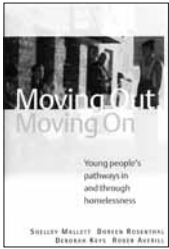


Review

Reviews of youth-related books and resources / BY DAVID FARRUGIA



Moving out, moving on – young people's pathways in and through homelessness

Shelley Mallett, Doreen Rosenthal, Deborah Keys and Roger Averill, 2009, Routledge, ISBN 978-0-415-47030-8

This book is an important contribution to understandings of youth homelessness, both in Australia and internationally. Drawing on rich qualitative data from young people and a strong conceptual framework, the book relates the experiences of young people experiencing homelessness in Australia to broader social structures and the construction of modern biographies by young people generally. The book concludes with important reflections on the relationship between agency and structural processes, and argues that policy frameworks must recognise the importance of complex interdependencies in young people's lives if they are to address the issue of youth homelessness.

The book's conceptual framework assesses a number of central concepts in research on youth homelessness, including the meaning of 'home', and the

notion of risk. The authors use a pathways metaphor to reflect on the combination of agency and structure in young people's lives. Four pathways are identified, each of which describes a distinct set of experiences, relationships with family and services, and plans for the future. One important outcome of the book is the importance of family and other relationships in determining whether or not young people are able to eventually return home – or create their own. The authors also reflect on the way the narratives they analyse fit in to broader trends in modern society, particularly widespread individualism in both young people's identities and policy frameworks. They conclude by emphasising the importance of interdependence as a basis for policy that aims to address the realities of youth homelessness. An important study with wide-ranging implications for research, policy and practice, this book will be of interest to students, policy-makers and researchers alike.

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Young people, ICTs and democracy: Theories, policies, identities and websites

Tobias Olsson & Peter Dahlgren, 2010, Nordicom, Gothenberg, ISBN 978-91-89471-87-0

Edited by Tobias Olsson and Peter Dahlgren, this collection of 12 chapters provides a generally optimistic, empirically driven



European contribution to a terrain of scholarly research that exists at the intersection between youth studies and internet studies. *Young people, ICTs and democracy* is divided into four sections: theories, policies, identities and websites. The synthesis that emerges between these sections and across the chapters is due in part to its genesis at a 2007 symposium. At its core, the book is concerned primarily with understanding the late modern context of young people – often characterised as being saturated by technologies of communication – and the interplay between that context and political and civic roles. The contributors document the potential of contemporary communication technologies and begin to locate limitations in relation to political engagement.

Towards the beginning of her contribution in section one, Natalie Fenton points towards a recurrent theme in the collection, which also speaks to a broader sentiment about the internet, young people and politics that many potential readers of this book may be interested in: 'the internet is ... a medium that is more readily associated with young people,

[and] young people are increasingly associated with disengagement from mainstream politics' (p.19). By bringing these discourses of engagement and disengagement together and exploring new spaces of youth engagement, this collection provides an important perspective for those interested in youth studies. Chapter 7 by Maria Bakardjieva, titled 'The internet and subactivism', for instance, was of particular note in my reading. Bakardjieva draws on two qualitative studies of young people who actively use blogs and social network sites, primarily Facebook. She notices that while the proliferation of participation and investment in these social spaces is undeniable, the young people operating within them consistently downplay and disassociate themselves from their revolutionary or transformative dimensions. Instead, blogs and social network sites are described simply as mediums of the everyday where civic participation features only incidentally. Understanding this lived reality of young people is, according to Bakardjieva, the key to facilitating their political engagement.

In summary, this collection provides a much needed contribution that begins to chart a rapidly developing field of study of interest to scholars, policymakers, educators and any party with an interest in both enabling and mapping the civic participation of young people.

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