handed and relevant for the topic. In a qualitative content analysis, the interviewees' responses will be analysed in relation to the literature and Scotland's current policies. It is expected to detect the critical gaps between the practice and the theory in that particular way.

This study provides an exciting opportunity to advance our knowledge of the impact of youth workers' jobs on political literacy. Determining the impact will increase youth work recognition by other sectors. This output may lead to additional funding for their activities and broader space for the influence that youth workers have over young people's lives.

The reader should bear in mind that the study will only examine the angle of youth workers while acknowledging that young people's angle is as much as relevant. Unfortunately, the time constraints and limited opportunities due to the current pandemic situation did not allow the author to reach out to young people. All primary data has been collected on digital platforms in online interviews under cooperation with the partner-organisation - YouthLink Scotland. (YLS) As the interviews are taking only the angle of youth workers, the study could fall on the level of bias. In order to avoid this scenario, the author will relate the arguments of the interviewees with the literature. This approach has limitations on its own, ones which will be discussed in Chapter 3. On the other side, the research strengths are the experience and opinion of youth workers who are the ones working on the spot, directly with young people and policymakers or other sectors simultaneously.

This study's key terms are young people, youth work, policies, programmes, and political literacy. **Young people**, according to the Scottish definition, are people aged 11-24. (Children and Young People Act, 2014). **Youth work** is a recognised educational practice

based on the participants' voluntary approach, which builds on where young people recognise them as partners in the learning process. (YLS, 2005). **Policies** refer to refers to a rule or plan of action, especially an official one adopted and followed by a group, organization, or government. (Cairney, 2012) **Programmes** reflect a set of related measures or activities. **Political literacy** refers to the capability to understand political processes or/and be politically engaged. (Chapter 2)

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The following chapter will explore the studies and current policies related to the topic of the role of youth work in advancing the political literacy of young people in Scotland. For a thorough analysis, the chapter will summarize the studies in three sections. The first part will analyse the theories and approaches of the concept of political literacy of young people, while the second part will discuss the literature on youth work and challenges in measuring the impact of the sector of programmes for advancing political literacy. A third, small part will be dedicated to frame the youth policy context in Scotland.

2.1. Incentives of young people's citizenship practice

Young people are considered to be politically inactive compared to older generations of their age. It is widely accepted that young people are less politically involved than any other age group, and the voting percentage favours these opinions. As young people represent a projection of one society's future, their disengagement becomes an issue that many authors and studies are analysing.

Authors, as Butt and Curtice (2010), Zengotita (2005:129), Whitehouse, and Bloom (2015) documented instances of declining voter engagement, which are given alongside commonly held notions of apathy or disinterest associated with young people and politics across western democracies. Pirie and Worcester (1998), for instance, claim that the `Millennial Generation' of young people who reached the age of twenty-one just before or after the turn of the millennium are less involved in politics than the equivalent age group was thirty years ago, less likely to vote in national or local elections than older people now or young people thirty years ago, and have little knowledge of politics at local, national or European levels. They conclude that this generation is an `*apolitical generation.*' (1998:10) In general, voter turnout and conventional politics have often been used as an indicator for defining the level of political involvement of one generation. Numerous studies that use this as an indicator of young people's involvement usually conclude that young people are apathetic or apolitical and have no general interest in politics. (i.e., Butt and Curtice, 2010, Pirie and Worcester 1998, Karen Badlar (2016)). These studies echo long-standing research suggesting that young people are mostly disengaged from electoral politics, among which are the studies of Russell et al.

2002; Sloam 2007; Henn and Foard 2014; Furlong and Cartmel 2012 and Manning and Edwards 2014 and Power Commission 2006.

On the other side, several authors critic the idea of conventional politics (Lailiyah, 2018) and using old indicators as voter turnout to describe young people political literacy nowadays. In 'The politics of Participation,' Hilkes (2017) argues that young people do not vote from the simple reason of not having policies addressing their issues. He recalls Elizabeth Ellsworth in her seminal 1989 critique of critical pedagogy: "empowerment for what?" (1989:307)—or, in this case, "engagement for what?" (Hilkes, 2017:166). The limitations of the opinion "if you do not vote, you do not complain" are explored in different studies that suggest that in the end, young people are not apathetic; instead, they are left out of the current political environment. If one takes, for example, the Scottish referendum for independence in 2016, it is visible that the general opinion that young people are not interested and do not vote for issues that matter to them is incorrect. At the Scottish Referendum, 65% of the young generation aged 16-18 voted at the polls. Under-18-year-olds showed similar average levels of political interest to adults. They were not merely following their parents' lead (over 40% held a different view on the referendum question than a parent who was also interviewed) and engaged with a wide range of diverse media and information sources. (Baxter et al., 2015:1)

As an example of the practice of civil rights, the world is witnessing increased social movement tackling racism (BLM), sexual abuse (#MeToo Movement), inequality (LGBTQ+ Movements), or climate change (Fridays For Future). (Wray-Lake, 2019) The frontrunners of these movements are young people who use tools that are not characteristic of conventional politics, such as the social media platforms. The notion that young adults are straightforwardly apathetic is, by and large, refuted by an ever-growing body of evidence suggesting that young people are – more accurately – actively seeking alternative forms of political participation. (Hilkes, 2017:167) The question remains: What makes young people engage in specific issues, but remain silent for conventional politics?

Rye Farthing (2010) presents an interesting and fresh view on the binary perception of engagement. According to her, both models of 'the former: apolitical harbingers of an incipient 'crisis of democracy' and the latter model of young people as the authors of sophisticated new forms of politics, are limited and fail to comprehend youth political participation. Farthing (2010) discusses that the old conventional politics seem to frame young people as disengaged according to conditions set by the adults. Controversially, policymakers, who are mostly adults,

do not ease the conditions for young people to enter politics or more easily engage. (ex. Not lowering voting age).

On the contrary, the latter model assumes that young people engage in new types of politics, however, does not acknowledge that young people do not just engage in new politics, but also reject the conventional ones. The author draws on Beck (2001) study and concludes that today's young people are *radically unpolitical. (Farthing, 2010:188)* This term describes a youth's agenda, which is not directed towards state legislation change which leads to not-voting, but instead put their efforts in non-state actors, international and supranational actors. Farthing (2010) would argue that the youth is issue-oriented; however, it does not seek state change. Instead, it is *living the change* on the local level or creates its *micro-politics.*

This study is relevant in discussing how society perceives political literacy, especially if we consider the youth as radically unpolitical. That would mean that young people are politically literate; however, they choose to use their literacy in methods, unlike the conventional ones.

2.2. Different theories of political literacy

These opposed perceptions of young people engaged in politics construct a somewhat unclear definition of political literacy and whether young people who are not engaging in society are politically illiterate. Two fundamental theories analyse young people's political literacy (Cassel and Lo, 1997). The first one explores political literacy as a mixture of knowledge, awareness, and understanding of political processes or political literacy as a cognitive function. (Lailiyah, 2018) This narrowed approach limits the literacy only to being informed about the political surroundings. Another author who adds to this approach is Westholm (1990), who would define political literacy as '*basic concepts and facts that consists of the necessary conditions for comprehending the contents of a public debate*.' In the study 'Theories of Political Literacy' by Cassel and Lo (1997), it is said that this understanding of political literacy can be measured through by '*degree of political sophistication or voting turnout*.' (Cassel and Lo, 1997:318).

The other approach tends to view political literacy as a much broader concept, including not only political knowledge and understanding but also political behaviour - such as discussing politics with others, voting, joining community organisations, volunteering (Stuart, 2015). This view argues that anyone who participates in politics is demonstrating a degree of political literacy, and so we should not just limit our examination of it just to political

knowledge. Moreover, several scholars of this persuasion, such as Norris (2001) and Dalton (2013) argue that focussing on 'political knowledge' is exclusionary because of who gets to decide what constitutes 'political knowledge' (i.e., well-educated researchers, who are frequently middle class and male). Just because someone cannot, for example, name the Foreign Secretary or understand the electoral system, does not mean that they are not knowledgeable about political issues that affect their daily lives. Still, the critique of the second approach is noticeable (Stuart, 2015), and it suggests that this approach does not take into account how different people experience politics and do not consider that different young people face a variety of opportunities and privileges. That means that one should not mark a young person as political illiterate just because they have not voted at the elections, when instead they have been fighting locally for fuel poverty because they are living it. This assumption takes us back to Rye Farthing (2010) understanding of the youth as radically unpolitical youth who are living the politics on the micro or local level.

In the end, all these theories and approaches may increase confusion around political literacy. Therefore, the reader should have a broad perception of the definition of political literacy and how this thesis will analyse it in the following chapters. Badlan (2016) defines it as *is a cornerstone of this democratic process, how citizens take an interest, develop critical awareness, and engage in the 'public sphere".* Crick (2000:64) summarize political literacy *as a combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes developing each other and enforcing the other two.* He relates political literacy with the concept of citizenship as an overarching activity that reflects concepts as political literacy and political philosophy. Political literacy is more than the formal aspects of politics as voting, but instead understanding politics in relation to one's lives and those of their community. (Hart et al., 2007; Crick, 2000)

In the following chapter, the author will discuss and analyse political literacy as a combination of both approaches. That being said, the study will include every programme addressing participation, engagement, political information, or education as programmes that are advancing political literacy.

2.3. The impact of youth work on political literacy

Youth work has been a large part of civil society globally and is recognized by the UN, EU, national and local governments. In recent years, its rise in western democracies has been noticed when the EU has started increasing funding and space for youth projects (European Parliament, 2019). In the national, the EU or UN strategies are visible that promoting the

political engagement of young people is a priority area. Because of that, many studies examine the political engagement of young people in society with its benefits and downsides. Youth work engages youth in a learning process of societal issues and their role within it. It exists outside the traditional, formal educative institutions.

In order to define the incentives that encourage youth political presence, the literature devotes part in analysing the settings and the context that provides the empowerment factors. The focus on settings assumes that young people learn to be political in the contexts of their lives, and that variations in political development are determined partly by their environments (Flanagan, 2013). Flanagan is referring to Hart's definition (2007) of political literacy: "Political *literacy is more than the formal aspects of politics as voting, but instead understanding politics in relation to one's lives and those of their community*" (Hart, 2013:487). In order to engage or access a certain amount of political information, young people should feel close to the community they live in and feel like they can influence the society with their knowledge or engagement. Flanagan (2013) analyses that proximal contexts such as schools, community organizations, extracurricular activities, religious institutions, and cultural groups operate as mini politics that offer youth opportunities to belong to a community and develop an understanding of the rights and responsibilities that go with membership. Youth work, as Campbell (2009) describes, "*creates space for belonging and membership*." (Campbell, 2009:438) The sense of community was introduced by Sarason (1974), who defined it as ''the *perception of similarity with others, a recognized interdependence, a willingness to maintain such interdependence offering or making for others what is expected from us, the feeling to belong to a totally stable and reliable structure*'' (1974:174). The sense of belonging to a community happens from a young age; however, for the political literacy important part is the transition from young person to adult.

Marc Jans (2002) explores the process of transition from adolescence to adulthood. In the process, he explains that young people learn social values through the informal world. According to him, the learning process of influencing one society mostly happens in the informal world. Youth work comes here as the creator of social values, which enable young people to influence and take an active part in the society. In "The study on the social value of organisations," Duncan Holtom (2014) examines how youth organisations create their social impact. He explains that youth organisations generate social values through: Youth participation, Youth work in formal, non-formal and informal education, Experiences and

opportunities, Places and spaces for young people to meet and make significant social relationships and information, advice and guidance. (Holton, 2014:13)

Suppose one is simultaneously analysing the ways of creating social values through Flanagan's examination of the context that encourage activism among the youth. In that case, it is recognised that most of the tools that youth work uses are indicators for constructing social values, such as empowerment towards youth participation. On that point, specific authors, as Cicognani (2015) and Quintelier (2008) explore the correlation between being a member of an organisation and political engagement. Cicognani (2015) suggests the hypothesis that young people who are members of a community or youth organisation will have a higher level of sense of community, empowerment, and social well-being compared to those who do not participate or report any individual involvement. Quintelier (2008) explores the idea of voluntary membership, which allows young people to become socialized with political decision-making processes, develop politically relevant attitudes and acquire politically relevant skills. Both authors conclude that correlation exists between membership in a youth organisation and active citizen participation.

Although the benefits of community belonging and creating social values are discussed, there is a gap of knowledge on youth programmes and their direct impact on political literacy issues. (Wray-Lake, 2019:127) Baillergeau and Hoijtink (2010:6) lament the fact that 'there is limited use of knowledge grounded in practical experience in the past.' They (2010:13) argue that despite youth work existing for more than a century, there is 'amazingly little academic knowledge about youth work,' 'very little data' and a lack of knowledge about what youth workers did, with whom and with what outcomes in past policy contexts when 'more funding was available.' This, they conclude, is particularly problematic given the existence of various 'negative assessments regarding the efficacy of youth work' (2010:13).

Furthermore, drawing on Baillergeau and Hoijtink, another growing body of literature recognizes the difficulty of measuring youth work's impact. McGregor (2015), in the "Universal Youth Work Literature Review" (2015), states that organisations providing universal youth work often struggle to get funding and to be recognised as contributors to positive outcomes for young people. According to them this is due, in part, to the recent economic crisis and its consequences in policy but it is compounded by three factors: (1) a lack of conceptual clarity around youth work practice; (2) a lack of robust outcome measures that can be used to demonstrate the impact of youth work; (3) the inherent difficulty of measuring

subtle and so-called ‘soft’ outcomes, as compared to targeted work with a clearly defined purpose and more clearly definable outcomes. (McGregor, 2015:5)

Consequently, the policymakers introduced evidence-based youth work as a priority. On one side, evidence-based youth work makes the practice transferable in other settings, for other groups and for informing further research on ‘what works’. (Pantea, 2013:1). Admittedly, there is growing literature that suggests that evidence-based youth work introduces managerialist concerns for measurement and accountability into a sector that previously had operated in a more loosely regulated way. (Seymour et al. 2017:147) On the other side, Dunne et al. highlight that funding requirements primarily fuel evidence-based youth work'. (2014:76) Over the past five to ten years, the evidence suggests that the shift towards evidence-based youth work has been particularly pronounced not only in the UK but also in Germany, Ireland, and Finland (2014:76). Evidence-based theory asks the youth workers for proof of their successes without acknowledging hardly measurable topics. Referring back to the McGregor's (2015) political literacy fits into the subtle and soft-outcome description of hardly measurable programmes. Scott and Leask, (2020:8) would state that ‘participation is to be effective and meaningful; it needs to be understood as a process, not as an individual one-off event.'. Therefore, asking evidence for an outcome of a continuous process is complicated and quite often impossible.

2.4. Accessibility of youth work

Although youth work has impacted young people's participation and empowerment, there have been studies that have focused on the downsides of the youth sector. The representation of youth voices and interests in policy processes can be addressed at two levels of analysis. First of all, how democratic and participatory are organisations that represent youth in policy processes, and second, how participatory and genuine are democratic institutions' efforts to consult young people and their representatives. (Cammaerts, 2014:3). For the purposes of the topic, the section will explore only the first level of the analysis of Cammaerts – how democratic and participatory are the organisation which represents youth. By stating his argument, he acknowledges that youth organisations represent young people, but questions which part of the young population do they represent?

According to him, youth organisations take a somewhat elitist look and address only the young people who are already easy to access and have the opportunities and the privileges to participate in youth organisations. Regarding the context that encourages youth participation, Wray-Lake (2019) points out the different factors that impact political

engagement as the social capital and status and the social identities (racial, ethnic, gender, sex, social class). The literature provides enough evidence on the tremendous effect that social factors have on a variety of opportunities. Socioeconomically advantaged individuals are more likely to vote, contact representatives, work for campaigns, show political interest, and display political knowledge than their less-affluent counterparts (Schlozman, Verba, & Brady, 2012). Youth with more educated parents, who are White, and who have higher academic achievement report substantially more civic learning opportunities than their peers (Kahne & Middaugh, 2008). This civic inequality arises from underfunded, under-resourced schools that offer less civic education, and from neighbourhoods with fewer organizations and fewer civically engaged adults (Levinson, 2010). Thus, despite the known value of youth opportunities to practice becoming political, young people's swaths begin political development at a disadvantage. Young people are heavily influenced, if not determined and immobilized, by their social and political circumstances, but simultaneously, they live with the pressure that their identity has become a project, an event, fragmented, contingent, liquid and uncertain (Hughes et al., 2005: 5). Filip Coussee (2009), in the article “Empower the Powerful," compares the Belgium and UK youth work perception. He introduces the youth work paradox of *"youth work that works is not accessible, and accessible youth work does not work."* (2008:8). He concludes that for local policymakers, professional youth workers and researchers there was neither head nor tail to this vicious problem: youth work that was initially set up with the aim to engage with hard-to-reach, vulnerable youth in the end deepened social stratification, reinforced social dividing lines and isolated young people from adults and also from each 'other.' (Coussee, 2009) These findings shifted the focus from the efficiency question (how can we reach more young people and deliver more outcomes?) to the identity question (what is the significance of youth work in the life of young people?). (Coussee. 2009:432) Moreover, this question becomes highly relevant in discussing the topic of this study. Political literacy could not be perceived just as an outcome, but a learning process between a young person and the society. Suitably, political literacy does not fit in the efficiency question. Instead, it is meaningful only when it is related to each young person individually.

2.4.1. Required cooperation for success

In defining the role of youth work in the lives of the youth, often it gets compared to the educational system. Generally, education remains the primary source of informing, teaching, and preparing young people to transcend in the adulthood. (Pring, 2007) Citizenship education in schools has severe limitations because it is acting as a facilitator in the role of the

state with its "*potential" citizens, encouraging young people to contribute to an economic agenda"* (Aapola et al., 2005*).* Jans (2002) analyses the specific importance of youth work against the educational system by positioning three structuring dimensions of youth participation that youth organisations promote: challenge, capacity, and connection. Challenge refers to a topic seen as challenging, and young people want to devote to it; capacity is the feeling that they can make a difference with their effort and connection is seeking alliance and comfort and support in other humans, communities, and organisations. These three dimensions are often related to informal youth education rather than the formal way. Formal education mostly does not offer the chance to work on challenging issues, but it does create connections and builds young people's capacities in certain aspects. (Pring, 2007)

That being said, Jans (2002) but also Crick (2000) conclude that youth work cannot succeed on its own. In a significant sense, it must maintain social cohesion and partnership with the governments, the education facilities, and the communities. As seen in the literature, youth work has many advantages. However, it remains flawed in many aspects of its accessibility, funding, and sustainability. Youth work would no longer be seen as an educational practice in isolation, creating its theory, but as an example of an educational practice almost entirely removed from formal education, one that. Arguably would ultimately be more effective (Pring, 2007; Fairfield, 2011).

2.5. Scottish policy context

Since the devolution of the Scottish Parliament, a special place and work has been directed towards youth work in Scotland. Youth services across Scotland changed dramatically, and at an unprecedented pace. (YouthWiki, 2017) The devolution of discrete political powers from the UK Government to the Scottish government has resulted in a raft of national policy priorities that embrace the potential of youth work as well as set out expectations in terms of sector performance and measurable impact on the lives of young people (Fyfe, 2018:3).

2.5.1 Main actors of youth work governance in Scotland

The Scottish Government, Education Scotland, and YLS are the central bodies responsible for implementing the strategy. The 32 local authorities in Scotland are responsible for implementing government policy on youth work, following The Requirements for Community Learning and Development Regulations 2013. Youth work is delivered through partnership activity by local authorities working with third sector organisations. The Community Learning and Development Team supports the sector within Education Scotland,

YLS, and Youth Scotland. YLS is the national agency for youth work. It is a membership organisation representing more than 100 youth organisations across Scotland, both voluntary and statutory. In the strategic plan of YLS 2013-2018, the organisation addresses the need for more accessible youth work and the lack of recognition of youth work by other sectors.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This research explores the following topic "The role of the youth work in advancing political literacy of young people". This research was executed as a collaboration between the National Youth Work Agency - YLS and the sole researcher of the thesis. The research topic is based on the literature for political literacy and the main reports and experiences of youth workers in the field. The political literacy literature suggests that there is no single definition of what is considered the political literacy of young people. Therefore, it remains unresolved how one can measure the level of political literacy of young people. Different approaches explore the quantitative indicators of measurement, i.e., percentage of young people who voted or who are members of community organisation. However, the rise of evidence-based youth work demands additional methods of measuring the political literacy as it consists of activity which could not be limited to the old conventional indicators for measurement. The youth work sector becomes highly intercepted by the dilemmas of measuring political literacy. Youth workers have been addressing the political literacy of young people in almost every project, and they become scrutinized when they cannot provide evidence for their work.

The primary purpose of the study is to examine the benefits and challenges of youth work and the current policies in place tackling advancement of political literacy taking the angle of youth-workers. The literature suggests that youth work has positive implication on young people's engagement how fails to properly measure its impact. That may result in lack of recognition, funding and inclusion in the policymaking processes. Accordingly, it remains significant to discuss the possible benefits of the youth worker in delivering these programmes, measuring their impact, recognition, and the challenges. There are a couple of possible assumptions around the topic. The most apparent assumption around the topic is that youth workers just address and improve the political literacy of young people as part of their job. On one side, this assumption leads us to the emergence of evidence-based youth work, which seeks for indications of which programmes work, but on the other side, there is a lack of acknowledgement of the unmeasurable impact of programmes as political literacy.

3.1.1 Interdisciplinary approach

Interdisciplinary research means research between disciplines, referring to the interaction of disciplines with each other. (Keestra, et al., 2016). This study uses an

interdisciplinary approach as it addresses youth work concerning education and policymaking. As such, the study is not using a single theoretical framework, instead, it is positioning youth work in relation to other disciplines.

3.2. Research approach

3.2.1 Choice of methodology

The aim of the thesis is to explore how youth workers influence young people's political literacy on the individual level and their position within the society in Scotland. In order to obtain this analysis, the research will delve into the experiences and opinions of the youth workers. Their knowledge and expertise in the field adequately responds to the aim of the research. The research examines the included parties' experience, knowledge, and perspective in order to map the role of the youth workers.

'Qualitative' methods are used to answer questions about experience, meaning, and perspective, most often from the standpoint of the participant. These data are usually not amenable to counting or measuring. Quantitative research, on the other hand, manages factual and measurable matter. (Hammarberg, 2016:499). Accordingly, the research requires qualitative methods, as the nature of the proposed research topic is unmeasurable in facts and numbers, but instead uses experiences and expertise of a specific topic.

3.2.2. Collaborative research

The partner organisation of the thesis-YLS suggested the research topic. The thesis represents a collaboration between the national youth work agency and the researcher. The partner-organisation discerned the lack of recognition of the youth work in the society and the need for precision the role of youth workers in advancing political literacy as a topic considered a constitutional element of their work.

Collaborative research is likely to happen in the social sciences. A collaborative model ensures that research questions are relevant, timely, and generalizable to providers in the field. (Corse, Hirschinger, & Caldwell, 1996). Consequently, as a membership organisation of more than 100 youth organisations, groups, and movements, YLS considered the questions as relevant and essential in the moment. A challenge faced by youth work organisations is the 'increasing requirement to measure the impact of their practice' (Fyfe et al, 2018). This is a particular issue for youth workers demonstrating the impact they have on topics such as political literacy as they often see it as "something that we just do" therefore, the sector is often missed at the National level or with other sectors Education.

3.2.3 Incentives for Collaboration

According to James W. Endersb (1996), there are a couple of incentives for collaboration in social sciences. Firstly, the expertise and the talent of other parties in a research can be useful assistance. Secondly, collaboration allows for advanced methodological techniques, thirdly there is an efficiency in the outcome of the research, and finally, the research is a social process where one builds upon the knowledge and the expertise of the researchers.

Similarly, this process provided the researcher with access to the partner organisation's membership base. The membership base was useful for the sampling of the interviewees. Secondly, the researcher was in constant communication with allocated responsible youth workers from the YLS who provided their support and knowledge on the issue. Additionally, they contacted the possible interviewees and arranged the interviews in coordination with the researcher.

This approach has been used by the University of Edinburgh for several years and provided excellent opportunities for students to think through theoretical ideas in real-world contexts and to gain transferable skills through applied, practical experience with the host organisation. (University of Edinburgh, 2020)

Admittedly, the process endured particular strengths and limitations on its own. As a researcher, the collaboration provided access to primary data collection and direct contact with youth workers from YLS and other possible interviewees. On the other side, the researcher was not directly involved in the design of the research question, as it was already decided between the University and the Partner-Organisation. Additionally, it is a balancing process between the communication and requirements of the University and the partner-organisation. Namely, the student-research is the mediator between two organisations with different requirements. The partner-organisation has been working in the field for more than 20 years, and the fact that they proposed the research question indicates that they are acknowledging the lack of studies on the topic, but to a certain extent, expect a pre-desired outcome. (Marlene de Laine, 2010:121). On the other side, the university seeks for academic study, which will satisfy the needs of a balanced and well analysed topic. Indeed, the researcher is caught among the two institutions and their requirements.

3.3.3 Power and positionality in collaborative projects

Collaborative projects between a partner organisation from the community and an academic researcher are often discussed in the literature. The study of Michael Muhammed et al. (2014) discusses the community participatory based research with academia through the prism of power and positionality. Similarly, in recognizing how entangled academic-community relationships are, Michelle Fine (1994) discusses embracing the contradictions to confront power hierarchies of who tells the story or who creates knowledge. In this research, the expertise was provided by the partner-organisation from the community – YLS. That follows the sampling process, which was led by them. Alternatively, the researcher influenced the partner by proposing several organisations from the database, which she considered as valuable for the research. On one side, the decision-making of the topic and the methodology was given by the partner-organisation, which accordingly Diana Wolf (1996) is one of the three perspectives on power within research that may shift depending on one's positionality. Equally, the researcher is the one who represents and writes all the findings of the data collection. Moreover, referring to Wolf (1996) that balances the positionality of the included parties.

3.4. Research design

3.4.1 Methods

The methods of this thesis included: a review of national (Scottish) strategies and policies and semi-structured interviews. The purpose of the document review was to contextualise the research and understand more about political and national actors. (Marshall and Rossman, 2006:107). The researcher reviewed Scottish national documents and policies that shape the working environment of the youth workers. Additionally, she mapped the stakeholders involved in the decision-making process for policies regarding the political literacy of young people. In addition, a mini-review of the participants and the organisation they work in was carried out to contextualise each interview (Marshall and Rossman, 2006:107). This research takes **the angle** of the youth workers and the perception of their role of youth work in advancing the political literacy of young people. Nonetheless, the researcher acknowledges the importance of young people since the topic indirectly targets them as impacted by youth theory and policy in practice.

The specificity of the research originates from the collaboration with a partner-organisation and the primary data collection of experts' knowledge and expertise. Providing a space to one stakeholder deepens the analysis of that particular angle. Equally, it offers a

starting point for further developing and upgrading the research with other relevant parties such as young people.

3.4.2. Semi-structured interviews

A comparison of the Anglo-American methodological debate in the social sciences with its counterpart in the German-speaking world reveals that scientists in the latter have now regarded expert interviews as a distinct interview form for some years (Flick et al., 2003). The nature of the thesis demands that the interviewees be experts in the field who can offer their knowledge and expertise from hands-on experience with young people. The researcher conducted semi-structured expert, otherwise named as elite interviews. These interviews give a deep insight into a sector's functioning because interviewees understand the organisations' operations, finances, and partnerships (Aberdach and Rockman, 2002:673). Marshall and Rossman (2005:105) suggest that this approach presents the problem of 'bounded perspectives' as it only considers one individual with a specialised focus. To alleviate this problem, interviewees were contacted beforehand, and were given only an information sheet with the necessary information about the interviews. Accordingly, they could not prepare beforehand for the questions. Additionally, the interviews were semi-structured, and they could not prepare for questions that arose during the discussion. Another problem presented by elite interviews is that elites are conscious of their organisation's image and may have an agenda (Berry, 2002:680), an additionally, they may be gatekeepers of it. Consequently, for the researcher, it was essential to remain in a positive relationship with the interviewee. However, it was necessary to remain detached and unbiased in the critical analysis when conducting and analysing interviews. The semi-structured style allowed for an open discussion that could be shaped around the participant and their responses, while open-ended questions allowed interviewees to talk without constraint (Guest et al, 2012:12). This style allows the interviewer to probe areas of interest and draw out individual perspectives (Marshall and Rossman, 2006:102).

3.4.3. Sampling

Sampling is a major methodological issue in all research. It is of particular importance to qualitative studies as it closely relates and intertwines with other research design elements. In qualitative research, the sampling is purposive and strategic as the focus is placed on contexts and using the sampling to gain information, as opposed to the gold standard of random sampling in quantitative research (Miles et al., 2014). Meuser and Nagel (2005:73) also relate expert status to the field of research. Selected individuals are defined as experts, and a status

accorded to them by the researchers. Social scientific interest in experts is targeted at their specific contextual knowledge of a given research field or their internal knowledge of the structures, procedures, and events in a given organization. In other words, experts serve as informants and possess knowledge otherwise not accessible to researchers. Accordingly, the researcher, together with the partner-organisation prepared and created the sampling of the research.

The limitations of the sampling consisted of time and place constraints. Most of the relevant organisations and their experts are currently working from home or not working because of the global pandemic. (United Nations INYD, 2020) The most responsive ones were the youth workers working in youth sectors/councils of the local authorities. In a great sense, this setting shaped the sampling process of the research. Finally, the researcher conducted five interviews with youth workers from heterogenous backgrounds, which was not limited to local authority representatives.

In order to maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of the interviewees, in this research we present the type of the organisation they come from, without reference to the personal details of the interviewees.

	Type of an organisation	**Letter in study**
1.	Local Authority Youth Sector	C
2.	Youth Council	D
3.	Youth Organisation supporting youth councils on a national level	H
4.	Feministic Movement of Young People -	E
5.	Digital Literacy Youth Organisation	A

Table 1: Information on participants and the corresponsive letter in the text

3.4.4 Ethics and ethical dilemma

Ethical approval for the study was received from the School of Social and Political Sciences of the University of Edinburgh in June 2020. The UK Research Integrity Office's (UKRIO) Code of Practice for Research, adopted by the University of Edinburgh, was followed (UKRIO, 2009).

Informed consent was gained from participants as ethical rules stress (UKRIO, 2009), and the data kept secure and confidential according to the University's Research Data Management Policy (University of Edinburgh, 2018). Each participant in the interviews was given an informed consent form and an information sheet. In order to mitigate the ethical

dilemmas of confidentiality, anonymity, and transparency, every participant signed an informed consent form prior to the interview. Additionally, the interviewees were given an information sheet with material on the research topic.

An ethical dilemma arose with the exclusion of young people as participants from the study. As directly influenced by youth policies, a study of this character should include and preserve their views and opinions. Admittedly, that tightened the research's perspective, but including the young people under the time limits and global issues would have manifested in inadequate and would risk the research of not concluding. (Saunders and Townsend, 2016). Correspondently, the researcher decided to take the angle of the youth workers and discuss their perspective of their role in the process of advancing the political literacy of young people.

Another ethical risk derives from the digital conduction of the research. Digital ethical risks become more relevant than ever, especially in research purely piloted online. (Livingstone, 2014: 71). The ethical dilemma, then, is how to balance the legitimate need of the researcher to create a friendly space for interacting with participants with the later protection of participants' privacy (OssCom, 2010). The research used data encryption as a method of securing the data of the participants. The data is password-protected and accessed only by the researcher.

3.5 Research in practice

3.5.1. Predicted risks

The researcher predicted risks based on the online nature of the research. The research was done remotely and adapted accordingly to the regulations for online work. The interviews were conducted on the platform Microsoft Teams. The limits of this setting include the probability of lack of access to the internet of every participant, a stable internet connection, intrusion or interruption by members who are not participating but are cohabiting with the participants and security of personal data.

Depending on the nature of the setting, the risks were minimized by an informative sheet that was sent out to the participants before the focus groups. The researcher advised the participants to isolate in a room/space with a good Internet connection and minimal disruptions by non-participants. The data was processed and stored in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) along with the Data Protection Act 2018.

3.5.2 Data Analysis

As Eugene Bardach (2009:69) reminds us, "In policy research, almost all likely sources of information, data, and ideas fall into two general types: documents and people." This study delivers a documentary analysis and an interview analysis. However, the interviews after the process of transcription become documents as well. (Owen, 2014:10). The interviews, together with the national documents and literature, were analyses through a qualitative content analysis. (Drisko, 2015:5). The data collection was compared with the findings of the literature, and the Scottish documents put in practice.

3.5.3. Limitations of the study

The limitations of the study were partly because of the setting of conducting the interviews. Although, the online platforms offer many possibilities, they take away the face-to-face communication in which the interviewer and the interviewee can maintain better rapport.

Another limitation arose from the researcher's previous experience as a youth worker. That being said, detaching from the topic and remaining objective throughout the process has been a challenge. Some of the follow-up questions may have led up some of the interviewees or encouraged them to think in a specific direction.

Finally, the study's limitations include representation of one angle – the youth worker's one. Admittedly, young people did not participate in the primary data collection, but part of the secondary literature reflects their views. Consequently, that may decrease the value of the research resulting in not representative sample in the qualitative data collection.

Chapter 4

Findings

4.1. Scottish youth work policy context

In the following section, the study sketches the crucial policies in the area of youth work and analyses the inclusiveness of political literacy as goal, outcome, or indicator in each one of them.

The most crucial policy related to youth work and its outcomes is the **National Youth Work Strategy** (NYWS). Scotland is one of the few countries in Europe with youth work national strategy, together with Northern Ireland, Wales, Finland, and Estonia. (Dunne et al. 2004:98). The NYWS was published in 2007 (Scottish Executive, 2007) and followed up with a second NYWS in 2014 (Education Scotland et al., 2014) with the 2015-2019 strategy. The **NYWS 2007 Moving Forward** focused on recognising and re-establishing youth work as priorities that will enhance and provide youth opportunities to the young people in Scotland. The Scottish Executive in this strategy announced the contributions for providing and supporting youth services. "Moving forward" was primarily based around a commitment to universal access to personal and social development through youth work and developing the capacity of the sector to deliver and measure positive outcomes. (McGregor, 2015:12) However, it did not fully detail the planned topics and issues, which would be considered priorities for the youth work sector. (Scottish Executive, 2007)

The following **National Youth Work Strategy 2014-2019** goes a step further, discussing the specific needs, issues, and opportunities for young people. The strategy sets five goals, and each one of them predicts specific outcomes. The new strategy is equally explicit in its commitment to universal youth work and evidencing positive outcomes (Scottish Government 2014:3): Additionally, it analyses the challenges of the conditions to achieve those outcomes. The creators of the strategy define '*creating an opportunity for all' as* one of the critical challenges. By that, the authors acknowledge the deficit in the equal representation of all marginalized youth groups by the youth work. Additionally, the Scottish Executive (2014:3) would state that: *"[The strategy] recognises the contribution that youth work makes towards the National Outcomes and the wide range of activities and policies that impact on young people's lives; it also recognises that both universal and more targeted specific work have equal validity and importance."*

Despite the fact that NYWS focuses on positive outcomes, political literacy remains explicitly unaddressed. One could visualise its representation in the outcome *"young people are well informed and encouraged to make positive choices and contribute to civic society."*. As the literature review suggested being informed is one approach towards political literacy. The second approach considered in Chapter 2 equals political literacy as engagement in society' could be noticed throughout the key actions that are planning to be undertaken by the stakeholders. Specifically, the key actions imply that young people's engagement, including underrepresented and marginalized groups, will be valued and encouraged in society. (NYWS, 2015-2019). The latest strategy – **National Youth Work Strategy 2020-2024** is in the process of making, and unfortunately, it is delayed because of the 2020's global pandemic.

Another significant policy that addresses young people's literacy is the **Curriculum for Excellence (CfE).** The broad curriculum framework provides a coherent approach to the curriculum, assessment, and qualifications for children and young people aged 3–18. The CfE was introduced in 2010, having been in development since 2002. It is intended to provide a coherent, more flexible and enriched curriculum for all children and young people, wherever their learning takes place. This includes the learning opportunities delivered through youth work. Its outcome is expressed in developing four capacities in every young person: a successful learner, a confident individual; a responsible citizen; and an influential contributor. (YouthWiki, 2017). All of the four capacities refer to certain aspects of political literacy, whether on the level of being informed or directly engaged. Recalling the literature review, Jans (2002) concluded that youth work could not succeed on its own. Additionally, youth work often is compared to education as compared by Pring (2007) and Fairfield (2011). They would suggest that youth work is educational practice and should not be seen isolated from the other. In that regard, the CfE is an approach towards institutional collaboration with the purpose of improving young people's political literacy, and as such, it becomes highly relevant for youth workers' practice.

The **Youth Work Outcomes** are widely recognized as a step further in defining the impact of youth work. Dickson et al (2013:36) would state that without determining a 'starting point' (such as what young people's relationships were like before, or how confident young people were previous to participation in youth work activities), it is difficult to ascertain whether youth work activities have an impact on particular outcomes'. Neither of the outcomes explicitly demonstrate the political literacy as an outcome of the youth work. That being said, the different views of political literacy still can be recognized in the outcome 3: "young people

create, describe, and apply their learning and skills," referring to political literacy as information and knowledge (Chapter 2) and outcome 6: "they express their voice and demonstrate social commitment," recalled in political literacy as engagement. However, the explicit mention of political literacy remains unaddressed.

Furthermore, the **Manifesto for Youth Work** was firstly published in 2005 and revisited in 2015 by Bernard Davis. In 2005, Bernard Davis examined the policy context and analysed the critical challenges of youth work in the Manifesto for Youth Work. He discussed the overall position of youth work and the policies upon which it is based in the Scottish society. As the main discussion of the Manifesto, which was revisited in 2015 again was the impact that youth work has over every single young citizen, however, he discussed that the impact derives upon the voluntary approach used by youth workers. According to Davis (2015), this approach represents youth work's most outstanding liability. On the other hand, the literature suggests that the voluntary approach may be a youth work's distinctive characteristic from other similar services. (Crick, 2000). Young people choose to participate in youth work's practice, and that is the power of youth workers. If one looks into the Manifesto, it contemplates the general public's perception that the role of the youth work is their final product, and not the process. Consequentially, as Davis explains youth work is losing creditability when the final product does not fit their desired outcome. In the revisited 2015 Manifesto, Davis brings these issues again for discussion. Instead of letting the practice speak for themselves, youth workers are faced with the challenges "*as never before, to be clear, confident and articulate about just what their practice involves and how its distinctiveness enables them to reach parts of the adolescent population that other practices cannot or do not reach."* (Bernard Davis, 2015:99). As Chapter 2 suggested, McGregor (2015:5) defines the three factors that compound the struggle in recognizing the impact of youth work, including the clarity of the practice and the difficulty of measuring the "soft-outcomes" as political literacy. The Manifesto of Youth Work 2005 and 2015 both underline the challenges youth workers face when defining their practice and their role within the society.

The Scottish policy context is defined by plenty of guidelines, reports or statements by the youth organisation. Among these reports, the only one directly addressing political literacy is "You Decide!". The materials in this resource aim to develop professional capacity in practitioners, schools, and community settings to develop and embed the essential skills of political literacy in young people. The resource introduces the critical skills of research, debate, and participation in political literacy. It also provides workshops and reading materials

supporting the professional development of political literacy skills. This material foresees political literacy as being informed and knowledgeable about political processes and society and being civically engaged.

4.2 Youth work's impact on the political literacy of young people in Scotland

As discussed in the literature review and Scotland's policy context, the key challenge of youth workers measures the impact of their practices. This particular matter, together with difficulty in precising what their practices involve and uncertainty of the final product, hamper the clarity of the impact. This is materialized in the concept of political literacy of young people, which summarizes a variety of practices and usually represents the process itself, rather than an outcome of a practice. This goes noticed in the report "Being Heard," which outlines that "if participation is to be effective and meaningful, it needs to be understood as a process, not as an individual one-off event." (Scott and Leask, 2020:8). The Scottish policy context analysis extrapolated that political literacy is considered in many policies as both: civic engagement and gaining knowledge. Nevertheless, as a term in the theoretical policies, political literacy is not explicitly adopted as an outcome nor a goal.

This study undertook primary data collection through the methods of interviews with youth workers. Firstly, it was essential to be examined how youth workers perceive political literacy, compared to political literacy in the policies. Similar to the Scottish policies, youth workers tend to define political literacy differently. Diverse projects and activities require distinctive attitudes towards political literacy, and therefore it results in different opinions by the youth workers on the definition of political literacy. Youth Worker (YW) D defined political literacy as *the information to understand politics (Youth Worker D)* while YW C would define it as *being politically illiterate means that if they are not politically active, their voice will not be heard and somebody else will have a say in issues that matter to them instead of themselves* (Youth Worker C)

As a consequence of the different definitions, the findings evidence variety of answers among the youth workers on how they believe influence young people's political literacy in Scotland. On one side, youth workers see it as more abstract and unmeasurable impact as YW C would say: "*youth work is crucial in ensuring that young people can define their meaning in the world and understand their meaning as citizens"* (Youth Worker C), while YW A would say "*having for me an impact is also just the ability to have that conversation and understand it, and I do not see the impact as something that I could measure or put it into a box*" (Youth Worker A)

On the other side, some youth workers perceive youth work's role related to political literacy as more concrete action. The literature recognized that youth programmes, in general, build skills necessary for young people. Schulman and Davies (2007:34) write that '*programmes that do embrace a positive youth development framework report both an increase in positive developmental outcomes, particularly skill-based competencies, and a decrease in incidences of risk behaviour'*. Moreover, multiple surveys convey that participation in youth organisation encourages practicing civil rights by the young people. The "Statement on the Nature and Purpose of Youth work" declares the feature of "*youth work start where young people are*" as essential and definite. This considered in terms of political literacy means that youth workers should look at the level of political literacy that young people right now have. Accordingly, the literature showed that young people nowadays worry less about conventional politics and issues that they feel pressing, such as racism, climate change, and data protection. Social media is now a common currency in the daily lives of most people, particularly younger people (Langford and Baldwin 2013). In that regard, youth workers tend to address more questions closer to young people rather than the formal education institutions. YW A would say that "*we always encourage young people to be even more engaged with digital spaces to learn even more and understand why these spaces are built in a certain way, and so to understand the politics behind it."* (Youth Worker A)

In summary, youth workers see political literacy differently, which also depends on their role within the organisation and the type of issues they represent. It has to be highlighted that the youth workers working in local authority, which is not issue-targeting, but rather a geographically targeting work, consider the role of youth work more abstractly, as YW C would consider. On the other hand, youth workers working on an issue, as YW A relates the role of youth work with an issue-based engagement such as data literacy. Both views consider youth work as crucial in ensuring young people are informed and engaged. Moreover, this opinion was supported by the rest of the interviewees too. The policies require youth work programmes to be up-to-date and relevant for the current issues. Accordingly, as the sampling suggests, the youth organisations are targeting digital data literacy, feminism, and local changes which, as explained in Chapter 2 of this study, are the interests of the youth.

4.3. Youth workers' role within Scottish society

In order to define the role of youth workers one has to look into to broad picture of the society and where youth work stands. Firstly, youth work unlike other services, is based on a voluntary approach. As discussed by the literature and examined in the Scottish policy context,

the voluntary approach has its advantages and disadvantages. As a voluntary-based service, the participants often come and go, according to their needs. At the same time, that makes the work unique and valuable (Crick, 2000) but also takes power away from the YWs (Davis, 2015). Secondly, youth work is not statutory or considered as essential service in Scotland. That being said, it has its own strategy, but it does not guarantee its permanency. And finally, the funding for the practice comes from public and private funds that are not consistent and often can be cut. For clarification, the funding in the period of 2010-2019 has suffered £400m cuts. (UNISON, 2019). The interviewed youth workers agree that youth work has become essential. Paradoxically, they recognize that youth work can disappear in the foreseeable future. "*In terms of the near future, I really do worry that much it is going to get cut again. And will be spending over the coronavirus because youth work is not deemed an essential service" (Youth Worker D)*. Similarly, another YW C would answer that: *There is a sort of push me -pull you-relationship between. It's easy to get rid of youth work because it is not statutory (Youth Worker C)*

These issues become relevant when we discuss the role of youth work on topics as political literacy. On the one hand, the surveys and the literature (Chapter 2) show that youth work practices encourage young people to take part in local youth councils or movements, but on the other hand, this seems to go unrecognized by the rest of the stakeholders, policymakers and even youth workers themselves. Although the youth workers acknowledge their function and essentiality, not all of them would say that the Scottish institutional landscape is undervaluing them and their role. *Actually, it is been this fantastic working relationship. We work very closely (with the Scottish institutions). It is a sort of a well, 'no, I do not recognize what you are saying, but I am happy to have a discussion with you'- relationship. We understand that level of respect on all levels with the top of the council. We have had meetings with government ministers when necessary. We have really been taken as seriously as one could say. Just quite nice to see it. (Youth Worker D)*. Another youth work would clarify that *In Scotland's we are very lucky that our parliament is very accessible, not just for watching a debate, but also to attend a Commission's meeting and ask questions (Youth Worker E)*

These answers raise the controversy around the perception of youth workers in their environment. When it comes to political literacy as soft-outcome or the process itself, youth workers need to demonstrate their impact in order to maintain their funding and recognition in society. Nonetheless, their answers show that they are satisfied with the Scottish institutions' accessibility and cooperation. In summary, that raises the questions of how good the

cooperation between youth workers and the institutions is, when youth workers still have to deserve and fight for their recognition?

4.3.1 Youth workers in the policymaking process

The previous section questions the cooperation between the policymakers and youth workers. In the process of policymaking, youth workers themselves are actively taking part because they are knowledgeable of young people's opinions. Davidson, Evans & Sicafuse, in 2011 would define them as front-liners whose ability to form healthy, positive relationships with young people is key to maximizing benefits of program participation and policy initiatives. Lipsky (2010) would suggest that youth workers are street-level policymakers. Like the public servants of Lipsky's 1980 study, frontline youth workers directly provide a service to the public. The decisions frontline youth workers make in their relationships with young people constitute youth policy as it plays out in real life, thus establishing frontline youth workers as policymakers through their daily encounters with young people (Wastell, et al., 2010). As this becomes relevant for defining the role of youth workers and their recognition, the interviewees in this study answered questions related to their perception of youth work in the policymaking process.

According to Cairney, P. (2012:33) the policy cycle includes: agenda setting, policy formulation, legitimation, implementation, evaluation and policy maintenance or termination. Most of the interviewees would agree that youth workers are not represented on every level of the policy cycle. YW H states: *They seem to be a lot more youth representation at the implementation stage and provide feedback on how best to enact these policies. By which point there is not a lot we can do to perhaps to change the direction of a specific policy that it is going, just to problem solve from there and make sure that it is effective as possible. I would like to see youth work organizations involved a lot more at the creation stage (Youth Worker H)*. As YW H would directly state including youth workers at the stage of implementation does not give youth workers access directly in the design of the policies. Additionally, the YW H will add that: "*We tell young people, okay we have the money, how exactly would you like to see it implemented? Then we are taking that feedback forward. We are just not sure if those responses are being affectively turned into actions related to the wants of young peoples, so we would like to see a little bit more of young people being asked at the very beginning stages and be involved there" (Youth Worker H)*

Additionally, the interviewees that stated that the cooperation between the organisation and the policymaking is excellent, when asked about the role of youth workers in the

policymaking process, contradict their statements by saying: *Generally speaking, politics is very inaccessible, you know, and politicians are inaccessible. Decision-makers are inaccessible, and I think youth work generally is about making giving young people who do not usually have the chance to have their voices hear (Youth Worker D)*. Citizenship, as a topic included in the formal education, is part of different levels of policymaking. Referring to the literature, Crick is clear that citizenship is an overarching activity that reflects concepts such as political literacy, political philosophy and should be part of education, but he regards it as more than a school educational subject (2000:110). As recalled in the literature, citizenship except in schools is studied in youth work practices. Therefore, the significance of including youth workers equals the ones of teachers and educational stuff. Still, youth policy is constituted from the bottom-up, but often developed from the top-down, excluding the voices of frontline youth workers from formal decision-making processes and silencing their input on what the work looks like at the programmatic level. (Hogue, 2020:5). This way, youth workers are not enabled to access the means for advancing their practice; neither could affect the conception of their perceivable and recognizable role.

4.3.2. Youth workers and educational institutions

Another topic that was raised and discussed throughout the interviews was the position of youth workers compared to those of teachers and formal educational staff. This topic's emergence was predictable considered that citizenship as a subject does not equal but reflects political literacy. Meaning that both youth work and education provide services that improve the political literacy of young people. Although youth workers educate and nurture young people across many development stages, they are rarely regarded as teachers in the conventional sense. In the public's imagination, teachers in formal school settings are often the only educators acknowledged (Brion-Miesels et al., 2015). The interviewees had a unified view on their role compared to teachers. As the interviewee C would say: *But the approach used is very youth work centered and it was equipping young people to be in their own space as opposed to in the schools' situation (Youth Worker C).* Ginwright (2007) and Hirch et al (2011) highlight that even though youth workers are not teachers, young people feel more connected with them than classroom teachers. This statement was corroborated by the interviews as well. The YW D would say: *Youth workers tend to come from a diverse range of backgrounds and ages and young people might find it a little bit easier to connect with them.* Similarly, Ginwright (2007) discussed that although youth workers' pedagogical expertise and practices vary, their engagement with youth in non-hierarchical and distinct ways from school-based teaching has

provided youth with an essential reprieve from violent school practices while also offering spaces of learning and development. Correspondently, the non-hierarchical segment of Ginwright's study was substantiated by the interviewees. '*Probably the biggest on that youth work can offer is this environment which is not so strict because when you are at school, you it got this power dynamics, and I think when these power dynamics are removed and when young people get to express themselves freely, as in the youth work sector, I think that is the opportunity to do indeed a political and social change.' (Youth Worker A)*. Supported by literature of Ginwright and Brion-Miesels, youth workers practice in specific format than schools. This diverse environment opens the door for a more personal and closer connection.

4.4. Inaccessibility of youth work

The literature review suggested a couple of authors who discuss the challenge of youth workers to target all young people, including marginalized, unrepresented groups. Cammaerts (2014) and Coussee (2009) discuss the sometimes-elitist nature of youth work. As this challenge of youth workers influences their practice and the impact they have, it could downgrade the importance of their work and the advancement process. In Scotland, this is extrapolated in regions like Dumfries and Galloway, which are characterized as mostly rural. (Being Heard, 2020) It has been identified that many young people are unaware of their rights and the opportunities to become involved and as a result do not know that they can or how they can do so. (Being Heard, 2020:49). While the interviewees mostly agreed Scottish parliament is accessible, later in the statements, it was noticed that they acknowledge the inaccessibility. In the words of Youth Worker E "*So, it's all very well and good. They are having open sessions in the parliament in Edinburgh. But if you live in Shetland, that is not as accessible"*. Turning to the literature, Cammaerts (2014) discussed that social-economic factors can influence young people's engagement. Admittedly, some authors like Colardyn and Bjornavold (2004) would say that youth clubs and youth workers have long been identified as significant sources of support, and sites of neutral refuge away from home and school, for economically and socially marginalised young people. In Scotland, the challenge of being accessible to all young people has been recognized in the policies. (NYWS 2015, Opportunities for All). Namely, the challenge is accepted by both youth workers and policymakers. Nevertheless, specifying the exact impact of youth work constructs a work attitude that tends to reach young people who are easily reachable to justify the funds.

Chapter 5

Discussion

The study has sought to discuss the benefits and the challenges of youth workers in the process of advancing political literacy in Scotland. Focus has been placed on understanding political literacy within the Scottish youth policies and in youth work margins in practice. In doing so, the study reflects youth work influence on young people individually, recognition of the impact in the society, and the challenge of accessibility.

5.1. The role of youth work in impacting political literacy

The evidence of political literacy is present in the Scottish youth policies. The analysed document that explicitly is promoting political literacy is You Decide!. This is not a national-wide policy but an informative document that supports practitioners, schools, and community settings to reflect on how well they build capacity in learners to use their voice, participate and contribute to decision-making processes that are real and meaningful. (You Decide, 2016) In the youth policies as the NYWS, or Opportunities for All, or CfE, political literacy is not directly addressed. The policymakers recognize political literacy in its cognitive function as being knowledgeable and informed and encourage youth civic engagement. However, they do not recognize the new forms of engagement, neither consider the existence of radically unpolitical youth (Eye Farthing 2010). NYWS is codesigned by the Scottish Executive, YouthLink Scotland and Education Scotland. (YLS, 2017) This suggests that youth workers views and the positions of young people themselves as represented by the youth workers are included. Still, it does not correctly address the levels of political engagements and the current trends among young people.

The interviewees' results on the specific impact that youth work has over young people's political literacy can be summarized in two distinctive answers: "*building skills and attitudes for engagement and practicing citizenships*" and "*developing personal connection and sense of belonging to a community*" (Chapter 4). Similarly, the literature focuses on the positive outcomes created by youth workers. As discussed by Holton (2016), youth work has personal, social, political, and civic impact on youth and society. Holton (2016) is drawing on Henderson (2005) studies and implies that building skills encourage young people to be civically engaged. Youth workers also influence the sense of community of young people. In that regard, this study illustrated Campbell (2009) work and Flanagan (2013), who analyse the effect of

membership in youth organisation on young person political engagement. In the primary data, it is easily detected that the interviewees feel building close connections with young people encourages them to be actively engaged. Despite the fact that youth workers can summarize their impact and practice in words, the more significant part of the literature on Europe-wide level, UK and Ireland detects that 'there is little evaluation data of youth work practice itself which hampers the identification of the outcomes and the contribution that youth work makes in the lives of young people' (Dunne et al. 2014, p. 176)., specifically in the UK and Ireland, there is a general dearth of 'specific investigations of youth work activities' (Dickson et al. 2013, p. 46).

In summary, the national policies in Scotland reflect political literacy in their outcomes and goals and have dedicated specific key actions in addressing the targets of informed and engaged young people. In practice, youth workers can concretise their work as building skills and attitudes and creating a belonging environment. However, the impact of those two practices are hardy measurable, and the literature recognizes this as a lack of evidence. As such, youth workers are caught in a position to prove their impact in order to reach the goals and outcomes set by the national policies.

5.2 The role of youth work within the society

This study analysed the position of youth work within the society and the recognition of the work by other stakeholders. In that sense, it discussed the difficulty of proving the impact of the practice, the role of youth workers in policymaking processes, and juxtapose them to educational institutions. The CfE reflects required cooperation between schools and the third sector in order to tighten the political curriculum for children. The Curriculum again is created in codesign with youth workers. The report "Being Heard", which is sorely designed by youth workers, analyses the role of local youth councils and their work challenges. That being said, national policies include the significance of youth work and stress the need for cooperation between different sectors.

Firstly, the interviewees discussed their cooperation with Scottish institutions generally. The findings suggest that youth workers are quite satisfied with the accessibility of the Scottish parliament and institutions. Alternatively, they feel like their work is still undervalued and required to be evidence-proved even in soft-outcomes like political literacy. Secondly, the interviewees discussed the position of youth work compared to education. Most of the interviewees agree there should be necessary cooperation between education and youth work especially when it comes to political literacy. Both sectors offer a distinctive way of

learning citizenship and develop different environments. Holton would underline that "*they are complementing each other and should not be considered as substitutes or competitors*" (2015:15).

To conclude, the policies generally do not address the impact measurement issue of the organisations. In most of the policies, the cooperation is amplified, strengthening the role of youth workers as meaningful providers of services (Holton, 2015) that advances young people's political literacy. However, the problematic measurement of the impact remains unaddressed, and that diminishes their position in the society by making them prove the worthiness of their practice. (Dunne et al. 2014). In Scotland, youth workers feel positive accessible and cooperative environment, contradictorily they see themselves as undervalued and are lacking recognition. This may indicate a necessity for improvement in the cooperation by building on the positive relationships set between policymakers and practitioners in order to discuss challenges around topics as political literacy.

5.3. The role of youth work in giving voice to under-represented groups

This study overviewed the accessibility of youth work as a critical challenge in improving political literacy. Sometimes, it is said that youth work empowers only the powerful (Cammaerts, 2014), and because of that does not really have a meaningful impact on all young people. This challenge is recognized by the Scottish national policies (NYWS 2015, Opportunities for All) and the wide range of the youth sector's reports and strategies. (Being Heard, 2020). The interviews' results showed that youth workers are aware of this specific challenge and state that "*youth work could be seen as inaccessible, and not a place for all young people"* (Youth Worker E). The literature, as in Dunne, et al. acknowledges this and would say "*that while some young people gain the maximum advantage of youth work, many of those who have perhaps the greatest potential to benefit from youth work is not currently being reached in practice*" (2014:182). Additionally, the authors of this study would say that there is a lack of evidence of the effectiveness of these kinds of measures (soft-skills) on disadvantaged young people' (Dunne, 2014:157). On the other hand, McKee and Stuckler, (2011:30), discuss that if youth work is solely targeted at so-called risky, troubled or at-risk young people, it becomes vulnerable itself, because it creates distinctions between those young people with access to resources and those in need of 'intervention". Both opinions make a valid point on the accessibility of youth work. However, when discussing political literacy and the availability of programs addressing it to all young people, especially so-called 'unreachable' groups is essential. The benefits of these programmes, especially for unreachable youth, are

numerous. Both Colardyn and Bjornavold (2004) and Lindstrom (2012) conclude that youth clubs and youth workers have long been identified as significant sources of support, and sites of neutral refuge away from home and school, for economically and socially marginalised young people.

In Scotland, the accessibility challenge becomes relevant when discussing community-based youth work in rural and hardly reachable places. (Being Heard, 2020). Young people in these areas do not have equal access to youth services as their peers in urban areas. As mentioned, Scottish policies recognize this as an issue and encourage the youth sector to work on this challenge. Nevertheless, Scotland still asks the youth workers to work towards issue-specific interventions aimed at 'at-risk' or 'socially excluded' groups while providing evidence-based youth work. (McGregor, 2015:8) Authors like Coussee (2009) recognize the youth work paradox: youth workers have produced new, more accessible forms of youth work to increase participation of vulnerable youth, but rather ironically, they are blamed for not producing positive outcomes and even for creating counterproductive effects. (Coussee, 2009:423). For example, open youth centres would bring with them a nuisance, drug abuse, consumerism, aggression, juvenile delinquency, and hooliganism (Dishion et al., 1999; Mahoney et al., 2004). That being said, the youth workers are encouraged by the policymakers to address this issue; however, they are failing because most certainly, they have to prove their work by providing positive-outcomes evidence.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

The purpose of the current study was to ascertain the possible benefits and challenges of youth work in advancing the political literacy of young people in Scotland. The study undertook a documentary analysis of the national policies tackling political literacy and youth work in Scotland and conducted semi-structured interviews with youth workers to discuss their current work's practices. By using this approach, the study critically discussed the angle of youth workers and the expertise of their practice and the policies in theory. The main goal was to position youth work's impact on the political literacy individual level of young people in Scotland, and its position and impact within the Scottish society.

The study has found, youth work positively affects youngsters' individual levels of political literacy by having programmes that address political literacy in the form of cognitive and behavioural function. These programmes build skills necessary for civic engagement (Schulman and Davies, 2007) and develop a sense of community and membership to every young person. (Quintelier, 2008; Cicognani, 2015) Conversely, the study ascertains that youth workers face difficulties in measuring that impact, specifically the impact of programmes which are an on-going activity, or the process itself, not of a quantitative matter. On one side, the study discussed the positive relationship the youth workers feel towards Scottish institutions. On the other side, they feel undervalued and are lacking recognition by the same institutions. Towards achieving positive outcome and transferable practice youth workers are generally asked to engage in evidence-based youth work, one that asks for proof of the outcomes. (Pantea, 2013) Often, youth workers cannot provide evidence, and consequently face cuts in funding or tend to focus on easily achievable goals as they address only reachable youth (McGregor, 2015). The former results in deducing the quality and quantity of programmes, and the latter adds to the increasing inaccessibility of the sector. Building on the constructive and optimistic relationships between the sectors would result in better understanding of programmes tackling political literacy, and the political trends among young people by the policymakers, general public and the youth work sector.

This research extends our knowledge of the impact of youth work on essential topics as political literacy and also builds upon the literature that analyses the recognition and the impact of youth work in society. The empirical findings in this study provide an understanding

of the angle of youth workers and their opinion and expertise on the topic of political literacy. Additionally, it detailly analyses the comprehensiveness of political literacy in the Scottish national policies and reports.

Although this study did not precisely provide the exact role of youth work in the advancement of political literacy, it examined the possible roles of youth workers and their recognition in Scotland. Additionally, it represents an interdisciplinary study which intersects the third sector translated in the youth sector, educational sector, and policymaking process. The findings did not only suggest how the youth workers themselves perceive their role but also positioned these perceptions in Scotland's broad picture of youth policies.

The generalisability of these results is subject to certain limitations. Firstly, the study considers a small number of youth workers in its primary data collection. An increased number of participants would have given a wider variety of answers, which may have led to different results.) Secondly, the study does not represent the views of young people. As a consequence, it does not fully represent the opinion of every engaged party. (Allmark, 2004 Unfortunately, young people were not included in the study as they are the direct users of the programmes and policies addressing youth work, and their experience would be tremendously valuable. Furthermore, finally, the process itself may have been obstructed by the researcher's bias and their experience as a youth worker.

This research has thrown many questions in need of further investigations. The discussion section deliberated the opinions of youth workers about the level of cooperation with Scottish institutions, and based on the findings, questioned the excellent cooperation between the institutions and the sector. It also challenged the perception of political literacy itself, whether as cognitive function, level of engagement, (Fox, 2015) or the new form of radically unpolitical youth in the Scottish policies. (Farthing, 2010). And finally, it doubted the trust in the youth workers by the policymakers. (Pantea, 2017) On the one hand, the accessibility as a goal in the national policies suggests that youth organisations are the best option for reaching youth out of school, marginalized, at-risk or vulnerable. On the other hand, the institutions suggest that youth work should be evidence-based without recognizing the need for soft-outcomes or the process itself, which shows a distrust in the outcome-delivery.

Therefore, further work should be done to establish which outcomes, despite the political literacy, are soft-outcomes and which processes could not be assessed in the old conventional way. Additionally, another possible area of future research would be to

investigate why the institutions are only considering evidence-based youth work as applicable for more funding and more prominent recognition of the work when obviously topics as political literacy are crucial, but not quantitative. And finally, future research is necessary in order to include the opinions of the young people and their perception of political literacy. In that regard, the study would have excellent reliability and validity as it would have been representative of all included sides.

Bibliography

Aapola, et al. (2005). *Young femininity: girlhood, power and social change*, Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Aberbach, J. D., & Rockman, B. A. (2002). *Conducting and coding elite interviews*. PS: Political Science and Politics, 35(4), 673-676.

Allmark P. (2004). *Should research samples reflect the diversity of the population?* Journal of Medical Ethics 2004;30:185-189.

Anon, (2014). *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*. , pp.Scottish Parliament Act, 2014–04-02.

Badlan, K., (2016). *Explorations into young people's political literacy.*

Baillergeau, E. & Hoijtink, M., (2010). *Youth work and 'youth at risk' in the Netherlands*. *Societes et jeunesses en difficulte*.

Bardach, E. (2009). *A practical guide for policy analysis: The eightfold path to more effective problem solving* (3rd ed.). Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Baxter, G. Tait, E. McLaverty, P. MacLeod I., (2015). *The independence referendum shows that young people can be mobilized politically given the right circumstances*.

Beck, U., (2001). *Freedom's children.In*: U. Beck and E. Beck-Gensheim, eds.Individualisation.London: Sage, 156171

Berry, J. M. (2002). Validity and reliability in elite interviewing. PS: Political Science and Politics 35(4), pp. 679–682

Brion-Meisels, G., Savitz-Romer, M., Vasudevan, D. (2015). *Not anyone can do this work: Preparing youth workers in a graduate school of education*. In Pozzobini, K. M., Kirshner, B. (Eds.), The changing landscape of youth work: Theory and practice for an evolving field (pp. 71–90). Information Age.

Broadhurst, K. Wastell, D. White, S. Hall, C. Peckover, S. Thompson, K. Pithouse, A. Davey, D. (2010) *Performing 'Initial Assessment': Identifying the Latent Conditions for Error at the Front-Door of Local Authority Children's Services*, *The British Journal of*

Social Work, Volume 40, Issue 2, March 2010, Pages 352–370, **https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcn162**

Butt, S. and Curtice, J., (2010). Duty in Decline? Trends in attitudes to voting. Chapter 1 in Park A. Curtice, J. Thomson, K. Philips, M. Clery, E. and Butt, S. eds., 2010. *British Social Attitudes 26th Report*. Bodmin: Sage Publications Ltd

Cairney, P., (2012) *Understanding public policy : theories and issues*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cammaerts, Bart et al., (2014) *The Myth of Youth Apathy*. American Behavioral Scientist, 58(5), pp.645–664.

Campbell, D. E. (2008). *Voice in the classroom: How an open classroom climate fosters political engagement among adolescent*s. *Political Behavior*, *30*, 437-454. doi: 10.1007/s11109-008-9063-z

Carol A. Cassel & Celia C. Lo, (1997) *Theories of Political Literacy*. *Political behavior*, 19(4), pp.317–335.

Cicognani, E., Mazzoni, D., Albanesi, C., and Zani, B., (2015). *Sense of Community and Empowerment among Young People: Understanding Pathways from Civic Participation to Social Well-Being*. International Society for Third-Sector Research, Voluntas 26, pp. 24-44.

Colardyn, D., and Jens B.. (2004). "*Validation of Formal, Non-Formal and Informal Learning: Policy and Practices in EU Member States*." European Journal of Education 39 (1): 69–89. doi:10.1111/j.0141-8211.2004.00167.x.

Corse, Sara J, Hirschinger, Nancy Beth & Caldwell, Susan, (1996) *Conducting treatment outcome research in a community mental health center:* A university-agency collaboration. Psychiatric rehabilitation journal, 20(1), pp.59–63.

Coussee, F. et al., (2009). *Empowering the powerful: Challenging hidden processes of marginalization in youth work policy and practice in Belgium*. *Critical Social Policy*, 29(3), pp.421–442.

Crick, B., (2000) *Essays on Citizenship*. Trowbridge: Continuum

Dalton, R.J. (2013) *The Apartisan American*, Thousand Oaks: CQ Press

Davidson, L., et al. (2011). "*Competency in Establishing Positive Relationships With Program Youth: The Impact of Organization and Youth Worker Characteristics*." Child & Youth Services 32(4): 336-354.

Davies, B. (2005) *Manifesto for Youth Work;* Youth and Policy Number 88

Davies, B. (2015) *Manifesto for Youth Work Revisited;* Youth and Policy Number 114

Dickson, K., Vigurs, C.-A. & Newman, M., (2013) *Youth work: A systematic map of the research literature*, Dublin.

Dishion, T., McCord, J. and Poulin, F. (1999) '*When Interventions Harm: Peer-groups and Problem Behaviour'*, American Psychologist 57(9): 755–64.

Drisko, James & Maschi, Tina, (2015) *Content Analysis*, Cary: Oxford University Press USA - OSO.

Dunne, A. et al., 2014. *Working with young people: The value of youth work in the European Union*, Brussels

Ellsworth, E. (1989*). Why doesn't this feel empowering? Working through the repressive myths of critical pedagogy. Harvard Educational Review, 59(3), 297–324.*

Endersby, J. (1996). *Collaborative Research in the Social Sciences: Multiple Authorship and Publication Credit. Social Science Quarterly, 77*(2), 375-392. Retrieved August 24, 2020, from **http://www.jstor.org/stable/42863473**

European Parliament, (2019), *EU Budget 2019: MEPs increase funding on youth, migration and research*, viewed on 01.08.2020 < https://bit.ly/2EvYXpE>

European Union, (2010/2018), *European Youth Strategy 2010/2018*, viewed 05.08.2020 < **https://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/youth-strategy/strategy-2010-2018_en**>

European Union, (2018) *European Youth Goals,* European Commission, viewed 10.08.2020 <**https://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/youth-strategy/youthgoals_en**>

Fairfield, P. (2011) *Education after Dewey,* London: Continuum.

Farthing, R. (2010). "*The politics of youthful antipolitics: representing the 'issue' of youth participation in politics."* Journal of Youth Studies 13(2): 181-195.

Fine, M (1994) *Working the hyphens: reinventing self and other in qualitative research.* In: Denzin, NK, Lincoln, YS (eds) Handbook of Qualitative Research. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 70–82.

Flanagan, C.A., (2013) *Teenage citizens the political theories of the young*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Flick, U., Kardorff, E. v. and Steinke, I. (eds) (2003) *Qualitative Sozialforschung.* Ein

Fox, S., 2015. Apathy, alienation and young people: the political engagement of british millennials.

Furlong, A. & Cartmel, F., (2007). *Young people and social change new perspectives* 2nd ed., Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill/Open University Press.

Furlong, A. and Stacey, B., (1991*) Young People's Understanding of Society*. Guilford:

Fyfe, James et al., (2018). *The Impact of Community-based Universal Youth Work in Scotland*

Georgi, V.B., 2008. Citizens in the Making: Youth and Citizenship Education in Europe. *Child Development Perspectives*, 2(2), pp.107–113.

Ginwright, S. A. (2007). *Black youth activism and the role of critical social capital in Black community organizations.* American Behavioral Scientist, 51(3), 403–418.

Hammarberg, K. Kirkman, M. Lacey, S. (2016) *Qualitative research methods: when to use them and how to judge them*, *Human Reproduction*, Volume 31, Issue 3, March 2016, Pages 498–501, **https://doi.org/10.1093/humrep/dev334**

Handbuch, 2nd edn (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowolth)

Henderson, R., (2005) *Education, training and rural living: young people in Ryedale.* Education + Training 47(3), pp. 183-201.

Henn, M., and Foard, N. (2014) *Social Differentiation in Young People's Political Participation: The Impact of Social and Educational Factors on Youth Political Engagement in Britain*, Journal of Youth Studies, 17 (3), 360–380

Hirsch, B. J., Deutsch, N. L., DuBois, D. L. (2011). *After-school centers and youth development: Case studies of success and failure*. Cambridge University Press.

Hogue, S. (2020) *Spotlighting the role of frontline youth workers as policymakers beyond a COVID-19 world,* viewed 14.08.2020 < **https://www.youthandpolicy.org/articles/youth-workers-as-policymakers/**>

Holtom, D. et al. (2016) *Study on the social values of youth organisations*, European Youth Forum

Jans, M. and De Backe, K., (2002) *Youth (work) and social participation*. Youth Participation in Slovakia.

Kahne, J., & Middaugh, E. (2008). *Democracy for some: The civic opportunity gap in high school.* Circle Working Paper 59. Medford, MA. Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE).

Keestra, M., Rutting, L., Post, G., De Roo, M., Blad, S., & De Greef, L. (2016). Interdisciplinarity. In Menken S. & Keestra M. (Eds.), *An Introduction to Interdisciplinary Research: Theory and Practice (pp. 31-33*). Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press. doi:10.2307/j.ctt1bc540s.8

Lailiyah, et al., (2018). *Youthizen, Political Literacy, and Social Media*. *E3S web of conferences*, 73, p.14005.

Langford, L. & Baldwin, M. (2013) S*ocial Life2 Report: The Most Comprehensive Tracker of UK Social Media Use*, November 2013 (Harris Interactive)

Levinson, M. (2010). *The civic empowerment gap: Defining the problem and locating solutions*. In L. R. Sherrod, J. Torney-Purta, & C. Flanagan (Eds.) *Handbook of research on civic engagement in youth* (p. 331-361).

Lindstrom, L. (2012). "'*I Learn Nothing!' Voices of Visitors at Youth Clubs in Sweden."* Journal of Education and Learning 1 (1): 84–98. doi:10.5539/jel.v1n1p84.

Lipsky, M. (1980). *Street-Level Bureaucracy. Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services.* New York: Russel Sage Foundation.

Lipsky, M. (2010). *Street Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services.* 30th Anniversary Expanded Edition. The Russell Sage Foundation: New York, NY

Livingstone, S. and Locatelli, E. (2014) E*thical dilemmas in qualitative research with youth on/offline*. International Journal of Learning and Media, 4 (2). pp. 67-75. ISSN 1943-6068 DOI: 10.1162/IJLM_a_00096

Mahoney, J., Stattin, L. and Lord, H. (2004) '*Unstructured Youth Recreation Centre Participation and Antisocial Behaviour Development: Selection Influences and the* Moderating Role of Antisocial Peers', International Journal of Behavioral Development 28: 553–60

Manning, N. and Edwards, K. (2014) *'Why Has Civic Education Failed to Increase Young People's Political Participation?* Sociological Research Online 19(1): 5.

Marshall, C. & Rossman, G.B., (2006). *Designing qualitative research* Fourth., Thousands Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.

McGregor, C., (2015). Universal Youth Work:A Critical Review of the Literature

McIntosh, H., Hart, D., & Youniss, J. (2007). *The influence of family political discussion on youth civic development: Which parent qualities matter?* Political Science and Politics, 40, 495-499. doi:10.1017/S1049096507070

McKee, V., (2011). *Freedom, fairness and responsibility: Youth work offers the way forward*. *Youth & Policy*, (106), pp.9–22.

Meuser, M. and Nagel, U. (2005) "*ExpertInneninterviews – vielfach erprobt, wenig bedacht"* in Bogner, A., Littig, B. and Menz, W. (eds) Das Experteninterview – Theorie, Methode, Anwendung, 2nd edn (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften), pp. 71–93.

Miles, M., B., Huberman, A. M. and Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis. A Methods Sourcebook.* Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Muhammad, M., Wallerstein, N., Sussman, A. L., Avila, M., Belone, L., & Duran, B. (2015). *Reflections on Researcher Identity and Power: The Impact of Positionality on*

Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) Processes and Outcomes. Critical Sociology, 41(7–8), 1045–1063. **https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920513516025**

Norris, P. (2001) *Digital Divide: Civic Engagement, Information Poverty, and the Internet worldwide,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

O'Toole, Therese, Marsh, David & Jones, Su, (2003). *Political Literacy Cuts Both Ways: The Politics of Non-participation among Young People.* The Political Quarterly, 74(3), pp.349–360.

OssCom., (2010) *Always on—Adolescents' use of CMC*. In Crossmedia Cultures

Owen, G.T., (2014). *Qualitative methods in higher education policy analysis: using interviews and document analysis*. Qualitative report, 19(26), p.1.

Pantea, C. M. (2013) *Building evidence-based interventions in youth work*, Berlin

Pirie M. and Worcester, R. M. (1998) *The Millennial Generation*, London, Adam Smith Institute

Power Commission (2006) *Power to the People: The Report of Power: An Independent Inquiry into Britain's Democracy*, York: Joseph Rowntree Trust.

Pring, r. (2007) *John Dewey: Continuum Library of Educational Thought Volume 4*, London: Continuum.

Quintelier, E. (2008) *'Who is Politically Active: The Athlete, the Scout Member or the Environmental Activist? Young People*, Voluntary Engagement and Political Participation', Acta Sociologica, Vol.51, No.4, pp.355-370

Russell, A., Fieldhouse, E., Purdam, K., Kalra, V. (2002) *Voter Engagement and Young People*, Electoral Commission: Electoral Commission

Sarason, S. B. (1974). *The psychological sense of community: Prospects for community psychology*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Saunders, M.N.K. and Townsend, K. (2016), *Reporting and Justifying the Number of Interview Participants in Organization and Workplace Research*. Brit J Manage, 27: 836-852. doi:**10.1111/1467-8551.12182**

Schlozman, K. L., Verba, S., & Brady, H. E. (2012). *The unheavenly chorus: Unequal political voice and the broken promise of American democracy.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Schulman, S. & Davies, T., (2007). *Evidence of the impact of the 'youth development model' on outcomes for young people*: A literature review

Scott, R. J. & Leask K., (2020), *Report Being Heard*, A study on young people engagement in Scotland

Scottish Executive, (2007)*, National Youth Work Strategy*

Scottish Government (2012) *Opportunities for All supporting all young people to participate in post-16 learning, training or work*

Scottish Government (2016), *You Decide!,* Education Scotland, viewed on 12.07.2020 < **https://www.education.gov.scot/nih/Documents/soc10-youdecide.pdf**>

Scottish Government, (2014), *National Youth Work Strategy 2014-2019*, YouthLink Scotland, Education Scotland

Sercombe, H. Sweeney, J. Milburn, T. Liddell, M. Rory McLeod, Denning P. (2014) *Scottish Youth Work: same, but different*., viewed on 13.08.2020 : <**https://srcd.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1750-8606.2008.00050.x**>

Seymour, K. & Bull, M. & Homel,. (2017). Making the most of youth development: Evidence-based programs and the role of young people in research. Queensland Review. 24. 147-162. 10.1017/qre.2017.17.

Shantz-Hilkes, C. (2017*). The Politics of Participation.* 10.1007/978-94-6351-098-1_11.

Sloam, J. (2007) *'Rebooting Democracy: Youth Participation in Politics in the UK', Parliamentary Affairs,* Vol.60, No.4, pp.548-567

UKRIO. (2009). *Code of Practice for Research. Promoting good practice and preventing misconduct.* [Online], viewed 01.07.2020 Available from: **https://ukrio.org/publications/code-of-practice-for** research/ .

UNISON, (2019), *Youth Services Report* viewed on 12.08.2020 < **https://www.unison.org.uk/news/press-release/2018/12/axing-millions-youth-work-puts-futures-risk-says-unison/**>

United Nations, (2020), *Statement on Covid19 and Youth,* viewed 10.08.2020 < **https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Youth/COVID-19_and_Youth.pdf**>

United Nations, 1995, *World Programme of Action for Youth*, viewed 29.07.2020 < **https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/wpay2010.pdf**>

University of Edinburgh, (2020), Placement-based dissertations, viewed on 02.06.2020 < **http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/gradschool/student_development/placement-based_learning/msc_placement-based_dissertations**>

University of Edinburgh. (2018). *Research Data Management Policy* [Online].viewed 30.05.2020 < **https://www.ed.ac.uk/geosciences/intranet/it/rdmgeos**>

Westholm, A, Lindquist, A. and Niemi, R. G., (1990). *Education and the making of the informed citizen: Political literacy and the outside world.* In Orit Ichilov (ed.), Political Socialization, Citizenship Education, and Democracy. New York: Teachers' College.

Whitehouse, H. Bloom, D., (2015). *Tory MP backs banning 16 year olds from landmark EU*

Wolf, DL (1996) *Situating feminist dilemmas in fieldwork*. In: Wolf, DL (ed.) Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1–25.

Wray-Lake, Laura. (2019). *How Do Young People Become Politically Engaged*?. Child Development Perspectives. 10.1111/cdep.12324.

YouthLink Scotland, (2005), *Statement on the Nature and Purpose of Youth Work*

YouthLink Scotland, (2017) *Interim report on the National Youth Work Strategy* viewed on 12.08.2020 < **https://www.youthlinkscotland.org/media/1824/national-youth-work-strategy-interim-report-july-2017.pdf**>

YouthLink Scotland, (2020) *Youth Work Outcomes*, viewed on 15.07.2020 < **https://www.youthlinkscotland.org/policy/youth-work-outcomes/**>

YouthLink, (2013). *Youth Work and Schools Partnership – Curriculum for Excellence Final Report*:832007-14, Edinburgh.

YouthWiki (2017), *Youth Policies in the United Kingdom (Scotland),* viewed on 15.08.2020 < **https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/content/youthwiki/overview-United-Kingdom-Scotland**>

Zengotita, T., (2005) *Mediated: How the media shape your world and the way you live in it*. USA: Bloomsbury

Appendices

Appendix 1: Informed consent form

THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
School of Social and Political Science

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

RESEARCH TOPIC

The role of Youth Work in advancing political literacy of young people in Scotland

CONSENT FORM

Please initial each box

If you are happy to participate in the research, please initial each box as appropriate (leave blank any box for which you prefer not to give consent) and then sign this form at the end:

1.	I have been given the opportunity to ask any further questions and have had these questions answered to my satisfaction.	☐
2.	I understand that participating in the research involves an interview (approx.1h).	☐
3.	I have been given information about how my data will be stored and used during and after the end of the research, and I have read and understood this.	☐
4.	I understand that analysis of my given statement may be included in the final research paper/dissertation thesis/ policy brief.	☐
5.	Please choose one of the following two options: • I am happy for my real name to be used in the research analysis on the topic of "The role of youth work in advancing political literacy of young people in Scotland"	☐

OR

- I would not like my real name to be used in the research analysis on the topic of "The role of youth work in advancing political literacy of young people in Scotland" ☐

6. I understand that the research team will record the interview, and I give my consent for this audio record to be recorded and securely disposed after the finalization of the dissertation. ☐

7. Please choose one of the following two options:

OR

- I agree for the data I provide to be retained by the research team in secure storage for their future use on similar and related projects. ☐

OR

- In order to promote open and public research, I agree for the data I provide to be shared openly through the organization YouthLink Scotland and I understand that other researchers and members of the organization will have access to this data, under the original consent conditions e.g. use of my real name or anonymized. ☐

8. Please check the options with which you agree:

- I agree to be directly quoted with my name and last name and the organization I come from. ☐
- I agree to have my personal information changed with a made-up name (pseudonym). ☐
- I agree that the research can publish documents that consist of my answer to the questions. ☐

9. I agree that the researcher can re-contact me at a future date should they wish to follow up on this research. ☐

10. I understand that all or part of the content of my interview may be used; ☐
    - In academic papers, policy papers or news articles
    - In other media that may be produced, such as spoken presentations or posters, as well as in the YouthLink Scotland website, social media and press

11. I agree that YouthLink Scotland may use the research to promote youth work and political literacy in Scotland, by using content (including anonymized quotes) from the resulting report on their website, social media and/or in press ☐

12.	I agree that other researchers can contact me at a future date should they wish to follow up on this research.	☐
13.	I understand that my taking part is voluntary; I can withdraw from the project later, and I do not have to give any reasons for why I no longer want to take part (and this will be without any impact on any related services I am using).	☐
14.	I understand I can ask for specific quotes or statements not to be used (or to be redacted from the data) if I wish.	☐
15.	I understand that if I want to withdraw from the research, I can contact*;XXX*	☐

I agree to take part in this research project

Name of research participant	Date	Signature

Appendix 2: Information Sheet

THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH
School of Social and Political Science

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Project title

The role of youth work in advancing political literacy of young people in Scotland

Invitation paragraph

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask questions if anything is not clear or you would like more information. Take some time to decide whether or not to take part.

What is the purpose of the project?

A challenge faced by youth work organisations is the 'increasing requirement to measure the impact of their practice' (Fyfe et al, 20181). This is a particular issue for youth workers demonstrating the impact that they have around topics such as political literacy as they often see it as "something that we just do" therefore the sector is often missed at National level or with other sectors such as Education.

The purpose of this project is to analyse the role of youth work programmes in improving the political literacy of young people. The goal is to identify the gaps between the current theoretical documents, policies and strategies and the implemented policies and programmes in practice on youth work and political literacy.

The research will run for approximately 2 months. The process design will include desk-based research and primary data collection through interviews with youth-workers.

Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been invited to participate in this study because you are:

Youth-worker implementing youth programmes tackling political literacy, who can give relevant experience of the field

Do I have to take part?

[1] **https://www.youthlinkscotland.org/media/3183/impact-of-community-based-universal-youth-work-in-scotland-november-2018.pdf**

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this Participant Information Sheet to keep and be asked to sign an Informed Consent Form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw from the study at a later date, without giving a reason and without any impact on any services you are using. Only the researcher and the project team of YouthLink Scotland will have access to the research data until 20.09.2020.

What does taking part involve?

You will be asked a number of questions regarding the youth work programmes you have implemented or taken part in. The interview will take place in online at the Microsoft Teams at a time that it is convenient for you and will last approximately 1 hour. The interview is one-off involvement. The interview will be audio-recorded through the option of the platform Microsoft Teams recording. The recording will be used for analysis of the given data and will be securely disposed after the research is finished.

Are there any possible risks or disadvantages in taking part? (where relevant)

There are no significant risks anticipated from participation in this research project.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

By sharing your experiences with us, you will be helping the researcher X in identifying the possible gaps between the theoretical policies and the programmes and practice. Additionally, the University and the organization-partner YouthLink Scotland will better understand the importance of youth work over the political literacy of young people in Scotland. These findings will be used in policy recommendations to relevant institutions on the recognition of the role of youth work.

Will I be reimbursed for any expenses or for my time?

The participants will not receive reimburse for the time invested in the interview.

What If I Want to Withdraw From The Project?

Agreeing to participate in this project does not oblige you to remain in the study or to have any further obligations to the research project or team. If at any stage you no longer want to be part of the study, you can withdraw from the project by contacting X. You should note that your data may be used in the production of formal research outputs (e.g. journal articles, conference papers, reports) prior to your withdrawal and so you are advised to contact the research team at the earliest opportunity should you wish to withdraw from the study. You can withdraw from the project at any point in the research process, prior to the final submission of the research thesis. If you withdraw from the project all the information and data collected from you, to date, will be destroyed and your name removed from all the project files.

How Will My Data Be Looked After during the project?

All your data will be processed and stored in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) along with the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA). The project will be also be guided by and adhere to the University of Edinburgh's data protection guidance and regulations, see

http://www.recordsmanagement.ed.ac.uk/InfoStaff/DPstaff/DataProtectionGuidance.htm. All personal details, including contact details, addresses, phone numbers etc, will be kept strictly confidential within the research team, stored on password-protected and encrypted devices and/or University secure servers, in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation, and the latest University of Edinburgh data security protocols. Electronic project data will be uploaded as soon as possible to a secure University of Edinburgh server and stored there for the duration of the project, only accessible to the project team. All paper records will be transferred to locked storage at the University of as soon as practicable. Your Consent Form will be stored separately from your responses.

What will happen to my data after the end of the project?

At the end of the project, after the final grade and approval from the University of Edinburgh is obtained, all data will be deleted using the latest University of Edinburgh protocol for secure data deletion. The data will be deleted using desk encryption.

What should I do if I want to take part?

If you want to take part in the research, contact the researcher at. XXX

The researcher will follow up with provided informative consent form and the details of the date and time of the focus groups.

What will happen with the results of the research project?

The results of this study will be published in a master thesis and policy recommendations that may be used in the future as proposals for improvement of the policies and programmes. The results may also be used in additional reports or publications relevant to the matter.

The results will not be used for any publication for which the participants/report has not given their consent.

Who is organising and funding the research?

The research is conducted by X, student at MSc Public Policy at the School of Social and Political Sciences and the University of Edinburgh. X is the sole researcher of the thesis, however she is cooperating with a partner-organization YouthLink Scotland who will provide with the necessary data of organizations working in the field.

Who has approved this project?

This research project has been approved through the ethical review process in the School of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Edinburgh.

Contact for Further Information

If you have any further questions about this project, please contact the lead researcher at X

If you have any concerns about the way in which the project has been conducted, or you wish to make a complaint, you can contact the Deputy Director of Research (Ethics and Integrity) in the School of Social and Political Sciences:

Deputy Director of Research (Ethics and Integrity)

School of Social and Political Sciences

University of Edinburgh

Edinburgh EH8 8LN
e-mail: ethics-ssps@ed.ac.uk

For general information about how the University of Edinburgh looks after research data go to: https://www.ed.ac.uk/records-management/privacy-notice-research

If you have any queries about how the project data is managed, you can contact the University Data Protection Officer, Dr Rena Gertz, at **dpo@ed.ac.uk**. See **https://www.ed.ac.uk/records-management/about/data-protection-officer**

Thank you

Thank you for taking time to read this Participant Information Sheet.

Date

04.06.2020

Appendix 3: Interview Schedule

1. Introduction to research
2. Information and questions regarding the informed consent form
3. Tell me more about you, your role within your organisation and the type of organisation you work in.
4. In your opinion and experience, how does youth work help young people be more politically literate?
    - How would you define political literacy?

5. Tell me more about projects that you have been part of, and which have worked towards advancement of political literacy.

    - What are the benefits and the downsides of these projects?
    - How do you measure the impact?
    - Do you use Internet and social media for improving political literacy in your work?

6. How do you feel youth work compares to other actors in the society?

    - Have you been part of any policymaking process? If yes, in which part? If no, why do you think that the organization has not been invited to the policymaking process?
    - In your experience how would you summarize the cooperation between youth workers and the institutions?

7. What can be improved in the future to have more politically literate youth?
8. Is there any resource or angle that you would consider important for the research?
9. Is there anything else you want to add?