Libraries and Learning Services

University of Auckland Research Repository, ResearchSpace

Copyright Statement

Youth Empowerment in South Auckland:

Gauging the Potential of Participatory Action Research

Jeffrey Kenda Ronald Sabour

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Development Studies, the University of Auckland, 2017.

ABSTRACT

Motivated by a sense of dissatisfaction with prevalent research methods which tend to overlook significant bodies of knowledge and capacity for social action, the researcher sought to investigate the potentialities and limitations of Participatory Action Research (PAR) in working with youth in the South Auckland suburb of Manurewa. By engaging youth as co-researchers in Participatory Action Research, the researcher investigated three questions: What does PAR reveal about the perspective of young people towards issues of underdevelopment which affect them? If any, what impact does engaging in PAR have on their capacities and willingness to engage in social change? If at all, how and in what ways does PAR alter some of the barriers and challenges which might otherwise prevent young persons from participating in social action?

The research findings indicate that all the participants attained a higher level of critical consciousness as a result of conducting PAR and consistently identified ways in which conducting PAR had a positive impact on enhancing their ability to engage in social action. The findings also provide insight into risks and limitations of conducting PAR with young people in New Zealand. Issues of facilitator dependence, facilitator capture, as well as barriers to participation are exposed. Also the significant levels of time, energy and commitment required for conducting PAR are better understood.

While making more explicit certain opportunities and challenges which PAR presents, the research findings point towards certain factors and conditions which enable researchers to more fully realise the potentialities of PAR, while minimizing some of its risks. The author argues that the process of empowerment set in motion by PAR is essentially organic in nature and that progress and development is therefore dependent upon the ability of those who conduct PAR to create certain conditions conducive to growth. A number of these conditions are examined. The author suggests that much depends upon the adoption of an approach which is informed by an appreciation of the philosophical and ideological roots of PAR as well as its technical features. The outcomes of the research provide insight into how PAR can be more fully utilised in the area of youth development in New Zealand.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

> *"...care must be taken lest people be treated primarily as passive objects to be developed, rather than as protagonists of development in and of themselves. The aggregate talents of several billion individuals represent a phenomenal reservoir of resources for constructive change that has so far gone largely untapped. People must become the protagonists of development that is both sustainable and just."*
>
> (BIC, 2015:5)

In 2015 the United Nations revealed the completed set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and called upon "all countries and all stakeholders" to act "in collaborative partnership" to implement the new development agenda (United Nations, 2015:paragraph 5). The UN describes the agenda as being of "unprecedented scope and significance" and refers to the SDGs as "universal goals and targets which involve the entire world, developed and developing countries alike" (United Nations, 2015:paragraph 4). Given the track record with the Millennium Development Goals, it seems that the commitment and participation of the UN member states alone proves insufficient for achieving goals of an ambitious international development agenda. Fulfilling the SDGs will require the active participation of the billions of people who occupy our planet. Much more then needs to be learnt about the ways and methods of tapping into the capacity of the peoples of the world to participate in the process of development.

This research provides insight into the benefits and limitations of using Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology for conducting development research with marginalized groups in New Zealand. Specifically the research looks at the contributions PAR might make to enhance the capacity of youth in South Auckland to engage in social action. By engaging youth as co-researchers in Participatory Action Research, the aim of the research is to determine what potential PAR has to give greater voice and control to youth over their own development and also what risks and challenges are presented by PAR. It is hoped that the outcomes of the research are useful for domestic development researchers and

that they provide insight into how PAR can be more fully utilised in the area of youth development in New Zealand.

Beyond simply scrutinizing PAR in a New Zealand context, the research seeks to provide insight into what factors and conditions might be conducive to getting the most out of PAR in terms of fulfilling its potential. Three questions guide the research:

- What does PAR reveal about the perspective of young people towards issues of underdevelopment which affect them?
- If any, what impact does engaging in PAR have on their capacities and willingness to engage in social change?
- If at all, how and in what ways does PAR alter some of the barriers and challenges which might otherwise prevent young persons from participating in social action?

The research is motivated by a sense of dissatisfaction with prevalent research methods which remain largely non-participatory and which tend to divide and fragment rather than integrate and bring together. The very separation of development studies and development practice as two distinct fields of academia is unsettling as it propagates a pattern of research and knowledge generation which involves an 'outsider' looking 'in'. This in turn serves to artificially separate bodies of academic or 'scientific' knowledge and theory from individuals and communities of practice and action. In the course of my undergraduate studies I identified PAR as a research methodology which has attracted a fair deal of support and popularity, especially in the field of critical youth studies (Cammarota & Fine, 2008). PAR is a methodology which brings together development research and practice as mutually reinforcing parts of one integrated process. PAR advances as a group of co-researchers engage in cycles of action, reflection and planning, in pursuit of development objectives defined by themselves (McTaggart, 1994). PAR is presented by its advocates as an effective means for empowering those who conduct it, and for enabling them to take charge of their own development (Montero, 2009). I have been keen to test the validity of these claims and also to better understand the limitations of PAR.

The research is also motivated by awareness that there remains only a limited amount of literature which addresses experience of conducting PAR in New Zealand. The majority of research which provides insight into the potential of PAR has been carried out in foreign contexts. While PAR has gained popularity in South America, North America and Europe in particular, the potential of PAR is yet to be broadly examined in New Zealand. It is hoped

that the research will better position PAR in the methodological toolkit of New Zealand development practitioners and researchers, especially those working with young people.

The site of research is Manurewa, a major suburb of South Auckland, New Zealand. It is understood that undesirable social conditions in Manurewa brought on by growing inequality in NZ impact young people most seriously (Boston & Chapple, 2014). As a result of cultural and historic circumstances, a lot of young people resident in South Auckland are marginalized and underserved by mainstream social services such as education, health and the justice system (Harris, 2006; Boston, et al., 2014; Zavala, 2013). Despite these undesirable social conditions, I also view young people of South Auckland as representing a vast reservoir of capacity to transform society waiting to be tapped. As a resident in Manurewa myself, I have observed how local bodies of knowledge and capacity for social action remain overlooked by civil and development agencies. The combination of the visible need for change along with the significant opportunity which exists to tap into latent capacity warrant the attention of development researchers like myself who can do more to identify methods and approaches which are more conducive to the social, spiritual and economic development of young people. The significance and value of the research is that it can be used to inform domestic researchers and social actors about how they might approach the use of PAR in their efforts to overcome the challenges they face, and to build better communities.

I am also motivated to conduct development research in a setting close to home as part of a conscious effort to draw attention of the value of development research taking place in all countries and within all communities, rather than simply in what are historically identified as 'developing' countries. The Sustainable Development agenda has been underpinned by an increasingly accepted assumption that development should be a concern of all peoples and nations, and that issues of underdevelopment are not confined simply to developing nations (United Nations, 2015). Issues of underdevelopment are increasingly linked to inequality within societies, rather than simply GDP per capita measures of individual states (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009). In my undergraduate studies I also became conscious of what I perceived to be an institutionalised bias in favour of development studies being carried out in developing country contexts which are foreign to the researcher. This apparent bias favours approaches to development studies which involve an outsider looking in as such approaches are thought to enhance objectivity and minimize the risk of coercion. In the course of my research I have made a conscious effort to expose and challenge these assumptions.

In respect to methodology, the study is qualitative in nature. It involves the formation of a group of six youth (including myself) who are introduced to PAR methodology and who engage in cycles of PAR indefinitely. The co-researchers are all residents of Manurewa and are aged from sixteen to twenty-seven. To monitor the impact which conducting PAR has on the co-researchers, data has been collected over a span of eight weeks through conducting semi-structured interviews as well as by gathering field notes as I conduct participant observation. I also facilitate a process through which the co-researchers themselves develop their own impact assessment framework. The experience and effects of PAR methodology on the co-researchers is the focus of this study, rather than any specific findings of the PAR which the youth co-researchers conduct.

The research is guided by a hybrid theoretical framework which draws on Freire's notion of critical consciousness (Freire, 2012) and Zimmerman's model of youth empowerment (Zimmerman, 2000). Using the model of Freirean critical consciousness, I develop a coding framework based on the idea of there being three stages of consciousness - each with certain characteristics - which an individual goes through in the process of conscientization. This framework enables me to identify shifts in the consciousness of the participants which result from them conducting PAR. Zimmerman (2000) on the other hand promotes an approach to development research which requires that participants in development processes themselves be in charge of the definition of what constitutes empowerment and in the development of methods for assessing developmental impact. To enhance opportunity for triangulation, the research group therefore develops its own impact assessment framework which provides data about the potential of PAR. The hybrid theoretical framework enables me to develop a set of methods for data collection and analysis which as a whole provide rich insight into the potential of PAR in working with young people in New Zealand.

This thesis is composed of seven chapters. In this first chapter I have offered an introduction to the research and have made clear the objectives of this study. In chapter two I describe the social reality within which the research takes place and provide justification for my choice of research site.

In the third chapter I review existing academic literature related to a number of themes which are central to the topic of research. Chapter three is the largest chapter of the thesis and is divided into two major parts. In the first part of chapter three I expose several

problems or gaps within existing theory and practice related to the area of youth participation and voice. In the second part of chapter three I review literature on the theoretical frameworks of critical consciousness and critical youth empowerment and examine this literature for knowledge and insight which may enable me to respond to the deficiencies of youth participation and voice already exposed in part one. To conclude chapter three I examine literature on existing experience of conducting PAR in New Zealand and expose a number of claims about its potentialities and limitations, the validity of which are tested through this research.

In chapter four I present the methodology of the research and provide justification for my choice of research methods. Chapter four begins with an examination of my positionality as a researcher. In this section I state upfront a number of assumptions which underpin this research and provide insight into my personal motivations behind the choice of research topic and methodology. I then provide a description of the various tools used to collect data and explain how I analyse the data to generate findings.

The findings of the research are then presented in chapter five. This research is qualitative in nature and as such the findings are presented in terms of themes which were reoccurring in the data. The findings clearly point towards a number of potentialities of PAR as well as provide insight into certain limitations.

In chapter six I discuss the research findings, making ample reference back to themes covered in chapter three. In this chapter I examine how my findings validate or challenge a number of existing claims about the potentialities and limitations of PAR. In chapter six I also draw attention to the new findings of this research and consider the implications of these findings. In this chapter I formulate an argument which is informed by the findings of the research.

In chapter seven I conclude the thesis by providing a summary of the most exciting findings of this research. In conclusion I also offer my final verdict on the potentialities and limitations of PAR and offer suggestions in respect to room for further research.

CHAPTER 2: THE RESEARCH CONTEXT

The research takes place in the Manurewa community of South Auckland, New Zealand. In this chapter I explain the rationale behind my choice of research location. Firstly, by conducting my research in New Zealand I seek to contribute to discourse about the value of conducting research and addressing issues of under-development in both developed and developing countries. This approach to research is consistent with the discourse surrounding the Sustainable Development Agenda which seeks to enlist all peoples and nations in processes of development which disrupt the binary of developed or developing states (United Nations, 2015:paragraph 5).

Secondly, Manurewa is a social space in which young people make up the largest portion of the community. Despite being the most dynamic segment of the population, they experience the highest degrees of marginalization. My research seeks to examine the potential of PAR methodology in conducting research in marginalized groups, and as such it takes on greater relevance when conducted in a setting in which young members of the population experience marginalization. Manurewa is an urban part of New Zealand affected by high rates of poverty. A broad range of health and human development indicators show that youth and children in particular are the most vulnerable to the effects of poverty (Boston & Chapple, 2014). I hope that the research brings further attention to the negative social outcomes of increasing inequalities within advanced economy countries like New Zealand.

In exploring the rationale behind my chosen research context I will review relevant academic literature and consider the implications of pertinent social statistics.

2.1 - RELEVANCE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES IN NEW ZEALAND

The international adoption of the Sustainable Development Agenda is an important indication of contemporary shifts which recast development research and practice methods and policy in a way that transcends the categorization of the world's countries into developed and undeveloped. My research acknowledges that the Sustainable Development Goals

(SDGs), to which the NZ government has made a commitment, are intended for all countries, including New Zealand. In adopting the Sustainable Development Agenda, the United Nations (2015:7th paragraph) affirms the expectation that "all countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership, will implement this plan." Referring further to the SDGs, the UN explains that:

> "This is an Agenda of unprecedented scope and significance. It is accepted by all countries and is applicable to all, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities. These are universal goals and targets which involve the entire world, developed and developing countries alike."

This welcome shift in the direction and change in the conceptual underpinnings of contemporary development practice is in part due to increased recognition of the presence of issues of underdevelopment within all countries - issues which stem from growing inequality within communities. Drawing on a considerable amount of data, Wilkinson and Pickett (2009) identify a strong relationship between the level of income inequality within countries and indicators of a broad range of social maladies. The pattern which emerges is that countries with higher income disparities such as the UK and the United States fare worse on measures of undesirable social conditions in comparison with advanced economy countries with greater social and economic equality such as Japan, Norway and Sweden. While the poorest people in an advanced economy country with high income disparity may be wealthier than those elsewhere (in terms of purchasing power), they actually face greater hardships than their 'poorer' peers in more equal countries (Grant & O'Hara, 2010). Most interestingly, while the harmful outcomes of income inequality are experienced most by those at the bottom end of the income spectrum, the social problems caused by greater inequality end up affecting even the high earners too. Similarly, Stiglitz (2012) identifies a clear relationship between income distribution and public health issues and as such argues that greater inequality results in a country having higher rates of health problems in comparison to countries with similar per capita GDP but lower levels of inequality. This suggests that countries with greater inequality suffer more as a whole.

It is in the light of this growing body of research and social analysis that authors like Rashbrooke (2013:7) draw attention to income inequality in advanced economy countries being a source or "growing international concern" as it brings with it "serious economic and

political risks" which "undermine social cohesion and raise acute ethical challenges". As a result of this advance in understanding of the outcomes of inequality, in recent years there has been a growing willingness to reconsider the conceptual foundations which shape development research and practice and to reconceptualise what is meant by development and underdevelopment. The entire school of Post-development thought emerged largely in response to the increasing awareness of the limitations of the North-South divide and the colonial underpinnings shaping development interventions. Thinkers like McFarlane (2006:1), for example, call for a "consistent interrogation of the epistemic and institutional basis and implications of the North – South divide" and suggest a need for attention to be given to "addressing inequality as a primary indicator of under-development".

With these ideas in mind I am eager to conduct my research in New Zealand. New Zealand is an advanced economy state which is affected by high levels of inequality. In 2013, the wealthiest 1% of adult New Zealanders owned more than three times as much wealth as the poorest 50% of adults combined (Easton, 2014:3). Easton (2014:3) further published that in the same year the wealthiest 1% of adults owned 16% of the total country's wealth, while the bottom half owned a total of 5% of the country's wealth. Between the mid-1980s and the mid 2000's, the gap between the rich and the rest in New Zealand widened at a rate greater than in any other OECD country during the same period (Rashbrooke, 2014). As a result, significant social crises affect millions of New Zealanders and it is marginalized groups which suffer most from the outcomes of inequality. Data published by Easton (2014:10) indicates that a disproportionate number of Maori and Pasifika households live below the poverty line. In 2013, 1 in 10 Pakeha households lived below the poverty line, whereas 1 in 5 Maori and Pasifika households lived below the poverty line. The prevailing 'brown tail' of underachievement also stands as testimony. In 2014 only 67.7% of Maori 18 years old gained NCEA level two or above, 75% or Pacifica, 85.1% of European, and 89% of Asian students. The national average for all groups was 81.2% (Statistics New Zealand, 2014). With inequality being so pronounced in New Zealand, 'domestic' development studies is thus of greater relevance than ever before.

2.2 - Youth Marginalization and Overlooked Potential in South Auckland

Given that this research seeks to examine the potential of PAR methodology in conducting research among and with marginalized groups, it is necessary for me to identify a research site within which I am be able to recruit participants belonging to a population affected by high degrees of marginalization. Marginalization is a contested concept for which there are a number of definitions (Riele, 2006). In the context of my research, I refer to marginalized persons or groups as those who are not served well by mainstream social services such as schooling, health care, the justice system and the like. Marginalized persons are not identified on the basis their personal traits, but through their relationship with the structures through which mainstream social services are provided. In the context of public schooling, for example, marginalized persons may be identified by having higher expulsion rates or persistent levels of under-achievement. More generally, they do not have their needs met by schools, in terms of relationships with teachers or peers, teaching style, curriculum, or school culture and structure (Riele, 2006).

The notion of marginality is useful as it disrupts habitual readings of individuals and groups which construct them as problematic and responsible for the 'trouble' they cause to society (Smyth, 2007). It allows us to recognize that marginalization is "a product of the institutions, systems and culture(s) we create and sustain" (Smyth et al., 2000:4). Marginality also enables us to recognize that without change in these structures, being the recipient of social services may not necessarily be beneficial to all members of society (Taylor, 2002).

Manurewa is home to a high proportion of Auckland's Maori and Pacific Island migrant population. These groups make up 58.3% of the Manurewa population, compared to the national average of 22.3% (Statistics NZ, 2013). Many argue that New Zealand's colonial history, combined with the continuation of western-centric modes of governance contribute to social conditions in which members of these populations experience marginalization from the mainstream structures of the society in which they live (Harris, 2006; Boston, et al., 2014; Zavala, 2013).

The indicators of marginalization are many. For instance, its outcomes are made apparent by the higher levels of poverty in areas more densely populated by minority groups

and by growing racial and class inequalities within cities such as Auckland. Development studies research in New Zealand is vital as poverty and conditions of significant under-development are prevalent within our own national borders. As reflected in the Sustainable Development Agenda launched in 2015, there is a growing consciousness of the limitations of binaries which categorize countries as developed or developing. As these binaries fade away it gives rise to a heightened consciousness of the harmful outcomes of growing inequalities within all societies, including those which make up OECD states such as New Zealand. Research carried out by the NZ Ministry of Social Development in 2014 indicates that poverty[1] affects 285,000 New Zealand children, or one in four children. What is most concerning is that New Zealand childhood poverty rates have almost doubled since the 1980s (Boston & Chapple, 2014). Poverty is more apparent in low socioeconomic areas like Manurewa and it is the minority groups within these areas which are most affected. Data from the 2013 census reveals that the median income in Manurewa was $24,700, compared to the national median of $28,500. For Maori in Manurewa who make up 25.3% of the population, the median income was only $21,400. When considering those at the lowest end of the income spectrum who suffer most from the consequences of poverty, 21% of the residents in Manurewa aged 15 and over lived on less than $5000 in 2013, compared to 14% of the national population. Low incomes are coupled with a high unemployment rate with 13.3% of people aged 15 and over in Manurewa being unemployed compared to 7.1% of the national population. 22% of Maori aged 15 and over living in Manurewa in 2013 were unemployed (Statistics NZ, 2013).

Youth and children are the most vulnerable to the effects of poverty, which has a lasting impact on their ability to excel. In 2014 the Ministry of Social Development reported that poor academic performance which prevails in South Auckland communities is due to "influencing factors strongly linked to poverty including: frequent changes of school; chronic ill health; inadequate food and clothes; poor and inconsistent parental care; limited access to books and learning resources; and family dysfunction" (Ministry of Social Development, 2014). A study conducted by the Ministry of Social development in 2013 identified that residents in the Clendon Park suburb of Manurewa gained proportionally low levels of formal education and that in 2013, 28% of all Clendon Park residents aged 15 years and over had no

---

[1] The NZ Ministry of Social Development defines persons who experience poverty as those who live in a home in which household income is below 60 per cent of the national median, after deducting housing costs.

formal educational qualification, compared with 17% regionally. Only 11% had gained a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 25% regionally (Ministry of Social Development, 2014). Research indicates that children born into low-income families can succeed, but they have much less chance than those born into better-off families (Boston & Chapple, 2014:14).

In considering the causes of poverty in areas like Manurewa, the notion of marginality or social exclusion is valuable as it enables us to move beyond placing blame and responsibility on certain groups and instead to ask what is it about the structures, cultures and institutions we construct which lead to conditions in which certain segments of the population remain under-served. We come to consider ways in which marginalization is at least in part a product of institutions and society, and requires action in those areas (Riele, 2006). Consider, for example, the fact that in 2013, 35% of Manurewa residents were born overseas (compared to the national average of 25%), and that of that group, 42% had been in New Zealand for less than 10 years. For many of these persons English is a second language, and as such equitable engagement with quality education and training remains a challenge in an environment in which mainstream teaching and curriculum is offered in English, through a system which is underpinned largely by western values and cultural norms. A report published by the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs in 2011 (p.34) concluded that, as a result of cultural factors, "[m]any Pacific peoples have not experienced success in the education system, and therefore tend to have lower incomes and live in communities with the fewest economic resources". Sustained inequities are thus partially attributable to cultural bias inherent in the institutional structures through which social services are provided.

Irrespective of cultural context, young people are often stigmatized and socially excluded in subtle ways which have significant implications for their development. France (2008) observes that young people who have just left secondary school or university are perceived as having less economic and social value and are thus stigmatized as problematic and unproductive. They thus struggle to gain access to anything other than low and unstable incomes, which increases the risk of poverty amongst young people. In the period of their lives when they are transitioning towards independence, they are left most economically vulnerable. France (2008:496) argues that neo-liberal governments tend to implement policy which is "more concerned with responsibilising families and young people and disciplining them to work regardless of its value". He suggests that in such cases little attention is given to addressing the problems of low youth incomes or providing adequate welfare support for those most vulnerable to poverty (France, 2008).

Significant progress has been made in recent years to reduce processes of marginalization. For example, between 2009 and 2014, the amount of Maori secondary students graduating with NCEA level 2 or above increased from 45% to 58%, a greater increase than any other ethnic group during the same period (Ministry of Education, 2016). However, significant disparities still remain, with 58% of Maori students graduating from secondary school with NCEA level 2 or above in 2014 compared to the national average of 77% during the same year. A growing body of literature speaks to the harmful outcomes of income inequality within societies. Chronic social ills such as reduced life expectancy, high crime rates, high incidences of mental health problems, low educational achievement and so on persist in advanced economy countries too, despite increasing average income and sustained GDP per capita growth. Research suggests that even if the lower bracket of society are being lifted out of poverty, social ills remain proportional to the size of the income gap between the rich and the poor (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009; Stiglitz, 2012; Rashbrooke, 2014).

CHAPTER SUMMARY

In conducting this research I am keen to learn about the potential of Participatory Action Research methodology in working with members of marginalized groups in South Auckland. Given the high incidence of poverty in Manurewa, the community is a focal point of a lot of domestic development research. I wish to emphasize here that my reasoning for pointing out social ills and drawing attention to indicators of under-development in South Auckland is not to reinforce pervasive stereotypes or to suggest a lack of capacity for critical action within young people in South Auckland. That the voluntary sector is a proportionally larger part of the economy in South Auckland compared to other parts of the city is a clear indication of the willingness and capacity of its residents to make a contribution to the betterment of society (Census, 2013). New Zealand in general is placed very highly on an international scale of philanthropy and volunteerism (Cox, et.al, 2015). Also, South Auckland has a high density of young people who represent a reservoir of capacity to transform society waiting to be tapped (Census, 2013). Thus my intention has been to expose the need to look beyond binaries and to recognize the very real and harmful social outcomes of inequality existing within advanced economy countries such as New Zealand. It is my hope that the outcomes of the research contribute to a body of knowledge which assists protagonists of development to adopt methodologies appropriate to each context. It is hoped that

methodologies can be adopted in ways which reduce the effects of marginalization and potentially enhance self and group expression of persons participating in development research.

In the next chapter I review existing academic literature relevant to the topic of study, identify gaps in the literature, and suggest how this research responds to gaps or problems arising in this area of research which are yet to be resolved.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 - CENTRAL THEMES

The following two sub-themes of 'Participation' and 'Youth Participation and Voice' are presented below as 'problems' which I attempt to address through my research. In reviewing the body of knowledge about these topics and the specific schools of thought within them, I attempt to expose what work is left undone and to justify how my research contributes to filling some of the gaps.

3.1.1 - PARTICIPATION

My research seeks to scrutinize Participatory Action Research methodology and assess its potential in working with marginalized youth. This research is motivated by a sense of dissatisfaction towards contemporary mainstream development research methodologies which are frequently non-participatory in nature and which fail to take into account the capacity of the masses of humanity to participate in processes of development. It is my intention to provide here a review of the main schools of thought related to the topic of participation. I describe how prevalent academic discourse about this topic has shifted over time and I point towards gaps which remain in research and literature.

Origins of Participation

In considering the roots of participatory development, it is important to firstly imagine the context in which the modern development industry emerged. In the post WWII context, development was broadly conceived of as a process through which the first-world industrialised states provided aid and assistance to the third world states in order to enable them to industrialize and 'catch up' (Escobar, 2011). The form which development took (and which some argue has continued to take) resembled an extension of Western colonial ambitions of the past. It is argued fairly convincingly that in a post-colonial era, development

intervention was a means through which power could be exercised in order to establish political arrangements of exploitation and oppression (Escobar, 2011).

Participatory development emerged as a reaction to growing consciousness of the inherently oppressive and exploitative nature and also the poor outcomes of 'top down' development which tend to exclude recipient beneficiaries from decision making processes relevant to their own wellbeing and lifestyle. Dasgupta & Beard (2007:230) argue that participatory community driven development was popularised as part of a "broader paradigm shift responding to the well-documented critiques of top-down, modernist and authoritarian approaches that have dominated development over the last fifty years". Participatory development has thus been an attempt to "increase the involvement of socially and economically marginalized peoples in decision-making over their own lives" (Guijt & Shah, 1998:1). From an ethical perspective, participation is an ideal promoted as being just and in keeping with the dignity of human beings. It is also justified on the basis of claims that participatory methods and approaches are more likely to ensure sustainable and relevant outcomes of development practice.

Participation: From 'Buzzword' to 'Tyranny' and 'Transformation'

Early insights into participation recognized that, rather than thinking in terms of a participatory or non-participatory duality, it is possible to view participation as a spectrum. Arnstein (1969) made a valuable contribution to thought by introducing the idea of a 'ladder of citizen participation'. He describes that certain methods and approaches to governance diffuse power and enable people to have control in determining the course of their own lives. On the other hand a different set of methods and approaches ensure that power remains centralised and sustains relationships of manipulation and domination. He argues that the space between represents a spectrum of degrees of participation. This is a useful contribution in that it recognizes that participatory development is concerned primarily with the diffusion of power and control and that various methods and approaches influence how power is exercised between various stakeholders. In prevalent discourse, participatory development is closely tied to notions of empowerment; adopting methods and approaches to development which supposedly enable recipient populations to take greater charge of their own development and determine the direction it should take (Cooke & Kothari, 2001).

The high ideal assigned to participation as a means of empowering the poor attracted to it a great deal of popularity and it became very much a buzzword in development discourse (Alejandro, 2007). Since the 1990s, the World Bank, for example, has been investing upwards of $7 billion of its annual development budget in programs of participatory community driven development (Mansuri & Rao, 2004). The actual development outcomes however have not been indicative that 'empowerment' and poverty reduction are accelerating at a notable rate. The ideals assigned to the concept of participation remain to be realised in practice.

Cooke and Kothari (2001) provide a useful critique of the concept of participation and the discourse surrounding it. Cooke and Kothari observe a significant tension between the poor outcomes of participatory development in the field and the prevalent assumptions about its inherent superiority as an approach to development. They argue that participatory development practitioners have been fooled or even consciously lead into using the rhetoric and techniques of participation to exercise power more subtly over populations and to force them into externally-determined development process. Cooke and Kothari (2001) propose that the imbalance of power between practitioners and beneficiaries which is sustained but obscured with the rhetoric of participation leads ultimately to tyranny. Rather than creating opportunities for beneficiaries to acquire and exercise power according to their own terms, participatory techniques become a vehicle through which particular types of people and communities are constructed in a way that favours dominant elite. Cooke and Kothari seek not to critique the methods and techniques of participatory development but rather the theoretical and conceptual basis of participation. They argue that a dominant western notion of power underpins the entire discourse. The risk then is that this western conception of power associated with economic and political influence becomes exported and imposed through the discourse itself. Cooke and Kothari (2001:4) stress that "the discourse itself, and not just the practice, embodies the potential for an unjustified exercise of power".

While Cooke and Kothari (2001) offer critique, it is not to say they are against participation per se. The issue is that assumptions about the potential of participatory development remain to be validated through concrete and progressive human development outcomes. In an attempt to re-invigorate learning and investigation in this respect, Hickey & Mohan (2004) theorize a more coherent and potentially transformative approach to participatory development. They argue that enhancing critical consciousness of populations in combination with the establishment of mechanism for citizen participation in democratic

20

political process has the potential to lead to social transformation according to the terms of the citizens themselves. In a similar vein, Alejandro (2007:541) suggests that, having been reduced to a series of methodological packages and techniques, participation has lost its philosophical and ideological meaning. He goes on to argue that in order to make participatory approach and methodology serve counter-hegemonic processes of grassroots resistance and transformation, these meanings need to be recovered. He calls for participation to be "re-articulated within broader processes of social and political struggle in order to facilitate the recovery of social transformation in the world of twenty-first century capitalism" (Alejandro, 2007:541).

3.1.2 - *YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND VOICE*

This research is motivated also by concern that the potential of young people to participate in processes of development remains largely overlooked, and that their absence from these processes is reinforced as a result of significant limitations in mainstream methods and approaches which seek to enhance the participation of young people in largely tokenistic ways. In this section I provide an overview of mainstream literature on the topic of youth participation and voice, and also draw attention to more progressive areas of learning which is relevant to this research.

Mainstream discourse about youth participation and voice

Youth participation and voice are contested concepts which take on different definitions in different contexts. In the context of my research I draw on the definition of Checkoway and Gutierrez (2006:2) who broadly define youth participation as "a process of involving young people in the institutions and decisions that affect their lives." The forms which youth participation can take are diverse, including young people organizing themselves in groups for political or social action, developing their own programs for community development, or advocating the interests and rights of their community members. Through social, political and economic participation, young people raise consciousness about matters which are of concern to them and take steps to transform the structures of society around them (Checkoway & Gutierrez, 2006). Youth voice is a concept closely tied to participation

and refers to the capacity of young people to express themselves and to be heard so as to exert influence on their political and social environments (Nairn et al. 2006). Youth voice also therefore involves the arrangement of structures and institutions in a way that ensures they are receptive to the expressions made by young people (Nairn et al. 2006).

The vast majority of literature about youth participation considers participation in the context of political processes of policy development and decision making. Youth are often only involved in shaping their own development in so far as participating in opinion sharing and decision making on issues defined by others. For example, the New Zealand Ministry of Youth Development (2016) states that "effective youth participation is about creating opportunities for young people to be involved in influencing, shaping, designing and contributing to policy and the development of services and programmes". Actions taken to enhance youth participation in this context seek to enable young people to have a strong voice that leads to action, and provides space for young people to be heard in civic affairs and policy development (Finlay, 2010). Efforts frequently involve the adoption of methods and techniques which make it easier for youth to participate in consultative and decision making processes. Efforts also seek to train and raise capacity in young people to engage in these consultative processes in a meaningful way. Finlay (2010:53), for example, argues the need to ensure that "meeting times, duration and locations work for youth" and that "the more young people are in control of meetings and activities, the more likely these processes will appeal and meet their needs".

Critical commentary on mainstream discourse about youth participation and voice draws attention to the issue of under-representation of various segments of the population. In all efforts to engage young people in decision making processes, groups which are less mobile or less accessible to those promoting youth participation are under-represented during discussions. Likewise, when conversations only engage several dozen persons who are supposedly speaking on behalf of the thousands if not millions of persons who make up cities and regions, representation is clearly an issue. Research conducted by Nairn et al. (2006:248), for example, indicates that "young people's inclusion in local government processes depended on adult organizers' perceptions of who should be 'targeted'" by program coordinators. They describe how two type of young people, 'achievers' and 'troublemakers', were often targeted while the broad diversity of young people in the 'excluded middle' were vastly under-represented. Critics also draw attention to the seemingly insurmountable obstacles which stand in the way of participation in the form of "economic and political forces that have made

meaningful participation for a diverse range of youth difficult to achieve" (Harris, 2006). Harris argues that the achievement of full citizenship for young people in both Australia and New Zealand has become more difficult as a result of social, economic and political changes which extend childhood and disrupt the passage to adulthood. As a result, there exists "considerable public anxiety" about the capacity of young people "to follow the appropriate trajectory to responsible adult citizenship" (Harris, 2006:220). Perceived then as "apprentice citizens" rather than entitled rights-holders, young people are denied opportunities for effective participation (Harris, 2006:220).

Youth as critically conscious agents of social transformation

Critics of mainstream efforts to engage young people, such as Checkoway & Gutierrez (2006), express concern that such initiatives fail to tap into the potential of young people to contribute to the betterment of society. They argue that this approach invites young persons to participate in pre-existing processes of decision making set in motion and intrinsically shaped by an older, often institutionalised 'other' which exists outside of the reality of the young people it seeks to engage. The outcomes of youth engagement informs a type of development intervention which remains something that some abstract 'other' does for and on behalf of a population which itself is treated as a passive recipient. Checkoway & Gutierrez (2006:2) argue that "just because a number of young people attend a number of meetings and speak a number of times, is no measure of the effect" of participation, and that "participation is about the real influence of young people in institutions and decisions, not about their passive presence as human subjects or service recipients".

In response to growing consciousness of these inadequacies, a body of thinkers and youth development practitioners are gaining insights into the potential of youth as critically conscious agents of social transformation (Checkoway & Gutierrez, 2006; Ginwright & James, 2002; Jeffrey, 2013; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Cammarota & Fine, 2008; James & McGillicuddy, 2001). These practitioners are aligning themselves with the emerging field of research and action termed 'critical youth studies'. Cammarota & Fine (2008:4) argue that critical youth studies "goes beyond the traditional pathological or patronizing view by asserting that young people have the capacity and agency to analyse their social context, to engage critical research collectively, and to challenge and resist the forces impeding their possibilities for liberation".

In considering the potential of youth as participants in social transformation, it is useful to firstly gain some historical perspective. It is broadly recognized that historically youth have played a significant role in processes of revolution and social change (Ginwright & James, 2002). Recent experience with the Arab Spring stands as testimony to the potential of youth to organize and mobilize in resistance to oppression. Ginwright and James (2002) provide a useful summary of important contributions made by young people to stimulate social change in Western societies. They draw attention to the 1960s in the southern United States where students violated segregation laws by sitting at lunch counters in white establishments, activity which triggered a new direction in the civil rights movement. They explain how children of South Africa, in their protests against the Bantu education system, directly confronted the government and helped to bring an end to the system of apartheid. Ginwright & James (2002) describe how increasing inequality, poverty, and disease in Brazil led to large numbers of children forced to live on the streets without their families or any other social supports. Thousands of these street children, with the support of adult educators and youth workers, formed a movement that led them to take over the Brazilian congress and force them to adopt the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. These examples make clear the potential for the actions of young people to transform entire nations (Ginwright & James, 2002:31).

More recently, Jeffrey (2013) provides a report on analyses of geographical scholarship and young people's protest around the world between the years of 2010 and 2011. He draws attention to numerous examples of young people – even children as young as eight – becoming involved in popular protest around the world and argues that daily media reporting during the period "presents a kaleidoscope of rebellion, dissatisfaction and anger prosecuted in large part by young people, and sometimes with reference to the notion of 'youth' and 'generation'" (Jeffrey, 2013:145). It is apparent then that each generation of young people manifests a particular capacity for acquiring critical consciousness and for resisting forces of oppression which affect them. Writing 80 years ago, Karl Mannheim (1972 [1936]:108) argued that each generation of young people experience a 'fresh contact' with their social environment, and as such he emphasized their inclination towards 'state-of-the-art' or ground-breaking social and cultural behaviour. This tendency to experience dissatisfaction with prevailing social conditions and cultural norms makes each generation of youth a reservoir of capacity to transform society.

While individuals working in the field of critical youth studies speak highly of the outcomes of early research and practice, it is apparent that systematic study of programs and projects which are guided by a social justice conceptual framework are relatively scarce. Similar research conducted with other segments of the population suggests that the furtherance of critical youth studies will find positive effects on such measures as personal confidence, social connectedness, civic competencies, and leadership development (Checkoway & Gutierrez, 2006). At present, however, little concrete experience exists. It is hopes that the outcomes of this research compliment working being done in the field of critical youth studies.

The construction of youth as problematic

As much as the examples above and many more provide insight into the potential of young people to participate in meaningful social change, it is acknowledged that youth can also attract to themselves a stigma of social burden, complacency and inclination towards anti-social behaviour. In contemporary Western societies, youth are dramatically overrepresented in the justice system and are portrayed through media as the cause of prevailing social ills such as violence, drug distribution and abuse, theft, gang activity, vandalism and the like. Ginwright & James (2002:27) argue that "today's young people face intense economic isolation, lack political power, and are subjected to pervasive social stigma". Clearly, the potential of youth is being largely overlooked and untapped.

In considering the question of how it is that youth are constructed as problematic, a number of themes stand out. It is recognised that the growing tendency for childhood to be extended leads to youth being assigned social standing which is less than that of full citizenship (Harris, 2006). As such, youth are more prone to experience and suffer the consequences of oppressive forces operating in the political, social and economic environment. Ginwright & Cammarota (2002) argue that youth react more strongly to these forces than other segments of the population by speaking out and adopting seemingly rebellious patterns of behaviour which are socially constructed as problematic. Contemporary public policy then shapes justice systems in ways that deals out tough treatment of youth in particular, which then acts to exasperate the construction of problematic youth (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). Adding their voices to this commentary, James & McGillicuddy (2001:3)

argue that "society has denied young people the basic supports they need to develop and is investing exorbitant public resources to punish them for the nation's neglect".

Harmful elements of contemporary social environments such as racism, mass unemployment, pervasive violence, and police brutality pose serious threats to youth in particular. Garbarino (1995) refers to these conditions as "social toxins," a term used to describe how aspects of the social environment become poisonous to a person's well-being. Similarly, Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn (2000) conducted extensive research which established a clear relationship between neighbourhood factors such as gun violence and police abuse, lack of healthcare, racist school practices, lack of jobs that pay a liveable wage on the one hand, and poor development outcomes on the other. These negative aspects of the social environment are barriers to healthy development and lead to youth being constructed by policymakers as problematic and as a threat to society. Ginwright and James (2002:28) argue that youth responses to social injustice "tend to evoke public policy that conceptualizes young people as the root cause of their own problems and does not adequately address the most significant problems facing urban youth."

Cammarota & Fine (2008) also offer very useful insight into why youth are constructed as problematic rather than as valuable agents of social transformation. They explain that sometimes young people gain critical awareness through their own social and cultural experience. They can for example gain awareness about the potentially oppressive and reproductive function of schools and the education system or even about their own family environment. However this insight leads them to forgo school for manual labour jobs or to leave home for the street which is termed a 'self-defeating' resistance because the choice ends up leading to the reproduction of the youth as working class or as dependents. Cammarota and Fine (2008:3) explain that "although the lads resist the schools' purpose of engendering uneven class relations, their resistance contributes to this engendering process by undermining any chance they had for social mobility".

Releasing the potential of youth

According to Checkoway & Gutierrez (2006), counteracting prevalent conceptions of youth as problematic and as a social burden is no easy task. An alternative view is emerging among a number of researchers which portrays young people as "competent citizens with a

right to participate and a responsibility to serve their communities" (Checkoway & Gutierrez, 2006:3). Proponents of this view are eager to learn about methods and approaches which empower young people to take charge of efforts to bring about social change and which provide real outcomes in terms of healthier communities. It is clear that, more importantly than the methods and techniques employed, what needs to change are the beliefs and attitudes held towards youth and their role in society. In reflecting on their early efforts to release the potential of youth in Brazil, James and McGillicuddy (2001:1) explain that:

"The unprecedented movement for change led by children was possible because educators and youth workers in Brazil re-examined their view of youth. They recognized that punitive practices were not solving any problems and invited the youth to join in reflective circles to talk. The youth workers realized the problem was the commonly held view that youth should be acted upon rather than in mutual partnership. The shift in perception and practice allowed new forms of partnerships to emerge. It allowed adults to support youth in creating their own organizations and structures and in developing the mechanisms to solve their own problems through the tools of organizing and citizenship".

In theorizing the movement of youth from being perceived as problematic to being seen as agents of social transformation, Cammarota & Fine (2008) provide a framework of three stages of youth resistance. They explain that youth enact one of three different forms of resistance, depending on the degrees of critical consciousness they have acquired. The first form is 'self-defeating' resistance which manifests itself in rebellious, anti-social behaviour and leads to the further construction of youth as problematic. If however they possess a higher level of critical consciousness their behaviour reflects the second stage and they enact 'conformist' resistance whereby a person engages in education and the economy with the intention of personal gains. They have a degree of critical consciousness which enables them to not necessarily agree with all the ideological underpinnings in their environment but to benefit from society personally by gaining greater social mobility, racial parity, and gender equality and so on. Cammarota and Fine (2008) argue that the task before proponents of critical youth studies is to assist youth to gain a level of critical consciousness consistent with the third level of 'transformational resistance' whereby a young person adopts an orientation towards social justice. Persons who engage in transformational resistance seek to "address problems of systematic injustice and seek actions that foster the greatest possibility for social change" (Cammarota and Fine, 2008:3).

Efforts to stimulate the mobilization and organization of youth for social action are thus commonly educational in nature. Proponents draw heavily on a social justice approach and are confident that doing so will empower youth who already show potential to find creative ways to transform society (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). A number of proponents of critical youth studies adopt Participatory Action Research methodology as they are convinced of its potential to raise the critical consciousness of the collaborating partners (Ginwright 2002; Cammarota, 2002; Fine, 2008). Cammarota (2002:4) argues that "Youth Participatory Action Research represents not only a formal pedagogy of resistance but also a means by which young people engage transformational resistance".

3.2 - PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH: THEORY AND PRACTICE

So far in this chapter I have offered a review of literature related to the themes of participation and youth voice. This research has been motivated by a sense of dissatisfaction with mainstream efforts to enhance youth participation and voice in New Zealand. As such the topics already presented in this chapter can be thought of as the 'issues' or 'problems' which this research seeks to address.

In this research PAR is being scrutinized for its potential to respond to the inadequacies and limitations of prevalent efforts to enhance youth participation and voice in New Zealand. Therefore the remainder of this chapter is arranged into a review of literature covering the themes of 'Critical Consciousness', 'Critical Youth Empowerment', and 'The Potential of PAR'. These themes are examined as theoretical and methodological frameworks which may enable me to respond to the problematic themes of youth participation and voice. While the theoretical foundations of PAR are explored, existing claims about its potentialities and limitations are also examined.

This research is concerned with gauging the potential of Participatory Action Research methodology to nurture the developmental capabilities of young people in South Auckland. In considering the impact that participation in action research has on the youth, it is necessary for me to adopt a theoretical framework which enables me to isolate a number of relevant indicators of human development. In selecting these indicators, I rely partly on Freire's (2012) notion of Critical Consciousness as a theoretical framework which I use to construct my methodology for data collection and analysis. In this section I provide an overview of Freire's notion of critical consciousness. In a subsequent chapter titled 'Design and Methodology' I provide details of how I use the notion of critical consciousness to isolate a number of human developmental indicators which I use to determine the impact of PAR methodology on the research participants.

Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy

"To be a good liberating educator, you need above all to have faith in human beings. You need to love. You must be convinced that the fundamental effort of education is to help with the liberation of people, never their domestication. You must be convinced that when people reflect on their domination they begin a first step in changing their relationship to the world." (Freire, 1971:62)

According to Freire (1971, 2012), education and teaching are processes of profound social consequence. Freire (1971) argues that rather than causing the domestication of citizens, education should seek to raise capacity in persons to liberate themselves from oppression and to bring about social transformation. Themes of justice, equity, critical knowledge, and a belief in the potential which education holds for effecting meaningful social change recur frequently in his work.

Freire holds the position that education is a highly political social action. Freire's critical pedagogy presents education as one process through which "the individual and society are constructed, a social action which can either empower or domesticate students" (Shor, 1993:24). According to Freire, politics is not just one part of education. Rather, he

suggests that education is entirely political and productive in nature. Simply put Freire (1987:46) states that "education is politics". Given this central premise, Freire suggests that "when a teacher discovers that he or she is a politician, too, the teacher has to ask 'What kind of politics am I doing in the classroom?' That is, 'In favour of whom am I being a teacher?'" (Shor & Freire, 1987:46).

In response to this rhetorical question Freire takes the position that "the fundamental effort of education is to help with the liberation of people" (1971:62). Freire's critical pedagogy is activist in that it promotes an education which seeks to stimulate 'revolutionary initiative' among both students and teachers (Freire, 1973). Freire (2012) calls for consistency between the values of a teacher who promotes democracy and critical pedagogy on the one hand and their classroom practice on the other. Freire's pedagogy thus seeks to throw away methods and approaches which construct students as passive receivers of information. He coined the term 'banking model' of teaching to describe an educational practice in which knowledge belonging to a learned teacher is bestowed upon ignorant, 'empty vessel' students who passively receive, memorize, and accept knowledge which remains unquestioned (Freire:2012). Freire argues that the banking model leads to the domestication of students and to the construction of passive citizens who remain the subjects of oppression.

As an alternative to the 'banking model' Freire describes the 'problem-posing' model as an approach which enables teachers and students, as co-learners, to question existing and generate new knowledge through a process of learning characterised by an interplay between action and reflection. Through a problem posing methodology, students learn to "question answers rather than merely answer questions" (Shor, 1993:25). Through his pedagogy, Freire redefines the relationship between students and teachers to one of reciprocity and mutual learning. He promotes a form of education which is explorative, action-oriented, and critical; processes through which learners are empowered to contribute to social transformation.

Freire is explicit in stating that the aim or goal of his education is to increase critical consciousness - an outcome which he suggests enhances the capacity of individuals to transform social reality and to liberate them from oppression. According to Freire (1973) critical consciousness represents the capacity of oppressed individuals to critically 'read' social reality and to act upon it in order to change social conditions. Critical consciousness is described not simply as a state of 'being', but also one of 'doing'. It consists of critical

thought and reflection which are expressed through critical action (Freire, 1973). Freire (1971:70) explains that critical consciousness is raised as a result of people's "intervention in the world as transformers of that world". Underpinning Freire's pedagogy then is an assumption that increasing critical consciousness leads to the outcomes of 'revolutionary initiative' directed towards the transformation of society (Freire, 1973).

The process of attaining Critical Consciousness

Freire (1973) theorizes that as a person advances in a critical learning process their state of consciousness develops through a number of stages which culminate in the condition of critical thought. According to Freire (1973) the first and lowest state of consciousness is 'intransitive thought,' where people are dominated and live fatalistically, resigning themselves to the belief that they have no control over their own destiny. In such a condition, persons believe that only luck or God can influence their future. They see no potential for their own action to change the condition they experience. Lacking volition and power, they are dominated by elite other, and see no real alternative to their circumstances (Shor, 1993:31).

The second stage of consciousness is 'semi-transitive,' where a person begins to see some possibility of change and exercises thought and action accordingly. Feeling somewhat empowered to do so, they pursue lines of action to make change. However, rather than recognizing faults in the whole system underlying an issue, they treat problems in isolation from each other and thus fail to address root causes of oppression. Semi-transitive thinkers are also still likely to naively rally behind popular leaders whose rhetoric aligns with revolutionary values. This is suggestive of the belief that change will still come largely from some heroic other, rather than from one's own self (Shor, 1993:31).

Through further critical learning, an individual eventually attains the highest level of thought, 'critical consciousness'. Freire describes this group as 'critical transitivity,' suggesting dynamism between critical action and thought. Such persons think holistically and critically about their conditions and see themselves as responsible and empowered for making the changes needed. Critically transitive thinkers feel empowered to transform the world around them and recognize the influence of power operating in society (Shor, 1993:31).

Shor (1993: 32), a close friend and collaborator of Freire, describes critical consciousness as having four main qualities:

1) Power Awareness: Knowing that society and history can be made and remade by human action and by organized groups; knowing who exercised dominant power in society for what ends and how power is currently organized and used in society.

2) Critical Literacy: Analytical habits of thinking, reading, writing, speaking or discussing which go beneath surface impressions, traditional myths, mere opinions, and routine clichés; understanding the social contexts and consequences of any subject matter; discovering the deep meaning of any event, text, technique, process, object, statement, image, or situation; applying that meaning to your own context.

3) Desocialization: Recognizing and challenging the myths, values, behaviours and language learned in mass culture; critically examining the regressive values operating in society which are internalized into consciousness - such as racism, sexism, class bias, homophobia, a fascination with the rich and powerful, hero-worship, excess consumerism, run-away individualism, militarism, and national chauvinism.

4) Self-organisation / Self education: Taking the initiative to transform school and society away from authoritarian relations and the undemocratic, unequal distribution of power; taking part in and initiating social change projects; overcoming the induced anti-intellectualism of mass education.

3.2.2 - CRITICAL YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

In section 3.1 I provided a review of literature exposing how youth participation and voice are treated in mainstream development. In so doing I exposed problems which exist in this area of activity which I seek to respond to through this research. In section 3.2 I am providing a review of theoretical frameworks used in the area of critical youth studies and I'm explaining how I draw on these frameworks in my research to respond to the problems described in section 3.1. I have already covered Freire's work on Critical Consciousness. In this section I present Zimmerman's theoretical work on youth empowerment and explain how this framework is used in my research.

To develop a methodology for research and analysis which enables me to gain insight into the impact that engaging in PAR has on a number of youth, I rely also on the work of Zimmerman (2000) who offers a theoretical framework for Critical Youth Empowerment. For the purpose of this research I focus specifically on one important premise which is central to Zimmerman's theoretical framework, namely that conceptions of empowerment are "context and population specific" (Zimmerman, 2000:45), and as such, that there is value in ensuring that processes of impact evaluation are participatory and that youth participants are actively engaged in the design, implementation, and analysis of evaluation methods. This idea plays an important role in the development of my research methodology. I seek to adopt a research and evaluation methodology which enables the participants to articulate for themselves what factors they value as indicators of empowerment and human development so that my analysis of the impact can be assessed in part through a lens which they construct themselves. More details of this analytical process are provided in Chapter 4.

Empowerment according to Zimmerman

Zimmerman (2000:43) describes empowerment as "a process where individuals learn to see a closer correspondence between their goals and a sense of how to achieve them, and relationships between their efforts and life outcomes". He adds that "efforts to exert control are central" to any process of empowerment (2000:44) and that through pursuing mechanisms of empowerment, people seek to "gain mastery over their lives" (2000:43). Zimmerman (2000) describes empowerment as both a process and an outcome. Persons can experience a sense of 'becoming' empowered and also a sense of 'being' empowered. He also suggests that empowerment may occur at multiple levels of analysis. For example, one can think in terms of the empowerment of individuals, or in a much broader context such as the empowerment of communities or Institutions.

An idea which is central to Zimmerman's (2000:45) theory of critical youth empowerment is that "empowerment is context and population specific". In other words, empowerment takes on different forms for different people in different contexts. The way which one individual describes empowerment may be dramatically different from the description of another. One person may live under certain conditions and feel empowered, whereas another person living under the same conditions could feel disempowered, due to their different set of values and beliefs. Both empowerment processes and outcomes differ in

their outward form, so no single description can fully capture its meaning for all people in all contexts. According to Zimmerman (2000:45), "empowerment is an open-ended construct that may not be fully captured by a single operationalization uniformly applied because, by its very nature, it takes on different forms in distinct populations, contexts, and times."

The idea that empowerment is context-specific has vast implications for development studies and for efforts to facilitate the empowerment of individuals and communities. Building on Zimmerman's theory, Jennings, et.al (2006:52) comment that "the development of a global measure of empowerment is not an appropriate goal" because to attempt this would result in the imposition on all people of a conception of empowerment underpinned by the particular set of values and aspirations held by the individuals who constructed it. Zimmerman's theoretical framework of empowerment is useful in that, rather than seeking to suggest how people should be empowered, it enables individuals, communities and institutions to gain insights into how to go about bringing greater coherence to their own ideals, their own opportunities and their own actions. Zimmerman explains:

"In the final analysis, empowerment theory is an effort to provide a conceptual framework for understanding processes and outcomes associated with the continuing struggle to make our lives, organizations, and communities closer to our ideals. The closer the correspondence between our goals, our sense of how to achieve them, and our efforts to succeed, the closer we are to being empowered." (Zimmerman, 2000:58).

According to Zimmerman's framework then, those concerned with processes and outcomes of empowerment should seek to identify and bring more and more consistency between three important elements;

1) Ideals - their values and aspirations and the vision they hold for the future

2) Plans - their sense of how to achieve their goals and what opportunities should be exploited

3) Actions - their practical efforts directed towards bringing their ideals into reality

With this framework it is possible for any individual, group or organization to articulate its own conception of empowerment and to develop its own set of indicators against which progress or movement can be measured. Far from suggesting the need for

everyone to isolate themselves and pursue their own developmental aspirations, the framework also enables for a discourse to emerge between various parties through which they can better understand the hopes and aspirations of each other and to explore ways in which synergies can be found. Also, development practitioners can adopt approaches which enable them to firstly become familiar with ideals and conceptions of empowerment held by the individuals and populations they serve. This can serve to safeguard against the tendency to impose on others foreign ideas of progress and their associated practices.

Speaking of the need for further research in this area, Jennings, et.al (2006:52) comment that "addressing community evaluation as a participatory process in which youth are actively engaged in the design, implementation, and analysis of evaluation studies should be considered an opportunity for meaningful engagement and empowerment" and that "empowerment evaluation is a promising area for future community based, youth-centred research". In the context of this research, Zimmerman's theoretical contribution is valuable in that it helps me to develop a research methodology which enables me to articulate a conception of empowerment held by the research participants and to measure in part the impact the research has on the participants according to their own terms. I provide further details about this process in the next chapter.

3.2.3 - THE POTENTIAL OF PAR

In this section I explore the nature of Participatory Action Research and examine its conceptual underpinnings and how they might serve to address inadequacies in mainstream youth development discussed in section 3.1. Participatory Action Research has often been presented as a research methodology which holds great potential for building capacity within persons to take charge of their own development and to overcome some of the limitations of mainstream development interventions as described in the previous sub-chapter headed "Central Themes". In this section I present PAR through the lens of both its advocates as well as its critics. The discussion I present in chapter 6 essentially involves a comparison between the findings of my research as described in chapter 5, and how PAR is presented in this chapter. It is my hope that my work gives deeper insight into how individuals and groups adopting the use of PAR methodology can do so in a way that makes best use of its potentialities while minimizing its shortcomings.

Historical and ideological roots of PAR

The precise origin of Participatory Action Research methodology is unclear. It is understood that in the early 1900s various elements of the methodology were being promoted by a number of researchers from different parts of the globe (Kemmis et. al., 2004). According to Kemmis et.al (2004), it is broadly recognized that Kurt Lewin (1946:38) was the first researcher to construct and present a coherent theory of action research which describes it as research proceeding "in a spiral of steps each of which is composed of a circle of planning, action, and fact-finding about the result of the action". It was in the late 1930s that Kurt Lewin and his students conducted tests in factory and neighbourhood settings to demonstrate the greater gains in productivity and social orderliness through democratic participation rather than autocratic coercion (Adelman, 1993). Wanting to challenge the control which university organizations held over the production of scientific insight, Lewin promoted a methodology which brings together the implementers of social action with social scientists. Lewin (1946:38-39) sought to "install fact-finding procedures, social eyes and ears, right into social action bodies" so that the "potentialities of cooperation between practitioners and social scientists" could be more fully exploited. Crucially, Lewin's methodology promoted coherence between research and action. He describes his methodology as "a comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action, and research leading to social action". When what is at stake is the possibility of meaningful social change, he was firm in stating that "research that produces nothing but books will not suffice" (Lewin, 1946:35). This construction of action research theory by Lewin made action research a method of acceptable inquiry (McKernan 1991:9).

It is essential to also consider here the social context in which Lewin's theory emerged as well as the ideological approach to action research which Lewin promoted. Lewin conducted research concerned with intergroup relations and overcoming the effects of minority prejudice in various companies and organizations in the southern United States. Through his work, action research was assessed as a means of systematic enquiry for all participants in the quest for greater effectiveness through democratic participation (Adelman, 1993). Not only did Lewin's methodology represent an effective alternative to Taylor's 'scientific management', but it also provided the details of how to transform social relationships within and between groups to sustain communication and cooperation (Adelman, 1993).

An important premise underpinning Lewin's theory is that there exists a willingness among people to participate in a process to improve their conditions, and that under certain circumstances this collective will can be expressed in meaningful action directed towards social transformation. This assumption is indicative of Lewin's faith in the capacity of persons who show a willingness to work for better social conditions. Through his studies, Lewin (1946:34) observed that "there exists a great amount of good-will, of readiness to face the problem squarely and really to do something about it". He recognized the real potential for this "serious good-will" to "be transformed into organized, efficient action" (Lewin, 1946:34).

Another important ideological underpinning of Lewin's methodology is that its goal is the pursuit of social justice - productivity gains are seen as a natural outcome of this pursuit, rather than an end in themselves. Lewin was eager to improve the lives of persons belonging to minority groups, to help them seek "independence, equality, and cooperation" through action research (Lewin, 1946:46). He wanted to enable minority groups to overcome the forces of exploitation and colonisation still present in their modern circumstances (Adelman, 1993). He employed knowledge generated in the social sciences as a means to help solve social conflicts and sought to raise critical consciousness through the posing of hypothetical, 'if so', questions (Adelman, 1993). Given that what is at stake is essentially a matter of ethics and social justice, Lewin (1946:46) concludes one of his publications by stating that the job of effecting greater social cohesion and cooperation "demands from the social scientists an utmost amount of courage" and that "it needs the best of what the best among us can give, and the help of everybody".

The last ideological underpinning which I want to draw attention to is that Lewin recognized that meaningful social transformation was the result of changes occurring both within the structures and governing policies of society, as well as in the hearts and minds of its individual members. He suggests that fundamental and lasting change is the result of these mutual interactions. Lewin (1946:40) explains that "the ideologies and stereotypes which govern intergroup relations should not be viewed as individual character traits but that they are anchored in cultural standards - that their stability and their change depend largely on happenings in groups as groups". Lewin thus suggests that the change of individuals could not take place in isolation from transformation simultaneously occurring in the broader community. According to Lewin, an effective framework for development gives attention to

the role of individual human beings in the construction of a better world and in the influence that beliefs, values and ideology has on action and behaviour.

To Lewin, PAR methodology enables the various components of society - its individual members, its groups, its governing institutions and leadership structures - to interact and exchange knowledge in pursuit of greater social justice and equity. What Lewin had in mind was a transformation needing to take place at the level of culture and belief. He observed that "one of the most severe obstacles in the way of improvement seems to be the notorious lack of confidence and self-esteem of most minority groups", resulting from historic and current political circumstances (Lewin, 1964:44). So insightful and integrative, I feel, is his proposal for a solution that I want to share in here in full:

> "The solution, I think, can be found only through a development which would bring the general level of group esteem and group loyalty which in themselves are perfectly natural and necessary phenomena to the same level for all groups of society. That means every effort should be made to lower the inflated self-esteem of the 100 percenters. They should learn the prayer from the musical play '*Oklahoma*', "Dear God, make me see that I am not better than my fellow men." However, it is essential to learn the second half of this prayer that goes something like "but that I am every darn bit as good as he." From the experiences thus far I would judge that raising the self-esteem of the minority groups is one of the most strategic means for the improvement of intergroup relations". (Lewin, 1946:45)

I have been careful in this section not only to provide insight into the unique research technique promoted by Lewin, but also to make explicit aspects of the ideological approach underpinning his method of enquiry. In conducting research into the potential of PAR, it is important that due attention be given to the conceptual underpinnings of the methodology, as in the final analysis, the approach researchers take to implementing a particular set of techniques influences greatly the outcomes of their research. I hypothesise that the potential of a methodology (in this case, PAR) to give rise to particular outcomes is strongly related to the approach taken by researcher to adopt a particular set of attitudes and assumptions associated with the methodology under scrutiny. Attention needs to be given not just to understanding the technique of PAR, but also to its ideological underpinnings. It is a matter of 'how' research is conducted, as well as the 'form' which research takes. To the greatest extent possible, in conducting my research I try to stay true to both the method and the

approach promoted by Lewin. I hypothesise that the outcomes of my research will be influenced by the degree to which I as an initiator of PAR am able to stay true to the technique of PAR, but also its associated set of attitudes and assumptions which have been made explicit in the preceding paragraphs.

PAR and Participation

As indicated earlier, this research has been motivated by a sense of dissatisfaction felt towards mainstream development research methodologies which fall short in drawing on the capacity of individuals and communities to participate collectively in the transformation of society. It was noted previously that the participation of the masses is hindered significantly by a tendency for development research and practice to divide and fragment - the research from the researcher; the developed from the developing - a tendency which has become so deeply ingrained that it is embedded in the institutions and structures which largely control development processes. It seems that releasing the potential of the masses of humanity to participate in the construction of a better world requires that those involved adopt ideologies and methodologies which are conducive to the transcendence of these immobilizing tendencies. How then is PAR presented in respect to its potential to overcome these tendencies which hinder participation? What claims are made by advocates of PAR about its potential to oppose forces of marginalization?

PAR is presented as research conducted "with" as opposed to "on" the implementers of social action (Somekh, 2005). According to Somekh (2005:34), PAR "promotes equality between researchers from outside the site of practice and practitioner-researchers from insider, working together with the aspiration to carry out research as professionals, with skilful and reflexive methods and ethical sensitivity". Persons seeking to implement PAR methodology are thus required to bridge the gap between the 'inside' and the 'outside' and to set in motion a process of learning through which all advance on equal footing, benefiting collectively from the various insights and perspectives held by each co-researcher. Far from being reduced to a set of techniques through which persons are engaged in processes of externally determined development intervention, in PAR participation takes on a different meaning. Participation in this context is about persons being given the opportunity to read their own reality and to determine for themselves steps which could be taken to improve

some aspect of their life conditions (Whyte, 1991). This participation is not forced, but rather results from an individual giving expression to their will to act towards social change.

PAR is also presented as being concerned with extending the notion of the so-called "expert" to encompass a wider range of stakeholders that operate beyond rarefied university walls (Cammarota & Fine, 2008). Appadurai (2006) argues that the ability to conduct research on one's social surrounding should be widely considered a basic human right. By the "right to research," Appadurai (2006:168) means "the right to the tools through which any citizen can systematically increase that stock of knowledge which they consider most vital to their survival as human beings and to their claims as citizens". Appadurai thus treats PAR methodology as one element of a toolset required to enable citizens to take charge of their own development.

At the level of its ideological foundations, PAR is presented as being underpinned by a faith in the capacity of the masses of humanity to participate in the transformation of society. This position of belief has profound implications for the approach one might take and the methods one might employ in the pursuit of social and economic development. Paulo Freire (1971:62) explains that "to be a good liberating educator, you need above all to have faith in human beings. You need to love." An important feature of community development and action research in particular is its "assumption that man must take a hand, that he is a necessary and capable partner in the shaping of his life and the life of the society he lives in" (Hayden, 1979:13). In other words, PAR acknowledges the capacity of persons indigenous to any context to collaborate alongside social scientists and other external parties in pursuit of a common goal of generating knowledge and improving social conditions. Rather than being seen as passive recipients, the peoples of the world are perceived as agents of change - as a reservoir of capacity to transform society waiting to be tapped.

PAR and releasing the potential of youth

As indicated earlier, this research has been motivated by recognition of deep inadequacies in prevalent discourse and action surrounding youth participation and voice. Far from tapping into the potential of young people to transform society, mainstream efforts to stimulate youth participation seek to involve young people in shaping their own development only to the point of joining in opinion sharing and feedback discussions. How then is PAR

presented in respect to its potential for channelling the capacities of youth towards meaningful social action?

Cammarota and Fine (2008) describe how PAR enables us to transcend the categorization and essentialization of youth. Avoiding the tendency to either treat young people as a pathological problem to be managed or as incipient radicals 'resisting' dominant culture through everyday cultural practices, engaging with youth in PAR requires seeing young people as partners in struggle towards a common cause. According to Cammarota and Fine (2008:4), "PAR does not allow us to 'freeze' young people in such fashion" but rather it treats young people as having "the capacity and agency to analyse their social context, to engage critical research collectively, and to challenge and resist the forces impeding their possibilities for liberation". Ginright (2002, 2006), Cammarota (2002, 2008, 2010) and Fine (2008) have published a number of reports about their experiences in working alongside young people in processes of action research. While much is to be learnt about this field of endeavour, initial indications of the willingness and ability of young people to bring about meaningful social change are very promising.

PAR and critical consciousness

My research has sought to identify what impact, if any, participation in Participatory Action Research has on youth in South Auckland. As previously indicated, it was my intention to develop a methodology for analysing my data which is shaped in part by Paulo Freire's theoretical framework related to critical consciousness and the process of 'conscientization'. It is therefore necessary that I consider here how PAR has previously been presented in respect to its potential to raise critical consciousness among participants. Through my own analysis and discussion I hope to test the validity of these claims.

Persons wishing to produce and enhance processes of social transformation have for some time recognized that the expansion of consciousness is central to such a process (Freire, 1964/1973; Montero, 2009). Freire (1964) coined the term conscientization to describe the process through which an individual attains higher levels of critical consciousness. Montero (2009:76) explains that conscientization "develops critical capacity allowing consciousness to be liberated from the dominant conceptions given by society... thereby producing a different understanding, and giving sense to one's temporal and spatial place in the society, and in

one's specific life-world". Paulo Freire (1970) was instrumental in articulating certain principles which, when combined and applied to practice, produced conscientization. One principle was the need to follow a sequence of actions and reflections, through dialog, about those actions (action–reflection–action). Another was the need to problematize social conditions as well as existing knowledge. Montero (2009:77) explains that "problematization erodes the foundations of certain beliefs and habits" and that without it "we would be dealing with an uncritical acceptance of ideologies, or what has been called indoctrination". Bringing these important elements together - practice within the social conditions to be changed, and reflection used to problematize these social conditions - facilitates the production of heightened critical consciousness (Montero, 2009).

While it is recognized that no perfect methodology exists and that there is no formula for bringing about social transformation, Montero (2009) and Adelman (1993) claim that PAR holds great promise for raising critical consciousness as it brings together coherently the important principles outlined by Freire. An important element of PAR which distinguishes it from earlier forms of Action Research is the fact that it enables the participants to determine for themselves the goals of their research and to identify the lines of action they wish to pursue together. Montero (2009:79) argues that "participation empowers the people, and as is the case of PAR, it is also directed to their conscientization".

3.2.4 - PAR IN NZ

In this section I present a brief portfolio of instances in which PAR has been used in a New Zealand context and consider what relevance this experience might have to my own research. The brevity of this section makes apparent that there is currently quite a limited amount of academic literature addressing the use of PAR methodology in New Zealand. This provides rationale for the research I am conducting.

In 2007 Williams published a journal article describing her experience of participating in an 18-month process of PAR with migrant, low-income, Tongan and Samoan women living in state-owned housing in Glen Innes - a suburb in East Auckland, New Zealand. The group worked together through several phases of activity and their action research culminated

in them conducting a public health survey and engaging in public policy advocacy in areas relevant to their survey findings. The article was an attempt at problematizing PAR specifically in respect to "the ways in which particular sets of knowledge, institutional and identity–power relations privilege particular worldviews and cultural systems over others within the research process" (Williams, 2007:613). Drawing on several examples to illustrate the point, the author describes how she and the other research participants had to "successfully negotiate a number of power–culture dynamics and associated tensions located in the cultural assumptions of PAR, working cross-culturally, and the challenges of attempting PAR within the context of a university–community partnership". William's concluding argument is that persons working with PAR must appreciate the need for context and participant specificity in order to minimize the marginalizing effects of cultural hegemony.

In 2010, Eruera published a report which shared experience of employing PAR methodology in the context of Maori Whanau groups in New Zealand. Eruera endorses PAR as an effective research tool for working with Maori and suggests that this is evidenced by the increasing use of PAR within Maori whanau groups in various settings. Eruera's research suggests that, while the principles of PAR align with many Kaupapa Maori principles such as self-determination and kaitiakitanga, because PAR is not founded within a Māori worldview it is necessary that Maori tikanga processes must be included in the PAR process when it is used in a Maori context. Eruera (2010:9) concludes with the argument that "PAR is able to respond to the diversity of whānau Māori and has the ability to progress whānau development and whānau ora in Māori communities".

In many ways building on Eruera's arguments, Zavala (2013) notes that separate PAR conducted in New Zealand supports the value of conducting PAR in the context of Maori Whanau groups. Zavala's (2013) findings suggest that working with Whanau groups - as opposed to individuals - proves to be an effective means for 'decolonizing' research and ensuring that community self-determination is enhanced among indigenous New Zealanders. According to Zavala (2013), the 'Whanau' - or extended Maori family - functions well as a social unit within which PAR takes place because it ensures the culturally informed distribution of roles, processes of collective decision-making, the enactment of rituals that build community, the upholding of rites of passage and other cultural practices and knowledges that have led to the survival of Māori communities. Conducting PAR in the Whanau context enables the form and pattern of research to be mediated and determined by

this indigenous community structure rather than by an external power. Zavala (2013:33) argues for a "renewed understanding of the primacy of grassroots structures in decolonizing indigenous research projects" and suggests that decolonizing research strategies are less about the method and more about the "spaces that make decolonizing research possible".

While limited in quantity, the experience of conducting PAR in New Zealand is rich and points towards the potential of PAR to give a reasonable level of autonomy and control to those who conduct it. Existing experience also points towards a potential limitation of PAR in respect to its inability to overcome marginalizing effects of cultural hegemony.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter I have reviewed existing academic literature relevant to the topic of research and have examined a number of claims about the potentialities and limitations of PAR which this research seeks to test. I began this chapter by examining existing literature related to the topics of youth participation and voice. This research was motivated by dissatisfaction with how youth participation is treated in New Zealand which results in significant bodies of capacity for engagement in social action being overlooked. Essentially the first part of this chapter exposed the 'problem' or 'issue' which I seek to address through this research.

In the second part of the chapter I examined two theoretical frameworks which guide this research, namely Freire's (2012) notion of critical consciousness and Zimmerman's (2000) notion of critical youth empowerment, which places emphasis on the need for research participants to take control of impact assessments. In reviewing literature on these two theoretical frameworks I have been eager to examine them in terms of their potential to provide insight into possible solutions for the deficiencies of mainstream efforts to enhance youth participation and voice.

Towards the end of the chapter I then examined existing literature on Participatory Action Research in preparation for testing the validity of claims already made about its strengths and limitations. In the next chapter I present the methodology I will use to examine the potential of PAR in working with youth in South Auckland.

CHAPTER 4: DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I provide an overview of the design and methodology of the research. I begin the chapter with a section in which I describe my research positionality and state upfront a number of assumptions underpinning the research. I then provide a description of the methodological toolkit I use in conducting my research and provide rational for my choice of methods.

4.1 - RESEARCH POSITIONALITY

Conducting research in my own back yard

My research takes place in Manurewa, a community in which I have been resident since the beginning of 2013. Part of the reason behind choosing Manurewa as the site of research is that, as a development researcher-practitioner, I want to gain experience in conducting research in my own community. In my experience as a development studies student I have taken interest in challenging what I perceive to be engrained assumptions about the inherent superiority of research methods which involve outsiders conducting research. I therefore have chosen to gain experience in conducting research as a member of the community in which the research takes place. As a long-term resident youth in Manurewa I have observed that, despite ongoing development interventions, local bodies of knowledge and capacity for engagement in social action remain largely untapped. It is my hope that the outcomes of the research better enable me to play an ongoing role in contributing to community driven development in my local community.

I reside specifically in the suburb of Clendon Park which is on the eastern side of Manurewa on the edge of the Manukau Harbour. Clendon Park has a central shopping centre bustling with residents of predominantly Pasifika and Maori heritage. Next to the shopping centre are a recreational centre and public library, as well as a skate park and basketball court which are all frequented by the many young people resident in the area.

In the time I have been resident in Clendon Park I have been deeply involved in community development, working alongside neighbours to establish and expand programmes for the spiritual and intellectual empowerment of children, youth and adults. The programmes we have been learning about are developed by the Baha'i community as a contribution to the betterment of society. I have established social connections with hundreds of my fellow residents and am gaining familiarity with the reality experienced by the spectrum of persons living in Clendon Park. I am also acquainted with various community groups and organizations whose influence extends throughout the community. These groups include the residents of the waterfront community group, the Manurewa Youth Council, local police teams, the Auckland Council's beautification trust, the Manurewa Marae, the 454 youth group coordinators, various churches and so on.

Through my involvement in the life of the community I have been invited on occasion to spaces created by various development agencies which seek to engage resident young people in discussion and decision making about community development intervention. One recent example was the city council arranging a community consultation during which they invited people who turned up to identify how, from among several provided options, they would prefer a grant of $60,000 be spent in the community. In contrast, I have also been involved in community development projects alongside other resident youth who together have taken initiative to improve living conditions in the community. Examples of these processes include ongoing neighbourhood youth groups which have carried out service projects to beautify public areas, to educate children about the harm caused by bullying, and to plant trees in areas damaged by erosion. These contrasting experiences have given me the opportunity to observe that so many initiatives which seek to elicit participation from residents fail to tap into local bodies of knowledge and capacity for engagement in social action. It is this observation which sparked in me the interest to learn about methodologies which may be more effective at tapping into the capacity of populations to themselves advance processes of community driven development and research.

In the course of my studies as a development studies student at the University of Auckland, I have been intrigued by the discourse concerned with the risks and benefits of development research being carried out by 'insiders' or members of the community under study. Having reviewed a broad range of literature on this topic I have developed an eagerness to gain experience in conducting development research in my own back yard as I feel that doing so is contributing to a body of knowledge which can serve to counter what I

observe to be an institutional bias in favour of outsider development research and intervention.

In response to arguments made about the superiority of outsider research, a body of researchers have called for the 'decolonization' of development research and methodologies, arguing that the post WWII development industry and the field of research and practice associated with it has been an extension of Western colonial interests (Smith, 1999; Zavala, 2013; Escobar, 2011). It is argued that development research shaped by colonial underpinnings is carried out in a way which directs the western academic outsider in pursuit scientific knowledge constructed through the study of an exotic 'other'. This mode has served to reinforce a colonial power relationship between the West and 'the rest'. Post development thought emerged as an attempt to dismantle the colonial values underpinning development practice. In this environment, sound critiques of the colonizing agendas shaping what counts as legitimate research have emerged (Zavala, 2013). An important argument made by thinkers such as Smith (1999) is that by encouraging research carried out by indigenous peoples and insiders to the group under study, research methodologies are decolonized because populations are enabled to reclaim control over their own ways of knowing and being. In further defence of 'insider' research, Brannick and Coghlan (2007) argue that the benefits of insider research include ease of access, pre-understanding of the reality under study, and the ability to understand and manage social politics. Further, Coghlan and Holian (2007) argue that insider research represents both a means and an end to development.

In response, critics argue that insider researchers lose objectivity and as such the epistemological foundations of their research are compromised. Asselin (2003:99), for example, argues that if insiders are involved in the construction of knowledge and the interpretation of their own social reality this "can threaten the trustworthiness or credibility of the study". Asselin also argues that conducting research as an insider is unethical because of the high risk of coercion due to existing power relationships. While the majority of critics do recognize the potential merits of insider research, they argue that the risks associated with credibility and ethics are high and that "the realisation of such possible benefits and the avoidance of significant difficulties require a cautious and reflexive approach" (Hodkinson, 2005:132). Unluer (2012), Hodkinson (2005), Coghlan (2007) and Asselin (2003), for example, all essentially argue that insider research requires high levels of reflexivity and suggest the adoption of particular methods and techniques which would ensure that a reasonable level of objectivity is maintained.

Beyond this 'for' or 'against' duality, there are thinkers who challenge the conceptual and institutional bias which leads to suggesting a need for higher degrees of reflexivity in the context of insider research in the first place. Loxley and Seery (2008) question the legitimacy of supremacy being assigned to outsider research and argue that any conceptual framework (whether insider or outsider) needs to be unpacked and understood in terms of exposing underlying assumptions in order to enhance research quality. In other words, the assumptions and worldviews underpinning an outsider's interpretation of reality have the potential to distort their findings in the same way that those of an insider would. Challenging assumptions about the ethical dimensions of insider versus outsider research, Malone (2003:798) explores ethical and institutional power issues and argues that a critical examination of the concept of "informed consent" is necessary. She calls for a radical revision of the standard notions of research ethics that assign need for caution to power relationships between insider acquaintances while ignoring the risks of power exercised by persons foreign to a social environment who are often perceived as holding institutional or cultural authority.

My personal experience with the human ethics application process at the University of Auckland affirmed my perception of institutionalised bias in favour of outsider research. The ethics application form clearly stated the preference of the University Ethics Committee that research does not involve participants who are acquaintances of the researcher. Because I was a resident in Manurewa, the feedback I received after my first application stressed the need for me to eliminate the possibility of potential participants being coerced into the project as a result of existing social ties. The question was put to me whether it was possible for me to conduct my research in a different suburb, and if not, why not. What struck me is that the process seemed to be shaped by an assumption that being an outsider to a population reduced the risk of coercion considerably. It seemed to overlook the fact that power is exercised between the researchers and researched no matter what the context. For example, I have also conducted development research fieldwork in the Ba providence of Fiji. I spent time in three village communities carrying out semi-structured interviews with persons who did not know me. I would approach strangers, explain the research, discuss the participant information sheet and consent form, then ask for their consent. Not once did a person decline. Not once did a person even question the value of the research or indicate any concern over their rights. Despite my insisting, the information sheet and consent form were very rarely read by the participants and, in a sense, they acted as a representation of my authority, rather than a source of empowerment for the participant. It was clear to me that, as a white foreigner, I was

perceived as someone with authority, someone who could be trusted and someone who should not be questioned. If I were to compare the likelihood of coercion in that research context with the likelihood of coercion in the context of my own community, I would argue there is considerably more risk in the context of Fiji as an outsider researcher. My point is that the academic structures are moulded by limited notions of objectivity as well as narrow-minded views towards the ethical dimensions of research. The assumptions underpinning an institutionalised bias in favour of outsider research need to be further exposed in order for there to emerge a more coherent treatment of issues surrounding research objectivity and ethics.

Much can be learned from efforts to transcend an insider-outsider dichotomy and instead to find approaches which draw on the strengths of each. Merriam et al. (2001) argue that an insider/outsider duality is not real and that it makes sense to think instead about power, positionality and representation associated with any research position. Rather than simply reducing the matter to the binary of being an insider or an outsider, Dwyer & Buckle (2009:55) encourage the need to "explore the notion of the space between that allows researchers to occupy the position of both insider and outsider".

Decades ago, Lackhard (1982) called for approaches to research based on what he termed as an 'insider/outsider dialectic' rather than dichotomy. It is with these ideas in mind that I approach my research in Manurewa as both an insider resident of the community and an outsider development studies student acting under the fold of the University of Auckland. While the academic discourse takes into consideration the possibility of researchers being both insiders and outsiders, I observe that the academic institutions and structures through which so much development studies research operates makes the adoption of such an approach difficult. I fully appreciate the legitimacy of the risks associated with conducting research in one's own back yard, but I do not think the risks justify the maintenance of institutionalised bias in favour of outsider research. Because of issues of subjectivity, outsider research also carries with it significant epistemological and ethical risks. I hope my research is a useful contribution to the growing body of knowledge being generated by persons who are finding ways to transcend the insider-outsider dichotomy and to experience the benefits of insider identity during research while also benefiting from participation in discourses which extend beyond the local sphere.

In deciding to conduct research in my own community I was motivated by Arbab (2000:210), who, reflecting on his own decision to adopt an approach to development research which transcends an insider outsider dichotomy shares:

"Over the years, I have become increasingly convinced that what I originally perceived as a matter of personal choice — to learn to see the world from inside the population I wish to serve and become a participant in their endeavours to transform the world — represents in fact a fundamental issue inadequately addressed in development theory. That so many development programs are interventions managed from the outside, while the praise of participation is confidently sung, is a manifestation of a social structure that has accepted separation as the norm — the dividing of people into groups of "we" and "they" who fight, who compete, who negotiate, who cooperate, or who help each other from across the boundaries that define their separateness. This tendency reinforces, and is reinforced by, an intellectuality that sees as the hallmark of intelligence the ability to identify differences, to divide, and to relativize, all in the name of being scientific. Such an approach is a gross misrepresentation of science, for although it is true that science analyses, it also integrates and points to underlying patterns of oneness."

Prior experience and other aspects of my positionality

A few more words need to be said about experiences and assumptions underpinning this research. Given my significant personal involvement in the community building activities of the Baha'i community, I find that my approach to acting as an initiator and facilitator of the PAR process is shaped significantly by my familiarity with a particular notion of consultation which is presented in the Baha'i writings. Consultation is described in the Baha'i writings as a method for exploration, problem solving and decision-making which, when applied, contributes to the well-being of the group and enables its maturity and understanding to become manifest (Baha'u'llah, 1978). In the Baha'i writings it is suggested that all collective matters can be approached in a spirit of frank and loving consultation. Beyond a simple set of techniques, consultation requires that all participants adopt a humble posture of learning and practice qualities of courtesy, dignity, care and moderation (Abdu'l-Bahá, 1978). Those who engage in consultation must search out the truth and not insist upon their

own opinion, for it is believed that stubbornness and persistence in one's views will lead ultimately to discord and wrangling and the truth will remain hidden (Baha'u'llah, 1978). In a society in which struggle and competition are promoted as the operating principles for governing relationships, Baha'i consultation is shaped by an alternative view that reciprocity and harmony should characterise relationships and modes of interaction. Consultation is then presented as "no easy skill to learn, requiring as it does the subjugation of all egoism and unruly passions, the cultivation of frankness and freedom of thought as well as courtesy, openness of mind, and wholehearted acquiescence in a majority decision" (The Universal House of Justice, 1996:96). Rather than being simply a set of techniques, Baha'i consultation requires an approach which is inseparable from the ideological and ethical beliefs about human nature which underpin it.

The relevance of this experience is that when I am faced with the need for reflexivity as a researcher, I am able to apply to my practice the disciplines and techniques associated with Baha'i consultation. I am not suggesting that I am able to entirely embody the high ideals associated with Baha'i consultation. It is however my belief that my sincere effort to conduct myself according to these ideals influences in a meaningful way how power is diffused among the co-researchers during the PAR process.

Another assumption underpinning the research relates to the belief that by development is meant the construction of a better world. In testing the potential of PAR then, its potential is essentially measured in respect to its capacity for enhancing the ability of persons who conduct it to contribute to the construction of a better world - a world that is better according to their own terms. The research methodology is shaped by this conception of development. While still broad by definition, development as building a better world still represents a significant shift away from a prevalent conception of development defined purely in terms of economic growth. Defining development as the construction of a better world leaves space for the protagonists of development to define for themselves what is meant by a better world. It is my attitude that this assumption in part leaves more space for participation.

So far in this chapter I have made explicit my positionality as a researcher and exposed certain assumptions underpinning the research. In the remainder of Chapter 4 I provide a description of each of the methodologies employed in my research, explain my rationale behind each choice, and discuss the suitability of each method to the research.

4.2 - PAR: The methodology under scrutiny

Participatory Action Research is an approach to scientific enquiry often presented as being an effective means for facilitating individual and social transformation. The purpose of this research is to scrutinize PAR methodology and test the validity of such claims. To gain insight into the strengths and limitations of PAR this research seeks to consider the potential it holds for facilitating the empowerment of young people in South Auckland. The central feature of the methodology of this research is therefore the bringing together of a group of co-researchers who conduct PAR. The other methods employed in this research, such as semi-structured interviews, form a second layer of tools of investigation which are used to gauge the potential and determine the impact of the core PAR process.

In its most basic terms, PAR is described as research proceeding "in a spiral of steps, each of which is composed of a circle of planning, action and fact-finding about the result of the action" (Lewin, 1946:38). Wimms (1997:7) explains that PAR involves the coming together of a collaborative group of persons who embark on a journey of transformation. He explains that "at the heart of this transformation is a research process which involves investigating the circumstances of place; reflecting on the needs, resources, and constraints of the present reality; examining the possible paths to be taken; and consciously moving in new directions" (Wimms, 1997:7). PAR thus essentially involves the formation of a group of co researchers who focus on a particular social space then engage indefinitely in cycles of planning, action and reflection in the pursuit of knowledge and transformation. The cycles of activity need not have a fixed duration, and the movement between the elements of action, reflection and planning need not follow a linear or fixed pattern. However, due effort needs to be given to ensuring all three elements are given equal attention and that the process integrates development research with development practice (Whyte, 1991).

My research received approval from the University of Auckland ethics committee prior to setting up the PAR process. My efforts to set in motion a process of PAR took place in the third week of June with a six week recruitment period. Initially efforts were made to attract potential participants through posting information flyers in several public spaces in Manurewa. This proved to be ineffective as no people made contact with me even after four weeks. As a next step I invited ten residents of Manurewa - aged sixteen to twenty-five with

whom I was acquainted - to learn about PAR, with the possibility of them choosing to conduct it. I used Facebook as a means of communicating with them initially. From the ten who I approached, six agreed to join the PAR group and began the first cycle of action research in the last week of July. However, before they engaged in any activity related to the research, fully informed consent was gained from all six participants. After several weeks one of these people voluntarily withdrew from the research, and so my research focussed on analysing the experience of five participant researchers, not including myself.

The first two meetings of the group were used to introduce the participants to PAR methodology and various ethical considerations which they needed to be aware of as they conducted PAR. To introduce PAR to the participants I relied on some simple diagrams and a set of guiding questions relevant to each phase of the cycle. These diagrams and questions were adapted from several presented in Smith, et.al.'s book titled *Nurtured by knowledge: learning to do participatory action-research* (1997). The guiding questions are presented as an Appendix.

The first cycle of activity began during the third meeting of the group with the researchers describing their social reality in Manurewa and identifying the problem which they sought to address through their action research. After a process of brainstorming many ideas and consulting about the risks and benefits of each, the group eventually agreed unanimously to focus on the issue of graffiti in Clendon Park. Through a fluid process of planning, action and reflection, the group developed and pursued evolving lines of action, one of which included starting a Facebook page for Manurewa graffiti artists. The page was intended to serve as a platform for graffiti artists in Manurewa to communicate, collaborate, and find ways to use their talent for good. The group also planned to promote and host an event to bring together taggers to design and paint a mural to be placed in the community. At the end of the data collection period, which lasted 8 weeks from the first meeting of the group, the PAR group was still sustaining its activities and its members intended to complete the group's plans to host the painting of a graffiti mural which would be put up in the community. All in all, the group of young people were able to learn about and engage in cycles of PAR with a reasonable degree of effectiveness.

To be clear, the purpose of my research is to place PAR methodology under scrutiny rather than to present the specific details of the action research which the youth conducted

themselves. The remaining set of research methods presented below enables me to gain insight into the potential of PAR.

4.3 - SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

During the eight week data collection period, data was collected using three methods; the recording of semi-structured interviews, the collection of field notes gleaned from my experience as a participant observer, and the development and utilisation of an impact assessment framework.

In respect to the semi-structured interviews, they took place at two points in the research. The first group of interviews was conducted at the very beginning of the first action research cycle before the group of researchers began working together. The second group of interviews took place at the end of the data collection period after eight weeks of the group conducting PAR. The semi-structured interview questions focussed on topics and ideas relevant to the research objectives and the key questions guiding the research. The guiding set of questions for the interviews is provided as an Appendix. The individual interviews were all conducted one-on-one in private. All the interviews were digitally recorded. I transcribed all the recordings and provided the participants with copies of their individual interview scripts for their feedback and approval. The interview data was coded and analysed only after having been approved by each participant.

Using semi-structured interviews enabled me to adapt and respond to the needs and opportunities presented by each participant. Creswell (2003) argues that semi-structured interviews enable researchers to gain more depth of insight and to more effectively engage each participant. As Berg (2004) also argues, I found that this method gave me the flexibility to adjust my language and to modify the way in which I asked questions to more effectively probe for responses.

The purpose of gathering data through this method was that it enabled me to compare participant feedback prior to their conducting PAR with their feedback after two months of conducting PAR. I developed a coding system derived from Freire's (2012) theoretical framework of three stages of critical consciousness. Freire (2012) proposes that a person's consciousness develops through three stages, each with its own characteristics. The details of

these stages have already been presented in Chapter 3. For every one of the three stages of consciousness I developed five codes, each describing a specific characteristic of that stage of consciousness. The specific codes can be found in the Appendix. By coding each participant's two interviews using this framework, I was able to analyse and compare the data from each interview and present findings in terms of a 'before' and 'after' impact assessment.

4.4 - PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

Throughout the eight week data collection period I was fully involved as a co-researcher in the PAR process and assumed a posture of being on equal footing with my fellow co-researchers. I acted as the initiator of the PAR process by bringing together the co-researchers, then throughout the eight weeks of the data collection period I acted as the primary facilitator of the PAR groups meetings.

While the group was conducting its activities I wanted to give priority to my identity as a co-researcher in the PAR process and did not want to interfere with that process by taking written notes in real time in the field. Therefore, in order to minimize my being perceived by the other researchers as anything other than a co-researcher on equal footing, I only took field notes of my observations in private immediately after the meetings and activities of the group. The notes I took capture the day-to-day happenings of the group, specific details about the day to day contributions and circumstances of each participant, as well as interpretive observations about the causal basis of any impact which conducting PAR may have been having on each participant.

During data analysis, the ethnographic data was triangulated against the data from the individual interviews. Conducting participant observation and collecting field notes enabled me to gain perspectives and insights which are indispensable when it comes to interpreting and making sense of the data collected through the interviews and through the participant's own impact assessments. My experience was consistent with the argument of Silverman (2006) who points out that participant observation enables the researcher to make sense of the social perspectives of a certain community. For example, by analysing the data of the interviews through the lens of my experience as a co-researcher, I was able to identify specific experiences or events which may have provided a causal basis for certain shifts in the consciousness of the participants. These details are presented in chapter 5.

4.5 - SELF-CONDUCTED IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

The final method used to gain insight into the potential of PAR involved me facilitating a process through which the participants developed their own impact assessment. My rationale for this method is grounded in aspects of Zimmerman's (2000) work on critical youth empowerment which suggests the need for participants to take charge of evaluation processes. An assessment of the potential of PAR to 'empower' or facilitate the 'personal development' of those who conduct it purely through the lens of Freire's work on critical consciousness felt inadequate, as it leaves little space for the potential of PAR to be assessed according to the terms of those who actually conduct it. In other words, what constitutes 'empowerment' and 'development' or even 'impact' is subjective and differs according to the values and worldviews of various parties. What I sought to achieve by working with the participants to develop their own impact assessment was to enable them to articulate what they consider to be important elements of empowerment and personal development, and for them to assess the value of PAR according to their own terms. After all, the advocates of PAR lay claim to its potential to enable populations to take charge of their own development and to pursue their own hopes and aspirations. Thus, not only was I able to assess the potential of PAR to stimulate an expanse in consciousness of the participants through Freire's theoretical lens, I was also able to assess the potential of PAR to facilitate development and empowerment according to the terms of those who conducted it.

The methodological process I followed to achieve this is as follows. During the individual interviews the participants were asked questions such as what does 'youth empowerment' mean to you and what does 'youth development' mean to you? Other questions were posed to probe for deeper insights into the conceptions held by the participants themselves. Also, during one of the group meetings, I facilitated a focus group brainstorming exercise in which these same questions were posed to the entire group and all answers were recorded. After this data collection I compiled all the answers from the interviews and the brainstorming session and organized the ideas according to common themes. Eighteen different themes emerged, each representing a different indicator of youth development and empowerment as conceptualized by the research participants themselves (see as Appendix). This list of indicators thus represents a body of ideas and values shared by the group as a whole rather than of any single participant. This list of eighteen indicators formed the basis of the impact assessment and is in itself a valuable finding of this research.

Finally, in order to enable each participant to determine for themselves what impact they experienced through conducting PAR, at the close of the data collection period each individual participant was given a list of the eighteen indicators and asked to number them in order from one to eighteen, one being the impact which they experienced most strongly as a result of conducting PAR, eighteen being the impact they experienced the least. The data that resulted provides insight into what potential the participants believe PAR has to facilitate empowerment and development according to their own terms. This data is useful as I am able to triangulate it against the findings from the coding analysis as well as from my field notes.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter I have provided an overview of the methodological tools used in the research and have provided rational for my choice of methods. PAR was the methodology placed under examination, and a tool kit of semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and an impact assessment developed by the participants were used to examine the effectiveness of PAR. At the beginning of the chapter I also made explicit my positionality as a researcher and exposed several assumptions underpinning this research.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

In this chapter I present the findings of the research. The findings are presented in three sections. Section 5.1 simply offers a brief profile of each participant to set the context and to provide insight into the depth of each participant's involvement in the PAR process.

In section 5.2 I present qualitative findings which are outcomes of my coding analysis, the participants' own impact assessments, and the ethnographic field notes. The findings are arranged in terms of notable impacts which conducting PAR had on each individual participant, as well as notable impacts which conducting PAR had on the group as a whole. As explained in chapter 4, the coding framework allows me to compare the language of each participants' first and second interviews, and to identify any shift in the frequency with which certain codes appear. Increases in the number of any given code between the first interview and the second interview indicates a shift in the participant's ability to think at higher levels of consciousness as per Freire's theory of critical consciousness. Detailed outcomes of this coding analysis are provided as an Appendix. Also as explained in Chapter 4, the participants' own assessments enable me to identify what impact the participants feel conducting PAR has had on them. At the close of the data collection period each participant was given a list of the eighteen indicators and asked to number them in order from one to eighteen, one being the impact which they experience most strongly as a result of conducting PAR, eighteen being the impact they experience the least. I am able to draw on this data in support of the findings I present in section 5.2. I want to draw attention to the significance of the self-identified impact assessment tool which is presented as an Appendix. The completed impact assessment in itself represents a valuable finding about the conceptions of youth development and empowerment held by the participants.

In section 5.3 I offer qualitative observations made from my perspective as a participant observer. In this section I begin to draw attention to certain opportunities and limitations which my research reveals about PAR.

Quotes from the participant interviews and ethnographic field notes are drawn on extensively throughout the chapter in support of the findings. In aggregate, the findings provide rich insights into the strengths and limitations of PAR methodology in working with youth in South Auckland.

5.1 - PARTICIPANT PROFILES

The following table contains a brief description of each participant. This paints a picture of the research contexts and the nature of the young people who conducted PAR. It also provides insight into the depth of engagement each participant had with the PAR process.

Participant 1
Having completed secondary school several years ago, Participant 1 has now settled into his chosen career path and is in his first year of a building apprenticeship. Participant 1 has lived in Manurewa for just over two years and does not know many people in the community. Participant 1 is Samoan.
Participant 1 attended four out of the eight group meetings. Participant 1 immigrated to West Auckland towards the end of the eight week data collection period. Participant 1 did not participate in any of the actions of the research group outside of the group meetings which he attended.
Participant 2
Participant 2 is in his final year of secondary school. He is determined to study early childhood education in the future and to work with young children. Next year he will take a gap year to do voluntary work with youth. Participant 2 is active in his community and has prior experience in working with children's and youth programs. He is social and spends a lot of time with friends. Participant 2 is Samoan.
Participant 2 attended seven of the eight group meetings, only missing the first group meeting. He was active on the Facebook group chat and was active in promoting the graffiti project via social media.
Participant 3
Participant 3 completed secondary school several years ago. In recent months he has been working on and off in a goods distribution warehouse. Participant 3 belongs to a large

family and is very social. Often he is away from home socialising with friends in the community. Participant 3 has no formal qualifications and has no particular aspirations in this area. Participant 3 is Maori.

Participant 3 attended two out of the eight group meetings. He was not responsive to the group's Facebook chat.

Participant 4

Participant 4 is in his final year of secondary school. He plans to work next year to support his family financially but hopes to eventually enter police college. Participant 4 is outspoken and confident. He is a social person and regularly spends time with friends. He is also heavily involved in his community and has experience in working with youth empowerment programs in his neighbourhood. Participant 4 is Samoan.

Participant 4 attended five out of the eight group meetings. On the three occasions he didn't attend he sent his apologies. He was responsive on the group's Facebook chat.

Participant 5

Participant 5 is secondary school aged. In recent months he has been having poor school attendance and has not been participating in any extracurricular activities such as sport. He has chosen not to enrol in school next year. While he is interested in the idea of becoming a mechanic, participant 5 has little clarity about what he will do next year. He is a social person and occasionally spends time with friends and family. Participant 5 is Maori.

Participant 5 attended six of the eight group meetings and was active in participating in the activities of the group outside of meetings. On the two occasions when he wasn't able to attend the group meeting he was disappointed about this and it was for reasons that were out of his own control. Participant 5 was always active and responsive on the Facebook group chat.

5.2 - INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Outcomes of impact assessments

-Clear relationship between conducting PAR and a shift in consciousness of each participant

The data gathered from the interviews, field notes and self-identified impact assessments indicates that conducting PAR had a notable impact on the consciousness of all the participants. While each participant experienced this impact in different ways and to different degrees, changes in thought, speech and patterns of action indicate that all experienced what can be described as a shift towards a higher degree of critical consciousness.

For example, comparing Participant 1's interview results indicate a shift towards a more semi-transitive state of consciousness with fewer indicators of an intransitive state of consciousness. In particular, Participant 1's comments in his second interview indicate he acquired a greater sense of hope and belief in the real possibility of social change. Also he showed signs that he found himself more often consciously moderating his behaviour and occasionally engaging in simple acts of social action, such as moderating his language around young people and placing rubbish in bins rather than littering. When asked what impact conducting PAR had on him, Participant 1 shared:

"I think I've become wary of my action and the things that I do, for example, littering. I used to always litter but now I'm like, oh, I still do it a little bit, but now I've become aware of like how bad it is and the effects of it."

In his second interview Participant 1 also showed fewer signs of being dominated. When asked about barriers which hold him back from achieving things that he wants to achieve he answered "Nah bro there is nothing now, I'm all sweet. Nah there's no barriers". This answer represents a development from his first interview in which he described being held back by his family, cultural practices and financial circumstances.

Comparing Participant 2's two interview results indicates a significant shift towards a

critically transitive state of consciousness away from a Semi-transitive state of consciousness. This also resulted in a significant reduction in thought patterns associated with intransitive consciousness. In particular, Participant 2's comments in his second interview indicate that his condition of being dominated by his parents was reduced. His behaviour and thoughts also more closely resembled that of a critical actor. For example, when asked what impact his participation had on him, Participant 2 shared:

"For me I think personally before this even started I wasn't even keen on talking to my mates about doing something positive. Like when I see them at school doing something like tagging I was never like 'hey you shouldn't do this' or 'you shouldn't do that'. But, like, ever since I joined this it encouraged me to stand up and do something. Especially we have all been aware of the negative influence and it made me more confident to actually talk to my friends about it at school. And all the things that we planned in this group, like, some of the projects we planned - especially the one about tagging - it encouraged me to go to school and actually talk to my mates about it. That helped me a lot and helped to change the way I think."

Comparing Participant 3's two interview results indicates a slight shift towards Semi-transitive consciousness away from Intransitive consciousness. In particular, participant 3's comments in his second interview indicate that he had adopted a more hopeful outlook and saw social transformation as a real possibility. While he was not notably more effective in identifying root causes of social issues or considering the possibility of him having a role to play in making a change, it was clear that his exposure to the PAR process resulted in him being more confident in the possibility of positive social change.

Comparing Participant 4's interview results indicates only a very slight shift towards critically transitive consciousness away from semi-transitive consciousness. In particular, participant 4's comments in his second interview indicate that his behaviour and attitude resembled slightly more that of a critical actor. Participant 4 became notably more conscious of the importance of his actions, even when seemingly small. In his second interview when asked whether conducting PAR has had any impact on him, he shared "It's made me think, man there's so much more things I can do, like even the littlest things actually matter" and "it just made me think about what I can do to help other youth, like, even just little things like asking them if they are alright, or even just it made me think about how they are easily

affected and how there are little things I can do to change that". A development of significance was that during his second interview participant 4 recounted how he recently spoke up against a physically abusive mother and that he would not usually have done that had he not been motivated by the group's conversations. He shared that he is now often "speaking up to injustice!"

Comparing Participant 5's two interview results indicates a notable shift from a more semi-transitive state of consciousness towards a critically transitive state of consciousness. In particular, Participant 5's comments in the second interview indicates his greater awareness of the complex nature of social problems and his increased ability to identify root causes of social problems rather than just isolating the symptoms. For example, when asked about concerns he has for his community, in his first interview Participant 5 was quick to identify social problems such as violence, bullying, alcoholism, littering and theft. In his second interview he drew less attention to these symptoms and instead made comments about inadequacies in the educational system and in home environments as being a cause of prevalent waywardness among the youth population. When asked what he has learnt through conducting PAR in his second interview, Participant 5 responded by saying:

> "Umm, going deep into a problem, like, finding the key parts to the problem
> of graffiti and how to prevent it from being ongoing. It's helped me to dig deeper
> into the problem and what actually we need to do to sort it out. Like before I would
> only think of, like, the cover of the book. You don't really know much until you
> open it."

That each of the five participants experienced this shift suggests that PAR methodology has the potential to raise the level of critical consciousness of those who conduct it.

I did expect that the degree of shift in consciousness would be proportional to the level of attendance of each participant, but my data does not support this hypothesis. For example, Participant 3, who had the poorest attendance, manifested a higher proportional degree of shift in consciousness compared to Participant 4 who attended meetings more than twice as frequently. This may in part be due to the fact that Participant 4 had previously had experience in participating in social action in his community and therefore may have already developed a heightened consciousness of the forces operating in his community. For

Participant 3 on the other hand, the experience of conducting PAR was quite new and in participating he may have been exposed to many new ideas for the first time.

-Outcomes of self-identified impact assessments

The self-identified impact assessment process gave the participants the opportunity to order various aspects of 'youth empowerment' and 'youth development' from one to eighteen, one being an aspect of empowerment and development which they felt they experienced to the greatest extent as a result of conducting PAR, eighteen being the one which they have experienced the least. By comparing the ordering of all five participants it is possible to identify a number of aspects of empowerment and development which consistently rank highly. The outcomes of each completed assessment of provided as an Appendix.

Four aspects of youth empowerment and development rank highly consistently. The development of 'Mutual Support', 'Power of Expression', 'Effort and Generosity', and 'Maturity and Foresight' all sat within the top six for at least three of the participants. This suggests that, according to the youth participants themselves, in the context of this research, PAR methodology was quite effective in facilitating these four dimensions of youth empowerment and development.

For example, in his impact assessment Participant 1 observed change within himself most in terms of developing 'Maturity and Foresight'. When asked what impact conducting PAR has had on him during the second interview he shared:

"I've become more cautious of stuff that I do, like, the effects of it. I've become more aware of that now".

In his impact assessment Participant 2 indicated that he experienced meaningful development in the areas of 'Power of Expression' and 'Mutual Support'. This is evident by how he took steps to engage in meaningful conversations about social action with his friends and by how he became friends with several of the other participants, spending time with them socially outside of the group meetings. In his second interview, when asked what it is about conducting PAR which had an impact on him, he explained:

"I think just being part of that group, I knew that it wasn't just me. Like, two of the other boys that I knew, one of them goes to my school, and, like, I knew that he was doing the same thing as me, like, going talking to his mates and people about what we were doing, and that made me more confident - just knowing that I wasn't doing it alone and that there are others out there that are with me that are doing it as well. So it just boosted my confidence to speak up."

Participant 3 ranked highly the development of his 'Power of Expression' as something he observed change within himself. In his second interview participant 3 mentioned talking to his friends in a constructive way on two occasions. When asked what impact conducting PAR has had on him he shared "Ummm only like umm you know like how we talked about people hanging around Clendon and kids smoking it just made me think about it more... After talking about it now with a few of the mates, now they know". And when asked whether he has observed any changes in his behaviour, he shared "I go to the rubbish bins now. Cos I used to like… now I tell my mates 'nah don't chuck that on the ground'". These are simple examples but they were impacts which were noticeable to participant 3.

Participant 4 ranked highly the development of 'Maturity and Foresight' on his impact assessment. On several occasions in his second interview he commented that conducting PAR has made him more conscious of the influence and consequences of his actions. When asked what he has learnt through conducting PAR, participant 4 answered:

"…even if you do the littlest things for people, most people see it, and most of them realise and come to conclusions from you helping. Like, I never used to open my mouth in public against injustice, like, when I see something wrong. But ever since the project made me think about it, maybe I can stop it if I say something or I try and do something about it. I think that's the fear for a lot of people. They don't want to do anything or say anything themselves cos they are scared."

Participant 5 ranked highly the development of 'Maturity and Foresight' as well as 'Power of Expression'. When asked how he has been affected personally by conducting PAR, Participant 5 shared:

"It helped me speak up a bit more. I'm trying to ummm it helps me think about what I really need to do."

Three aspects of youth empowerment and development ranked poorly fairly consistently. 'Learning and Education' sat within the bottom six for three of the participants. 'Integrated Development' sat within the bottom six for four of the participants. 'Social Confidence' sat within the bottom six for all five participants. This suggests that, according to the youth participants themselves, in the context of this research, PAR methodology was quite ineffective in facilitating these three dimensions of youth empowerment and development.

Another notable finding was that the notions of empowerment and development presented by the research participants were all essentially about the development of intellectual, social, spiritual and moral capabilities. The acquisition of political power and the accumulation of financial or material resources were not mentioned by any of the participants in the context of defining youth development and empowerment.

Recurring themes throughout individual interviews and field notes

-Friendship and mutual support as central to motivation

A theme which comes up repeatedly during the interviews and through the interactions of the participants is that of friendship and mutual support and how they influence the motivation of each participant. Social ties and friendships represent an important element of what is commonly referred to as social capital. Woolcock (1998:153) describes social capital as "the information, trust, and norms of reciprocity inherent in one's social networks". The theory of social capital compensates for deficiencies in economic development theory and policy centred almost exclusively on deficiencies in financial and human capital (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000:240). In the 1990s the concept of social capital became prominent across social sciences as a consensus began to emerge about the importance of social relations in development (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000:240). The theory of social capital took shape as theorists like Putman called for "efforts to encourage social capital formation" as necessary and complementary elements of development interventions (1993:36).

In the context of this research it is clear that social capital serves as a basis for motivation, but it is also reinforced through participation. In other words, PAR methodology

proves to be effective in establishing and facilitating a mutually enhancing relationship between motivation and social capital - essentially setting in motion a snowball effect.

In respect to friendship and social capital being a source of motivation to participate, this is evident from the first interviews and interactions between the group members. During the first interviews I asked each participant what motivated them to conduct PAR. Four out of the five participants answered that an important aspect of what motivated them was that they were familiar with some of the other participants and that they wanted to spend time with them doing something positive. For example, when asked what motivated him to participate, Participant 1 explained "I think just hearing, like, some of the other names, the boys, my friends, just the boys doing it makes me want to do it."

Social capital and mutual support also serve as a source of motivation for the participants to take social action. When asked what motivated him to conduct PAR, Participant 5 shared: "Ummm, I think it's the working together part - we all work as a team". When asked what it was about conducting PAR that had a positive impact on him, Participant 2 explained:

"I think just being part of that group I knew that it wasn't just me. Like, two of the other boys that I knew, one of them goes to my school, and, like, I knew that he was doing the same thing as me, like going talking to his mates and people about what we were doing. And that made me more confident, just knowing that I wasn't doing it alone and that there are others out there that are with me that are doing it as well. So it just boosted my confidence to speak up."

Two of the other participants also shared similar views about the environment of the group acting as a source of motivation.

In respect to PAR methodology facilitating the strengthening of social capital and friendship, this is made evident through the outcomes of participant observation and through the second interviews in particular. Throughout the eight weeks of data collection when the group conducted PAR several of the participants became friends through the process and began socializing together outside the meetings of the group - Participants 2, 4 and 5 in particular. Before the start of each meeting when I was collecting them, they would often ask if so and so a participant was coming today, indicating their eagerness to socialise with their new friends. It is interesting to note that these new friendships were formed in a constructive

environment and on a basis of shared concern for the community and an eagerness to contribute to its improvement. This influenced the nature of the participants interactions outside of the group meetings as well, for example, participants 2 and 5 would interact at school and mutually support each other in efforts to talk to their other friends about the graffiti project.

As well as strengthening social capital between the research participants, the actions of the group also served to extend the circle of friendship to others and to increase social capital within a larger pool. The graffiti project, which followed the data collection period, brought together some 20 young persons from the community, many of whom were friends of particular participants. This larger group of persons also developed ties of friendship grounded in a shared sense of concern for the wellbeing of the community and a willingness to contribute to its improvement.

The second round of interviews also provides rich insight into the potential of PAR to strengthen social capital among those who conduct it. When asked what impact he has observed on the other participants, Participant 2 shared:

“Umm I think mainly just [participant 5], one of the boys, cos we go to school together and see each other and, like, before that I hardly knew the guy but now every time we see each other at school we have this bond of friendship through this group and now every time we see each other we just so happy to see each other and talk about what we did and I think it strengthened that bond and yea it's impacted him a lot as well. Showing that you can build friendship through this [conducting PAR].”

-Shared surprise at the capacity and willingness of other participants to engage in social action

Another consistent theme in the data is that the majority of the participants experienced surprise at the capacity of the other participants to identify harmful social forces in their community and by their willingness to engage in social action.

For example, during his second interview Participant 2, shared:

"When we all got together in the second or third week and we got to plan or think about some of the negative influences that are in our community. I was surprised by all the things that we noticed and we all noted it down".

Similarly, when commenting on the activities of the group, participant 1 shared:

"...they noticed some of the problems in the community. I was surprised that they paid attention to the problems that we have in the community."

Participants 4 and 5 both shared similar sentiments. During his second interview Participant 4 referred to the efforts of the participants to engage friends in the graffiti project. He shared:

"When they said that they have boys that are keen I was shocked. I was like, oh man, now that makes me want to do it even more."

Similarly, when commenting on his attitude towards his community Participant 5 shared:

"I didn't expect much, but now knowing there is youth around and they are all coming together, it's amazing. So you know there is not just bad people in the neighbourhood. There's that secret group that is waiting to just explode and, yea."

Participant 5 also made comments during the group's meetings about how he felt surprised and encouraged by the number of his friends who had 'liked' the group's Facebook page and showed interest in the graffiti project. It was clear to me that initially the participants held onto assumptions about the lack of these capacities among their peers, but that through the course of conducting PAR, these assumptions were challenged. Conducting PAR enabled the co-researcher to develop faith in the capacity of others to contribute to social transformation.

-Shared experience of becoming more conscious of the serious nature of the social problems in the community

Another reoccurring theme is that the majority of the participants speak about developing a heightened awareness of the prevalence and serious consequences of harmful

forces in their community. When asked whether he sees any changes in himself or in the way he thinks or acts, Participant 4 answered:

"...I just had a broad idea about what the destructive forces are but when we were talking about them and going into detail I just got a lot more knowledge put into my head. Like when you actually think about it you think, man, these things happen every day but they are really bad and they cause a lot of anxiety and anger. It's just, like, you see them all the time but its normal so you don't do anything about it… Even though we didn't go into much depth in many things we, just, like, it made me think more about those things and how much effect they have on everything, like, all the destructive forces. It's like that night when we were talking about it briefly it was like, man, these issues are actually really big in society. Yea, it just made me think a lot more about the causes of these things and how they can have a big effect on people."

Participant 2 described how conducting PAR had a similar impact on him:

"...I didn't really care before I got involved in this. It's not that I didn't care; it's just, like, I never bothered to actually stop, think and have a look. But ever since I got involved I'm always looking around thinking about what negative things we need to fix - things we need to put effort into."

Participants 1 and 3 shared similar sentiments during their second interviews. This is a significant finding as it is indicative of the potential of PAR to raise critical awareness among those who conduct it. The very act of reflecting critically on one's social reality, especially in the company of others, creates an experience in which those present not only become more consciously aware of the challenges they experience, but also of the sense of dissatisfaction which others feel towards those same challenges.

-Shared faith in the potential of PAR methodology to release potential for social change

Another recurring theme of conversation among the participants is that the majority of them speak about their faith in the potential of PAR to assist other young people like themselves to become empowered and enabled to make a positive difference in their

70

community. When asked the question if at all, how they think youth in their community can experience personal development, Participant 2 shared:

"Just like what we are doing in our group you know. Just getting out there and getting people involved in what we are doing. Like how we come together and make it a space where we can talk about the negative things that are influencing us then we can identify those things then we can all work together and do something positive. When they see that their friends and others their same age are striving to do this positive think they will get influences as well and will get confidence to do the same things as well… I think a lot of them are not aware of things like this so just going out more, talking to them and letting them know that there are things like this that they can get involved in. You know, talking to them and trying your best to get them involved and get on board with what we are doing. Letting them know there are opportunities like this out there."

Responding to the same question, Participant 1 expressed "Personally I think just the space, like, the space that we have had. Yea I think offering more of that space would definitely have a big effect on youth."

During the second set of interviews Participants 3, 4 and 5 also shared similar thoughts about the value of other young people engaging in PAR.

5.3 - GENERAL FINDINGS MADE AS PARTICIPANT OBSERVER

-Role of the individual facilitator.

It is important to note that, at least within the bounds of this research, the continuity and sustainability of the PAR process is highly dependent upon me as the individual initiator and facilitator. My experience is that the recruitment process was time consuming and dependent upon me having existing social ties in the Clendon Park community. Even when drawing on my existing social connections in the community, it took three weeks of working several hours per day for me to recruit a sufficient number of participants to conduct the research. Had I tried to set in motion a process of PAR in a community with which I am not familiar, it would have been necessary for me to proactively reach out to strangers and

establish social ties with local people as a prerequisite to beginning cycles of activity with a group. Also, once the PAR process began, the participants depended on me collecting and bringing them together each week, as well as upon me making available a location for the group meetings. It is possible that some of the participants would have been willing to find their own transport to the group meetings, but this requirement would have significantly disrupted the attendance of the group. In addition, when the group did meet, the PAR process also depended upon me being familiar with the methodology and being willing to facilitate the group's discussions and to guide the group through the action, reflection and consultation process. It is worth noting too that I have significant experience in working with groups and teams, facilitating discussions and guiding lines of enquiry, and as such I had the capacity required to get the PAR process off the ground. While I am resident in Manurewa, I am in somewhat of a unique position as a white male having emigrated to the community only some four years ago, and having access to resources within my family which have enabled me to receive higher education and develop the capabilities necessary for facilitating the PAR process.

This observation exposes a significant limitation of PAR methodology in terms of its potential for serving as a tool for releasing the potential of those who conduct it. It also is indicative of the significant potential for the initiator/facilitator to exert disproportional control over the action research. This limitation will be discussed at length in the following chapter.

-Member of the community acting as the initiator and facilitator of PAR

The findings also provide insight into the value of me as a researcher and initiator of PAR having existing social ties within Manurewa as a result of me being a resident and active member in the community for several years prior to the research. For example, in his first interview in response to the question of what motivates him to conduct PAR, Participant 3 answered "Ummm to get out of the house and talk and cos, you are cool, cos you are a good mate, that's why I'm doing it". While my social connections assisted in the recruitment process I did not observe any instances in which existing social ties were a cause of coercion. That one of the initial recruits voluntarily withdrew from the research after several weeks

suggests they felt comfortable to participate or withdraw as they pleased. It is however evident that the social capital I possessed as a member of the Manurewa community enabled me to set in motion cycles of PAR alongside those who I consider my friends. Had there not been an existing social connection between the initial PAR facilitator and the community, the research process would have played out very differently.

It is also evident that the willingness and ability of the participants to contribute to discussion during the meetings of the group is enhanced as a result of existing social connections within the group. In my field diary I wrote that "Social familiarity enables expression to take place more readily as the co researchers are relaxed and comfortable in each other's company. Those who don't know other participants are more reserved in the first meeting of the group."

-Inconsistency between rhetoric and action of the participants

It is evident that conducting PAR results in change in the participants at the level of thought and consciousness. However, my observations as a participant observer indicate that, for each of the participants, there remains a significant inconsistency between their words and their actions. Throughout the research process the shift in consciousness expressed through words often did not translate into a proportional shift in behaviour and related lines of action. Commitments to action made by individual group members during the weekly meetings were often not followed through in the periods of time between each group meeting. Instead, the group meetings largely became the sphere within which the majority of the reflection, planning and action of the participants took place. In week three, for example, several participants agreed to make the group's Facebook page during the following week, but they did not follow through with this, so the group's next meeting was spent making the Facebook page. In my field notes I wrote:

"In reflecting on the first three weeks, I feel it would be useful for the group to revisit the questions/framework to guide PAR methodology to make sure we are taking time to experience all the relevant stages of the cycles of activity. It feels like we are heavy on the Planning side of things and weak on the Action and Study/Research side of things. I will open next week's meeting by recapping the various elements of PAR to ensure we are all on the same page".

In week four the group members agreed to conduct individual research into methods of reducing graffiti in communities, but none of the group members followed through with this action either.

This is not to say that there was no progress in this regard. For example, by week six Participants 2 and 5 in particular showed initiative in conversing with their friends at school and in inviting them to join the graffiti mural project. What this observation makes clear however is that more time would be required to determine whether PAR methodology has the potential to facilitate the empowerment of youth in terms of generating within them a more dynamic coherence between thought and action - a coherence which Freire (2012) identifies as an essential element of critical consciousness.

-PAR and capacity building

Through observing the workings of the PAR group it became clear that the potential of the participants to effect social transformation was very much dependent upon their individual and collective capacity rather than on the effectiveness of the methodology being employed. The potential of PAR methodology to bring about social transformation and the empowerment of populations is very much limited by the capacity of those who are conducting PAR in the first place. PAR methodology is not in itself a recipe to bring about immediate and significant social change.

As made clear by the findings discussed in section 5.2 however, PAR does have the potential to act as a stimulus for capacity building. It facilitates the generation and application of a growing body of knowledge distributed among those who engage in cycles of action, reflection, and study. It can be expected that as capacity is raised within a growing group, the effectiveness of their efforts to bring about change to the structures and conditions of society around them would also increase. In order then for the potential of PAR methodology to be more accurately assessed it would be necessary to conduct prolonged study and to observe what comes from long term engagement in cycles of action, reflection and study.

In this chapter I presented the findings of my research. In sum, the findings of the research support claims made about the potential of PAR to empower and enable young people to engage in social action with a degree of effectiveness. The findings expose specific areas of capacity building and personal development experienced by young people who conduct PAR. The findings also validate claims about certain limitations of PAR, such as its dependence upon capable facilitators and its significant time requirements.

In the next chapter I discuss the implications of these findings, make a connection between the outcomes of this research and the content covered in the literature review, and identify ways in which this research adds to existing literature.

Chapter 6: Discussion

This research seeks to provide insight into the benefits and limitations of using Participatory Action Research as a methodology for conducting development research with marginalized groups in New Zealand. I attempt to determine whether PAR has the potential to give greater voice and control to youth in South Auckland over their development. Three questions guide the research. Firstly, I wish to learn what PAR reveals about the perspective of young people towards issues of underdevelopment which affect them. Secondly, I seek to learn what impact, if any, conducting PAR has on the capacities and willingness of young persons to engage in social change. Thirdly I seek to discover whether and in what ways PAR alters some of the barriers and challenges which might otherwise prevent young persons from participating in social action.

In this chapter I engage in a discussion about the significance and implications of my findings. In doing so I draw attention to what new insights and understandings my findings add to the existing literature on the issue. I also suggest areas for further research. I have organized this chapter into three sections, each focussing discussion on a distinct one of the three questions guiding the research.

6.1 - The perspective of young people towards issues of underdevelopment which affect them

PAR and its potential to facilitate the expansion of consciousness

As made evident in section 5.2, the findings indicate that at the outset of the PAR process the participants tended to identify social problems at a fairly superficial level. The problems they isolated such as littering, violence, tagging and so on were essentially all symptoms of deeper issues. The operation of power in society was largely overlooked. According to Freire (2012), this reflects a fragmented way of viewing social reality and the problems within it. As the PAR process advanced, the group discussion and question posing process stimulated among the participants a shift towards a more holistic view of society and

enabled them to identify deeper causes of social issues, such as prejudice, aspects of culture, injustice, and faults in the systems and structures of society. For example, during his second interview when asked what was the cause of poverty in Manurewa Participant 4 responded:

> "Injustice, like, just some people in the world have so much money and because of them everyone else has to suffer. Or not even that, like, the government system and that, it is just really corrupt."

This is certainly not to say that all the participants 'attained critical consciousness' per se, rather that they advanced in their capacity to think critically and holistically. But indeed the findings provide evidence in support of the claimed potential of PAR to raise critical consciousness among those who conduct it by way of increasing their ability to go beyond merely identifying superficial social problems but rather to identify deeper causes, which in turn gives researchers a clearer sense of purpose and direction in carrying out social action. The findings of this research support the claims made by proponents of critical youth studies who promote the potential of Participatory Action Research to raise the critical consciousness of those who conduct it (Ginwright 2002; Cammarota, 2002; Fine, 2008). In Chapter 3 it was noted that claims about the potential of participatory development remain to be validated through concrete and progressive human development outcomes (Cooke and Kothari, 2001). While limited in scope, the findings of this research suggest that conducting PAR enables co-researchers to learn, build capacity, and to experience personal development outcomes in a meaningful way.

Another significant finding is that, through the course of conducting PAR, the majority of the participants shared an experience of becoming more conscious of the serious nature of the social problems in their community and of realising that they had become somewhat desensitised to undesirable conditions. The research exposes how young persons living in Manurewa are generally aware of issues of underdevelopment which affect them, but that until they are given the opportunity to think critically alongside others about the issues, some may remain somewhat complacent in the face of such challenges. The expansion in critical consciousness which results from conducting PAR serves to generate within the participants a greater willingness and sense of purpose to carry out social action. This finding is made explicit in section 5.2 of the previous chapter. These findings support the claim of Freire (xi:1997) who states that in the process of conducting PAR, "people rupture their existing attitudes of silence, accommodation and passivity, and gain confidence and abilities

to alter unjust conditions and structures". He argues that this feature of PAR represents "an authentic power for liberation that ultimately destroys a passive awaiting of fate" (Freire, xi:1997).

PAR and its potential to give to those who conduct it control over the nature and purpose of development

Another notable finding of the research is that PAR is effective in enabling those who conduct it to articulate and share their own particular conception of youth empowerment and youth development. What is striking is that the notions of empowerment and development presented by the research participants are all essentially about the development of intellectual, social, spiritual and moral capabilities. This finding is made explicit through the participants self-identified impact assessment which is presented in the Appendix. This finding is significant as it suggests that the participants hold values which are somewhat different to those promoted through mainstream development agencies which place the accumulation of financial resources as central to the progress of the individual and society. Mainstream notions of youth participation and voice are discussed in Chapter 3. Checkoway & Gutierrez (2006), for example, present the notion of youth participation as being primarily concerned with social, political and economic participation as means to enabling young people to draw attention to matters which are of concern to them and to take action to transform society. The participants in this research however place more emphasis on intangible aspects of empowerment and development such as the power of expression, networks of friendship and mutual support, personal integrity, social confidence and so on.

As discussed in Chapter 3, mainstream approaches to youth development are quite limited in seeking primarily to enhance political participation and voice of young people. Nairn et al. (2006), for example, present youth voice as the capacity of young people to express themselves and to be heard so as to exert influence on political processes of policy development and decision making. This conception is underpinned by an assumption that young people must necessarily engage in a struggle with others who control and direct development processes. In such an environment, youth participation only goes so far as their freedom to participate in opinion sharing and community consultation on issues defined by others. In this context, efforts to give young people more voice are somewhat limited in the degree to which power and control is handed out. For example, the New Zealand Ministry of

Youth Development's (2016) efforts to enhance youth participation focus on creating opportunities for young people to be involved in offering feedback on the design of policy and the development of services and programmes. In the context of this research, PAR gave control to the co-researchers over their own development, and enabled them to experience growth in ways which were of shared value to themselves.

The implications and practical applications of this finding are significant. A great deal of resources are directed by the public and private sectors towards modes of intervention based on a conception of development which views the well-being and progress of citizens as primarily dependent upon their capacity to participate in the economy and to accumulate material resources and political power. While it is apparent that the young people participating in the research also place value on the role which material resources play in contributing to their wellbeing, the research findings indicate that this dimension of development is assigned less value in comparison to those concerned with the intellectual, social, spiritual and moral capabilities of the individual.

This finding suggests that development practitioners who wish to learn about the hopes and aspirations of specific populations may do well to rely on PAR as a method which enables populations to articulate and agree upon aspects of development which are of shared concern to them. PAR holds potential for protagonists of development who are eager to increase the synergy between the intended outcomes of social action, and the hopes and needs of the members of the populations they seek to serve.

The findings of this research support claims that PAR has the potential to enable those who conduct it to define for themselves the nature and purpose of development. This claim has been made already by Eruera (2010) who argues that PAR is an effective tool for use in the context of Maori Whanau groups as it enables those who conduct it to incorporate Maori tikanga in a seamless way and enhances their capacity for self-determination. Eruera (2010:9) argues that PAR responds to the diversity which exists among Maori whanau groups and that its popularity is growing because of its proven ability to enhance whanau ora and the development of Whanau groups in Maori communities. Similarly, Zavala (2013) argues that PAR is an effective means for 'decolonizing' research and ensuring that community self-determination is enhanced among indigenous New Zealanders. Zavala's (2013) primary argument is that conducting PAR in the Whanau context enables the nature of action research to be shaped by this indigenous community structure rather than by an external institution.

The findings of this research support these claims, as well as suggest that PAR has the potential to also enable more ethnically diverse groups to define for themselves their own needs and aspirations and to pursue lines of action which are consistent with these needs and aspirations. Speaking on the potential of participatory methods to generate consensus and unity of vision, Woolcock & Narayan (2000:242) argue that "the use of participatory processes can facilitate consensus-building and social interaction among stakeholders with diverse interests and resources" and that "finding ways and means by which to transcend social divides and build social cohesion and trust is crucial for economic development". Despite being of different ethnicities and not belonging to the same Whanau Groups, the participants in this research were still able to identify and agree upon developmental imperatives and values which they shared together as residents of the same community.

6.2 - THE CAPACITIES AND WILLINGNESS OF YOUNG PERSONS TO ENGAGE IN SOCIAL CHANGE

PAR and faith in the capacity of others

An important finding from the research is that those who conduct PAR can experience surprise at the capacity of other participants to identify harmful social forces in their community and by their willingness to engage in social action. It is apparent that the majority of the participants in this research find hope and confidence in the realisation that the other participants actually shared similar concerns and aspirations for their community. For example, during his second interview when asked about his attitude towards his community, Participant 5 shared "I didn't expect much, but now knowing there is youth around and they are all coming together, it's amazing". This finding is significant as it is indicative of there being a certain level of embedded doubt or at least a lack of ability to see others as being willing and able to take social action.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the argument is made that, even in the field of Participatory Development, participation is treated primarily at the level of technique, and that in approach the capacity of the masses of humanity to participate in the transformation of society remains largely overlooked (Cooke & Kothari, 2001). One perspective is that when

development initiatives are underpinned by paternalistic assumptions about the nature of development beneficiaries, they then tend to be treated as passive recipients of knowledge, aid and assistance delivered from an external provider (Cooke & Kothari, 2001). It is this observation that makes me take a particular interest in participatory development and is part of the reasoning behind my choice of research topic. What I have come to realise however is that paternalistic assumptions are so pervasive and subtle that even those who are conscious of them can struggle to remain aloof from their influence. In the course of approaching my research, for example, I fell into the trap of deeming it necessary to justify conducting my research in Manurewa on the basis of it being a social space within which many young people are structurally marginalised. My understanding is that, had I been consistent with the values and beliefs underpinning PAR methodology, I would have instead felt justified in conducting research in Manurewa purely on the basis of it being a social space within which there exists a high density of young people who represent a vast reservoir of capacity to transform society waiting to be tapped. This difference in approach is simple, yet profound in implications and potentially in outcomes. The tendency for researchers like me to habitually think in terms of justifying development on the basis of social deficiencies leaves much space for people to be constructed as passive victims rather than as capable agents of change.

Far less obvious but equally immobilizing is the tendency for the masses of humanity to view themselves the same way - as being unwilling and incapable of participating in the betterment of society. Referring to these pervasive assumptions and patterns of despair, Freire (1997:xi) explains that "it is both difficult and joyful to see patterns of domination that result in internal and external forms of violence". Freire (1997:xi) identifies the means to counter these immobilizing forces by stating that those who conduct PAR must hold the belief that "people have a universal right to participate in the production of knowledge which is a disciplined process of personal and social transformation". He goes on to explain that the work of those who conduct PAR thus becomes about constructing "practices that strengthen hope and the growth of human protest and spirit" (Freire, 1997:xi).

The findings of this research indicate that, at the level of culture and belief, the participants in this research initially overlook the potential of others in their community to engage in social action. Through conducting PAR, however, the researchers become aware of this potential and develop increased faith in each other's capacity to engage in social action with a reasonable degree of effectiveness. This realization in itself serves to empower and liberate them somewhat from the shackles of complacency and despair. Through observing

the fruits of their action, they develop faith in the capacity of others, which in turn gives them greater resolve and determination to persevere. This observation reflects a description of (Freire, 1997:xi) who suggests that action researchers are "nurtured by the construction of meaningful knowledge". In this way the research provides evidence in support of the claim that we can treat PAR "as a form of liberation" in itself (Freire, 1997:xi). The research gives validity to Lewin's (1946:34) claim that there exists among the people of the world "a great amount of good-will" and of "readiness to face problems" which simply need to "be transformed into organized, efficient action".

PAR and the question of motivation

Another significant finding from the research is that the majority of the participants are initially motivated to conduct PAR because of their existing friendships with other potential recruits. Conducting PAR then serves to enhance friendships and mutual support between co-researchers, which in turn enhances the capacities and willingness of young people to engage in social action. PAR proves to be an effective means for establishing and facilitating a mutually enhancing relationship between motivation and social capital - essentially setting in motion a snowball effect. What the findings of the research suggest is that there exists among young people in Manurewa willingness and motivation to participate in social action which is grounded in a sense of shared concern and desire for mutual support between persons who consider themselves friends. In the context of this research, PAR is proven to be effective in tapping into the social roots of motivation.

This finding lends support to observations already made by Eruera (2010:9) who argues that, when conducted in the context of a Maori whanau group, PAR acts to "progress whanau development and whanau ora[2] in Maori communities". Zavala (2013) also suggests that PAR is effective in the whanau group context because the social capital latent within a whanau group lends impetus to the process and enables members of the group to more easily identify shared issues of concern and to adopt an approach to action research which is consistent with their shared cultural values and practices (Zavala, 2013).

In reading the reality of their community the participants also become more conscious of harmful forces operating around them, as discussed in Section 5.2. As the participants

---

[2] Whanau Ora is a concept which encompasses a sense of growing family cohesion, solidarity and commitment to tradition Maori practices which serve to reinforce cultural norms and values (Eruera, 2010:6).

begin to engage in a struggle to transform their community, a growing consciousness of a broader context and sense of purpose to assist those they care about also serves to motivate them. This suggests that under certain conditions, persons can be motivated to participate in social action by their solidarity and empathy for others. The findings of this research indicate a sound relationship between motivation and social capital. It seems that much can be gained from learning to develop and employ methods and approaches which tap into and enhance the development of networks of social capital latent within communities.

Some limitations of the research methods employed in this study

This research has made apparent a number of limitations in the methodology employed. In respect to identifying a shift in consciousness and in the development of the capacities of the participants to engage in social action, one significant limitation is that the research relies on the interpretation of data which is largely the verbal statements and rhetoric of the participants. The actions and everyday behaviour of the participants outside of the group's activities remains largely invisible. As such, while the research findings suggest that a shift in consciousness has taken place in all the participants as a result of conducting PAR, it is important to note that this shift is evident largely at the level of thought and rhetoric. This is worth noting as a state of critical consciousness, as described by Freire (2012), entails dynamic coherence between critical thought AND purposeful, consistent social action. While the data has suggested that some shift in the participants' behaviour is linked to them conducting PAR, identifying a shift in consciousness at the more profound level of thought AND day to day behaviour is beyond the scope of this research.

Another limitation of the research methodology is that it is not possible for me to separate the impact of the individual interviews from the impact of the participants conducting PAR. While the findings indicate that all participants experience a shift in thought and behaviour towards critical consciousness as a result of conducting PAR, it is possible that the shift in consciousness may also be partially attributable to intellectual stimulation associated with the interviews. The interview process requires that the research participants consider various questions, many of which could stimulate new thought processes and call upon the participants to reconsider their relationship with their community members, with the social problems in their community, and with processes of social action. The fact that the questioning process itself could contribute to a shift in the consciousness of the research

participants reduces the value of the research in terms of providing insight purely into the potential of PAR.

Another limitation of the research methodology to which I will draw attention is that the plans and aspirations of the PAR research group members are somewhat curtailed because of the parameter of my limited data collection period. This is made evident in my field notes which capture details of the third meeting of the group when the participants were reading the reality of their community and identifying an area of concern which they hoped to address through their lines of action, reflection and study. While many complex social issues were identified, Participant 4 in particular encouraged the group to focus on the problem which was thought to be most simple because he understood that the group only had eight weeks to carry out social action. While I had not suggested this when talking with the participants, it is clear that Participant 4 inferred this understanding and then projected it onto the other participants. This suggests that, if there had been no data collection taking place and had the group conducting PAR been formed purely for its own sake, it may be that the group would have aligned itself with a more ambitious line of social action and been more attitudinally prepared for long-term commitment.

Resolving the inadequacies of this research requires an investigation over a longer period of time, and an adjustment in the methods employed to collect data. It seems necessary to identify a methodological framework which makes the day to day actions of the participants much more visible, but one which also minimizes the risk of the data collection process itself having a stimulating impact on the participants. While no research methodology is entirely neutral in influence, progress could still be made in this regard. Further research into the topic of this thesis could be a suitable line of enquiry for someone pursuing a PhD.

6.3 - BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES WHICH OTHERWISE PREVENT YOUNG PEOPLE FROM PARTICIPATING

Limitations of PAR

Despite findings which are indicative of the potential of PAR in working with young people in South Auckland, it is also clear that PAR methodology in itself cannot be treated as

a recipe for success. This research also lends support to several claims previously raised about certain limitations of PAR.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the research findings indicate that PAR requires the initial participation of an individual/s with sufficient capacity to initiate the coming together of a group of persons who wish to conduct PAR, and who then facilitates and guides the group as it builds capacity to advance through cycles of activity. One of the most prevalent critiques of PAR is that, especially in the early stages, the workings of a PAR group rely heavily on and are greatly influenced by the involvement of an individual or small group of initiators who facilitate the activities and discussions of the co researchers. Researchers such as Altrichter & Gstettner (1993) raise the warning that such persons are likely to be methodologically more experienced, more eloquent in defining the aims of the action research and, in addition, confronted with expectations of guidance and leadership from other co-researchers. Referring back to their own experience, Altrichter & Gstettner (1993:343) explain that "it was mostly the researchers who initiated projects, took charge of them and - in contradiction to their official aims - produced new dependencies". This is certainly a notable feature of my experience as an initiator of PAR. In sum, the continuity and sustainability of the PAR process was highly dependent upon my involvement. For example, the scope of the participant's efforts in the field of social action was consciously reduced as a result of their awareness of the time restraints of my personal involvement in the PAR process. This dependence of PAR on skilled initiators represents a significant limitation and undermines the credibility of sweeping statements which present PAR as a means of empowerment accessible to all (Gore, 1991).

Gore (1991) also raises the warning that, like all methods, PAR is also prone to capture. The spaces of discussion and reflection within the group meetings are sites of power. The stakeholders in the decision making processes naturally exercise differing degrees of control and influence. While PAR methodology may give control to groups of local researchers, individual researchers will benefit from this power to different degrees (Altrichter & Gstettner, 1993).

My experience also indicates that, as the primary facilitator of the group's discussions, there has been significant potential for me to exert disproportional control over the nature and direction of the action research. In Chapter 4 I described in some detail how I hold a unique position in relation to the other co-researcher. I emigrated to the community

some four years ago, but prior to that I grew up in a social reality in Northland which was free of many of the challenges young people face growing up in Manurewa. Being a male of European descent, I also am less prone to forces of social and economic marginalization which operate in society. Unlike the other participants, I have also had the opportunity to receive tertiary training, to travel extensively overseas, and to acquire significant experience in the area of social action. My positionality increased the risk of me exerting disproportional influence over the nature and direction of the group's activities.

Because of her experience with navigating disproportionate power influences when conducting PAR in New Zealand, Williams (2007) argues that people working with PAR must appreciate the need for context and participant specificity in order to minimize the marginalizing effects of cultural hegemony. Being mindful of my own positionality and having perceived the risk of capture, I was reflexive in my approach and attentive to avoiding exerting disproportionate influence on processes of decision making.

As mentioned previously, in the course of the research a female participant voluntarily withdrew her involvement after the first few weeks. This observation is indicative of a potential limitation of PAR in respect to the degree to which it becomes accessible to all members of a community. This observation suggests that the formation of a PAR group composed of a particular type of individuals may act to marginalize in subtle ways others from becoming involved in the PAR process. This experience is suggestive of the need for initiators of PAR to adopt approaches to forming and gradually expanding research groups in a way which might minimize marginalization. In my research, for example, I could have been more attentive to somehow ensuring gender balance in the group.

As a participant observer in the PAR process it is also apparent that the fulfilment of the group's hopes and aspirations requires long term commitment to sustained action on the part of those initially involved. In this research, after eight weeks of conducting PAR the group was essentially still in the planning stages of conducting social action and was yet to begin the graffiti project which it set out to do. This finding supports the claim of Kemmis, McTaggart and Retallick (2004) who draw attention to the significant time requirements of PAR and how this feature of the methodology significantly reduces its popularity. As a researcher limited by time constraints associated with my Master's degree program, it was not possible for me to sustain my involvement in the workings of the PAR group beyond the eight week data collection period. As a result, the operation of the PAR group experienced

disruption. This limitation is obviously not something related only to PAR but is a challenge which needs to be faced with development processes in general.

Conditions which assist the realization of PAR's potential and some room for further research

Claims made about limitations of PAR are supported by this research. Despite having to navigate these challenges however, the overall outcome of the research is also indicative of the potential of PAR to enable young people in South Auckland to engage in social action with some degree of effectiveness and to experience positive personal development as a result. As discussed in Chapter 5, the research data indicates that after a period of conducting PAR all the participants develop a shared faith in the potential of PAR to assist other young people like themselves to become empowered and enabled to make a positive difference in their community. During the data collection period a number of the participants took steps to engage their own friends in the activities of the group. Thus from the perspective of the participants, PAR proves to be an accessible means for enabling young persons to engage in social action.

Given both the limitations and opportunities associated with PAR, it is valuable to explore how the findings of this research offer insight into some of the conditions required in order for PAR methodology to be an effective means for engaging young people in social action. Rather than giving into a culture of unbounded criticism about limitations and risks of capture, researchers can learn a great deal from exploring approaches to PAR which can minimize its potential deficiencies.

In an attempt to suggest how the pitfalls of PAR can be avoided, a number of action researchers including Unluer (2012), Hodkinson (2005), Coghlan (2007) and Asselin (2003) call for researchers to exercise high levels of reflexivity and suggest the adoption of particular methods and techniques which would be conducive of diffusing control away from the individual facilitator. However, the literature does not go much further than generalizations and offers little insight into such methods and techniques. Freire's (2012) notion of dialogue offers some insight into a mode of enquiry necessary for avoiding capture and stimulating a process of conscientization among growing numbers of protagonists. But even then, Freirean

dialogue is a concept and practice described only in very general terms as if to suggest it remains as an object of learning.

This research points towards certain considerations, methods and techniques which are yet to me made explicit by other researchers but which are conducive to the effectiveness of PAR. One of these conditions is that there are significant benefits which come from the initiator of PAR being a member of the community within which PAR is conducted, or at least being able to go through a process of generating social capital within the community prior to the initiation of the PAR process. In the case of this research the most obvious benefit is that this acts as a stimulus to participation because the initiator is able to draw on existing social capital in the early stages of the PAR process. As discussed in detail previously, in this research participants were successfully engaged only after I trialled a very non-participatory recruitment method which was largely forced upon me due to the requirements of the University of Auckland Ethics Committee. This experience exposes one of the existing barriers which might otherwise prevent young persons from engaging in social action and provides insight into how this barrier can be overcome.

The experience of having to initially conform to the University ethics committee requirements made evident the pitfalls of an existing institutionalised bias which constructs a separateness and aloofness - a separation which prevents young people from engaging in social action. The tendency for mainstream development research and practice to divide and fragment - the research from the researcher; the developed from the developing - is so deeply ingrained that it is embedded in the institutions and structures within which mainstream research and practice take place. My attempt to learn about dimensions and forms of participation which transcend fragmentation has been difficult because it was carried out within the framework of mainstream development research academia. As a student seeking to learn about the potential of Participatory Action Research, I was required by the Auckland University Ethics Committee to adopt methods and techniques which constructed me as an outsider separate from those with whom I had hoped to co-investigate reality with as co-researchers. I was required to use recruitment posters and information flyers which, while simple, inherently defined me as an 'outsider' seeking to engage 'insiders' in 'my' research. This felt in conflict with my identity as a long-term resident of the community within which I conducted my research - a community which I call home. The research initially felt reduced to a process through which 'I' recruited a 'them' to participate in 'my' research. It was only after this method had proven to be entirely ineffective that it was necessary for me to adjust

my method and remove the artificial barriers which had hitherto prevented young persons from engaging in social action. I then chose to go about gently stimulating the participation of a group of acquaintances as equal collaborators in a process of learning and transformative social action - an approach and method which felt more in keeping with my identity as an insider-researcher.

The research suggests that PAR may be less effective when arbitrarily imposed on a population and that it is best not to be seen as something which can be simply injected into community life by an external party. The social capital which I possessed as a member of the Manurewa community enabled me to set in motion cycles of PAR alongside those with whom I share a common identity and concern for our community. Were there not an existing social connection between the initial PAR facilitator and the community, the research process would have played out very differently or perhaps not at all. In reflecting on my experience I can relate to Freire's (xi:1997) claim that "when people are the masters of inquiry - the owners of the questions under study - their research becomes a means of taking risks, of expelling visible and invisible oppressors, and of producing actions for transformation".

In respect to another condition which can enable the potential of PAR to be realised, it is clear that there is much that can be learnt about how differing approaches to conversation and decision making influence the outcomes of PAR methodology. If a PAR process is open to being dominated by an individual, in particular an initiator/facilitator, the mode of communication within the group's reflections needs to be governed by a certain framework of ethical and epistemological principles which serve to more evenly distribute power. Yet the question of what principles and norms could constitute such a framework is left largely unaddressed in existing literature. What mode of communication is required in order to facilitate participatory, empowering and emancipatory conversations? What techniques can be employed in the context of group discussions which enable the voices of all to be heard? Further research is required to gain deeper insight into how ideological underpinnings and the approach taken to research can be tailored in a way that reduces capture and minimizes other challenges which otherwise prevent young people from engaging in social action.

In respect to another condition necessary for effective PAR, Alejandro (2007:541) argues that participation has been reduced to "a series of methodological packages and techniques" and as such has lost its philosophical and ideological meaning. He argues that if participatory development is to serve processes of grassroots transformational resistance, the

ideological underpinning and philosophical meanings of participation need to be recovered. One of the most apparent underpinnings of PAR laid down by Lewin (1946) is that it requires faith in the capacity of all people to participate in transformational social action with a reasonable degree of effectiveness. He takes this position upon his recognition of a significant body of "serious goodwill" latent within his research participants which simply needs to "be transformed into organized, efficient action" (Lewin, 1946:34). The findings of this research discussed in section 5.2 make apparent that conducting PAR generates within the participants a sense of assurance about their own capacity to engage in social action and also a faith in the willingness of others to contribute meaningfully to the process. It is worth noting too that, as a result of my prior engagement in transformative social action, I went into the process with an existing confidence in the latent willingness and capacity of others to participate. This was essentially a matter of belief and approach which no doubt shaped the outcomes of the PAR process. Had I not possessed this confidence as the initiating facilitator I may have felt less motivated to persevere in the research at the point when no participants responded to the recruitment flyers. In sum, the findings of this research support the claim made by Lewin that faith in the capacity of others is a useful conceptual underpinning of PAR, and also that PAR has the potential to actually generate and extend this sense of confidence to more and more critical actors.

Another issue which this research points towards is concerned with the duration of study and the time requirement of the co-researchers. By drawing attention to the element of dependence on an initial facilitator in the previous section, it is not to rule out the potential for this dependence to reduce over time and to eventually disappear. As noted in section 5.2, this research indicates that PAR has the potential to strengthen social capital between those who conduct it, which in turn is linked strongly to a growing sense of motivation among the co-researchers. It can thus be hypothesised that if cycles of activity were sustained for a sufficient period of time, it is possible that eventually a level of capacity could be developed among research participants which would ensure that others would begin to shoulder responsibility for driving forward the PAR process, independent of the individual/s who were initially crucial in the early stages of PAR. The findings of this research suggest then that long term commitment on the part of those initially involved is a necessary condition of conducting effective PAR. This aspect of PAR can be seen both as a limitation or an asset, depending on one's position. It is apparent that gaining more insight into the potential of PAR

to build capacity in those who conduct it and to effect social transformation in New Zealand requires extensive longitudinal research.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter I have discussed my findings and considered how they respond to each of the three questions which have guided the research. I have made reference back to themes presented in Chapter 3, drawing attention to existing arguments which have been given further validity through this research. I have also identified new insights which this research has revealed about realizing the potentialities of PAR.

In discussing the findings I have drawn attention to a number of conditions which enhance the effectiveness of PAR and minimize some of its risks. One such condition is that the initiator of PAR be a member of the community within which PAR takes place and that they be willing and able to make a long term commitment to sustaining a pattern of action, reflection and study. Another is that those who conduct PAR need to share faith in the capacity of others to engage meaningfully in social action and that they need to give attention to adopting techniques and approaches to group consultation which enable all to contribute on equal footing. While the articulation of these conditions remains incomplete, it nevertheless represents a new way of thinking about the use of PAR with young people in New Zealand. The research findings are indicative of the organic nature of development processes set in motion by PAR.

In the next chapter I conclude my thesis by summarizing the research findings and restating the argument which I have presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

This thesis addresses the use of PAR methodology with urban youth in South Auckland, New Zealand. The research involved me recruiting a group of youth who conducted PAR together. Relying on my existing social connections in the Manurewa community, I was able to successfully bring together a group of young people who engaged in cycles of activity and carried out various lines of social action. While acting as a co-researcher in the PAR process, I used three distinct methods to gather data relevant to the research questions. The data gathered was rich enough for me to analyse with a degree of success and I have been able to respond to the research questions.

In sum, the findings of this research support claims about the potential of PAR to facilitate a process of capacity building in those who conduct it. The findings indicate that all the co-researchers experienced advances in their level of critical consciousness as a result of conducting PAR and consistently identified ways in which conducting PAR had a positive impact on enhancing their ability to engage in social action.

Most crucially, the findings of the research point towards how certain conditions and approaches lend themselves to the realization of the potentialities of PAR and to the minimization of its risks. My main argument is that processes of development set in motion by PAR should be treated as essentially organic in nature. This conception of PAR as an organic process is a useful theoretical idea as it shapes both method and approach in a way that enables the potentialities of PAR to be realised. In the same what that a plant requires certain conditions to flourish, for PAR to be effective in releasing the potential of young people to engage in social action, certain conditions need to be met. One such condition is that the initiator/s of PAR should possess or be willing to develop a strong faith in the capacity of others to contribute to the betterment of society. Another important factor in enhancing the effectiveness of PAR is that it involves an individual or group of initiators who have an adequate degree of experience, capability, and willingness to make a long term commitment to social action. This research also indicates that there are significant benefits in the initiator/s of PAR being persons belonging to the population in which PAR will take place, or that they be willing to integrate into the life of the local population in order to establish ties of friendship and to build a foundation of social capital upon which a cadre of

researchers can be formed. Another important condition which this research points towards is that the initiators of PAR should adopt a conceptual framework of ethical and epistemological principles which enable them to facilitate and guide the activities of a growing body of researchers in a way that minimizes the control they exert and leaves room for indigenous co-researchers to gain a just degree of ownership over the direction and purpose of the PAR process.

While drawing attention to the significant potentialities of PAR, I am not suggesting that PAR is a panacea for the ills of the world or that it is superior in all aspects to other research methods. The research findings also support claims about some of the well-known limitations and risks of PAR. Issues of facilitator dependence, facilitator capture and barriers to participation have been exposed. Also the significant levels of time, energy and long term commitment required for conducting PAR are better understood. Given its challenging requirements, it is no surprise that the methodology is yet to gain widespread prominence in mainstream development.

Despite its challenges and limitations, I am confident that PAR is a methodology which holds much promise for use in New Zealand. While PAR as a methodological and ideological tool remains incomplete, it nevertheless represent a valuable asset, the value of which I feel will gradually become more widely appreciated. There is significant opportunity for PAR to be employed as a method of enquiry as it has proven to have the potential to counter processes of marginalization and to give greater voice and control to young people over their own development.

The findings of this research make explicit that PAR is unique not so much because of its technical features, but more so because of its ideological roots and conceptual underpinnings. Advocates of PAR have raised the challenge that if the philosophical and ideological meaning of participatory development is to be recovered it needs to be "re-articulated within broader processes of social and political struggle in order to facilitate the recovery of social transformation in the world of twenty-first century capitalism"(Alejandro, 2007:541). This research represents a step towards this recovery. PAR cannot just be employed as a technique. It requires the adoption of a particular set of attitudes and qualities of approach, as well as the realization of certain conditions. If these conceptual underpinnings of PAR are better understood, they can enrich the experience of development researchers and practitioners as they conduct their work. Those who conduct PAR would benefit from

developing a close familiarity with its ideological underpinnings and philosophical requirements. Researchers who are adequately informed and skilled to instigate and facilitate processes of PAR would do well to view their task as that of initiating processes through which growing numbers of people develop capacity to take ownership of and extend the scope of action research. In this work, access to knowledge should be treated as the right of every human being, and the opportunity to participate in its generation, application and diffusion should be extended to all who may wish to participate in the construction of a better world. While lending impetus to the revival of the ideological meaning of participatory development, this research has also exposed a number of conditions which enhance the effectiveness of PAR. To the degree that social actors become more and more mindful of the conditions which enable human beings to collaborate and to flourish, they will be taking steps towards releasing the potential of populations to take charge of their own development.

APPENDICES:

Freirean Coding Framework:

1) 'intransitive thought'

-(Fatalism) They believe that they have no control over their own destiny. They believe that only luck or God can influence their future
-(Inertia) They see no potential for their own action to change the social condition they experience. They lack volition and do not act for social change
-(Domination) They are dominated by an elite other
-(Powerlessness) They believe they do not possess enough power to make a difference themselves
-(Hopelessness) They do not perceive or imagine a realistic alternative to their current circumstances

2) 'semi-transitive'

-(Hopeful) They see some possibility for social change and have faith that change could come
-(Partially Empowered) While they believe they possess power to make changes, they hold the belief that significant change will still come largely from some powerful other, rather than from their own self
-(Occasional Actor) They feel somewhat empowered to make a difference and occasionally pursue lines of action to make change
-(Fragmentation) Rather than recognizing faults in the whole system underlying an issue, they treat problems in isolation from each other and thus fail to address root causes of oppression
-(Follower) They are likely to rally behind popular leaders whose rhetoric aligns with revolutionary values

3) 'critical transitivity'

-(Critical Actor) They exercise capacity for self-organization by taking part in and initiating processes of social change. They see themselves as responsible and empowered for making the changes needed and manifest a consistent dynamism between critical thought and action
-(Holistic) They think critically about society and analyse problems holistically, recognizing the complexity of problems and identifying root causes
-(Power Awareness) They show power awareness. They know that society and history can be made and remade by human action and by organized groups. They know who exercised dominant power in society for what ends and how power is currently organized and used in society
-(Critical Learner) They exercise capacity for self education and critical literacy. They posses analytical habits of thinking, reading, writing, speaking or discussing which go beneath surface impressions, traditional myths, mere opinions, and routine cliches
-(Cultural Critic) They exercise capacity for desocialization by recognizing and challenging the myths, values, behaviours and language learned in mass culture. They critically examine the regressive values operating in society and within themselves

The Youths self-identified Impact assessment:

These are elements and indicators of 'Youth Empowerment' and 'Personal Development' which the group collectively identified together. The list brainstormed by the participants has been compiled and grouped by the primary researcher and approved by the participants before being used in the research.

-**Using your talents for good**
You channel your skills and energy towards creating or doing something positive or great. Using the energy that you have to organize positive activities. Developing your talents and using them for good. Learning and understanding how to use your skills independently.

-**Elevating your thoughts**
The way you think changed so that your views and ideas have become more positive. You have started thinking about what's more important and prioritize the more important things, like service and helping others.

-**Purpose and spiritual identity**
Your soul is empowered. You feel that you have a purpose in life.

-**Personal Integrity**
You have the tools needed to defend yourself from harmful and destructive forces in society, like violence, drugs, stereotyping, prejudice, media, tagging and so on

-**Maturity and foresight**
You are more mature and responsible. You make better decisions and understand the consequences. You are more aware of who you are and what you are doing and the consequences of your decisions.

-**Power of expression**
The way you speak has changed - your language has become cleaner. You speak up more and express yourself better. You have become better able to answer questions. You express yourself more openly and have become more talkative and openly expressive.

-**Putting your ideals into action**
Your actions have changed. You put into action the positive things you think and feel. You put your words into action. You put your ideas into action and learn as a result. You not only talk about being better but you show it through action. You take action and see change.

-**Constructive habits**
Your lifestyle and priorities have changed. You have started to question your beliefs and patterns of behaviour and habits. You do less things for yourself, like gaming and movies. Your habits have changed as you found positive things to do with your time.

-**Learning and education**
You participate in courses and training for capacity building. You learn and understand new things. You have learnt something new. You give priority to your education.

-**Community social action**
You are doing something to help the community. You are being a source of power to transform a population. You feel able to make a positive change. You have learnt about the importance of your age group and the contribution you can make to society

-**Mutual support**
You have made new friends. You work with other youth to spread a positive message. Empowerment is about people helping each other. You are learning about teamwork.

-**Self discipline**
You have gained clarity about what you want to do and how you are going to do it. You are becoming better at planning something and following the plan. You apply yourself to hard work.

-**Reading reality**

You are better able to see reality and how you can or can't improve it.

-Social confidence
You have gained more confidence to put yourself 'out there'. You have become more confident. It's about building your confidence. You have overcome fears and challenges, like talking to new people.

-Self-focussed change
You are better at setting and achieving your own goals. Growing as a person. Going through stages of development. Personal development is to do with yourself and your own goals and things you want to change.

-Integrated development
You are doing well in your studies, your work, your service and those different parts of life like playing sports.

-Changing self-image
Your self-image is changing your personal image and the way society and others view you. For example, your physical appearance might have changed and you wear sensible stuff and the right uniform.

-Effort and generosity
You are better able to give of yourself to help others better, especially at school or places where you don't like to be and where you have to push yourself to be better.

Detailed outcomes of coding analysis and self-identified assessments:

Percentages are presented in terms of the percent of the total number of codes for each coded interview script. In other words, 37% intransitive in interview 1 indicates that 37% of the codes allocated to the interview 1 script were statements indicative of an intransitive state of consciousness.

Participants 1

Impact assessment of conducting PAR according to Freirean coding		
	Interview 1	Interview 2
Intransitive	37 %	19%
Semi Transitive	47%	70%
Critically Transitive	16%	11%

Self-identified impact assessment of conducting PAR					
1	Maturity & foresight	7	Constructive habits	13	Social confidence
2	Purpose and spiritual identity	8	Power of expression	14	Self-focussed change
3	Elevation of thought	9	Using talents for good	15	Learning and education
4	Personal integrity	10	Mutual support	16	Putting ideals into action
5	Integrated development	11	Community social action	17	Effort and generosity
6	Self-discipline	12	Reading reality	18	Changing self-image

Participant 2:

Impact assessment of conducting PAR according to Freirean coding		
	Interview 1	Interview 2
Intransitive	13%	2%
Semi Transitive	44%	38%
Critically Transitive	43%	60%

Self-identified impact assessment of conducting PAR					
1	Personal integrity	7	Purpose and spiritual identity	13	Social confidence
2	Mutual support	8	Putting ideals into action	14	Using talent for good
3	Power of expression	9	Maturity and foresight	15	Integrated development
4	Reading reality	10	Community social action	16	Constructive habits
5	Self-discipline	11	Self-focused development	17	Elevation of thought
6	Effort and generosity	12	Changing self-image	18	Learning and education

Participant 3

Impact assessment of conducting PAR according to Freirean coding		
	Interview 1	Interview 2
Intransitive	44%	34%
Semi Transitive	53%	63%
Critically Transitive	3%	4%

Self-identified impact assessment of conducting PAR					
1	Learning and education	7	Elevation of thought	13	Personal integrity
2	Power of Expression	8	Maturity and foresight	14	Social confidence
3	Mutual Support	9	Community social action	15	Integrated development
4	Changing self-image	10	Effort and generosity	16	Putting ideals into action
5	Using your talents for good	11	Self-focussed change	17	Constructive habits
6	Purpose and Spiritual identity	12	self-discipline	18	Reading reality

Participant 4

Impact assessment of conducting PAR according to Freirean coding		
	Interview 1	Interview 2
Intransitive	4%	2%
Semi Transitive	49%	46%
Critically Transitive	47%	52%

Self-identified impact assessment of conducting PAR					
1	Maturity and foresight	7	Reading reality	13	Changing self-image
2	Power of expression	8	Self-Discipline	14	Integrated development
3	Mutual Support	9	Purpose and spiritual identity	15	Social confidence
4	Effort and generosity	10	Constructive habits	16	Self-focussed change
5	Putting ideals into action	11	Personal Integrity	17	Community social action
6	Using talent for good	12	Elevation of thought	18	Learning and education

Participant 5

Impact assessment of conducting PAR according to Freirean coding		
	Interview 1	Interview 2
Intransitive	11%	5%
Semi Transitive	85.6%	60%
Critically Transitive	3.3%	35%

Self-identified impact assessment of conducting PAR					
1	Self-focused change	7	Power of expression	13	Putting your ideals into action
2	Elevation of thought	8	Mutual support	14	Community social action
3	Maturity and foresight	9	Reading reality	15	Self-discipline
4	Learning and education	10	Purpose and spiritual identity	16	Personal integrity
5	Effort and generosity	11	Using talent for good	17	Social confidence
6	Changing self-image	12	Constructive habits	18	Integrated development

Interview Schedule:

The questions guiding the research include: 1) what does PAR reveal about the perspective of young people towards issues of underdevelopment which affect them? 2) If any, what impact does engaging in PAR have on their capacities and willingness to engage in social change; and 3) How/if/in what ways does PAR alter some of the barriers and challenges which might otherwise prevent young persons from participating in social action?

Interview 1 Question:

-When you hear the words 'personal development' what do they mean to you?
-How do you think youth in your community can experience personal development?
-In terms of your own personal development, how do youth think conducting PAR might affect you?
-When you hear the words 'youth empowerment' what do they mean to you?
-How do you think youth in your community can be empowered?
-In terms of your own empowerment, how do youth think conducting Participatory Action Research (PAR) might affect you?
-Who or what do you think has the greatest influence on your future?
-How do you feel about life in Auckland?
-What things about life in Auckland are of concern to you?
-How do you feel about life in your community?
-What things do you like about life in your community?
-What things about your community are of concern to you?
-What is the cause of these things which concern you?
-In your opinion, who or what is responsible for causing these things?
-In your opinion, who or what is responsible for addressing them?
-What can you do about these things that concern you?
-Do you believe your actions make a difference to the world around you? Can you give an example?
-Who do you talk to about issues that affect you? Do you feel heard? Who else could you talk to?
-What experience do you have in participating in action to improve the conditions of your community? What motivated/motivates this action?
-Do you feel able to contribute in some way to improving the condition of your community?
-Does anything prevent you from addressing concerns that you have about your community?
-Do you think these barriers can be overcome? How? Who is responsible for that?
-Are there things which hold you back from achieving things you would like to achieve?
-What things in life are of interest to you? How do you learn about these things? Where do you find information?
-How do you feel about the things you learn/learnt at school? Are they of use or importance to you? What else would you like to learn? Do you learn about these things? How?
-What would you like to learn about your community?
-What things do you hope to learn through conducting PAR?
-What motivates you to conduct PAR?

Interview 2 Questions:

-Please describe your experience of conducting PAR over the past 8 weeks
-What motivated you to conduct PAR?
-How do you think conducting PAR has affected you personally?
-What is it about PAR that had this effect on you?
-In terms of your own personal development, how do youth think conducting PAR has affected you? -What specifically about PAR enabled you to develop in this way?
-In terms of your own empowerment, how do youth think conducting PAR might affect you?
-What specifically about PAR enabled you to be empowered in this way?
-If any, what impact have you observed that PAR has had on the other researchers?
-If at all, how do you think youth in your community can experience personal development?
-If at all, how do you think youth in your community can be empowered?
-Now that you have had more experience in participating in action to improve the conditions of your community, do you feel motivated to continue PAR? If so, what is it that motivates you? If not, why not?
-Aside from conducting PAR, do you plan to continue to take any action to improve the conditions of your community? If so, what will you do? If not, why not?
-Who or what do you think has the greatest influence on your future?

-How now do you feel about life in your community?
-What things do you like about life in your community?
-What things about your community are of concern to you?
-What is the cause of these things which concern you?
-In your opinion, who or what is responsible for causing these things?
-In your opinion, who or what is responsible for addressing them?
-What can you do about these things that concern you?
-Do you believe your actions make a difference to the world around you? Can you give an example?
-Who do you talk to about issues that affect you? Do you feel heard? Who else could you talk to?
-Do you feel able to contribute in some way to improving the condition of your community?
-Does anything prevent you from addressing concerns that you have about your community?
-Do you think these barriers can be overcome? How? Who is responsible for that?
-Are there things which hold you back from achieving things you would like to achieve?
-What things in life are of interest to you? How do you learn about these things? Where do you find information?
-What things have you learnt through conducting PAR?
-Are there other things you would you like to learn about your community?
-What else would you like to learn? Do you think you will be able to learn about these things? How?

REFERENCES:

Abdu'l-Bahá, A. (1978). *Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Bahá*, Haifa, Israel: Baha'i World Centre Publishing Press.

Adelman, C. (1993). Kurt Lewin and the origins of action research. *Educational action research*, *1*(1), 7-24.

Alejandro Leal, P. (2007). Participation: the ascendancy of a buzzword in the neoliberal era. *Development in practice*, *17*(4-5), 539-548.

Altrichter, H., & Gstettner, P. (1993). Action research: a closed chapter in the history of German social science?. *Educational Action Research*, *1*(3), 329-360.

Appadurai, A. (2006). The right to research. *Globalisation, societies and education*, *4*(2), 167-177.

Arbab, F. (2000). Promoting a Discourse on Science, Religion and Development. In Harper, S. (Ed). *The lab, the temple, and the market: Reflections at the intersection of science, religion, and development* (pp 203-289). New Delhi, India: Kumarian Pr Inc.

Arnstein, R. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of the American Institute of planners*, *35*(4), 216-224.

Asselin, E. (2003). Insider research: Issues to consider when doing qualitative research in your own setting. *Journal for Nurses in Professional Development*, *19*(2), 99-103.

Baha'i International Community (BIC). (2015, July). *Summoning Our Common Will - A Baha'i contribution to the United Nations Global Development Agenda*. Paper presented at the United Nations General Assembly conference, Geneva. Retrieved from: https://www.bic.org/news/%E2%80%9CSummoning-Our-Common-Will%E2%80%9D-addresses-new-UN-global-development-agenda

Baha'u'llah. (1978). in *Baha'i Consultation: A Compilation by the Universal House of Justice*, Auckland, New Zealand., National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ìs of New Zealand, 93

Berg, L. (2004). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences (5th ed.).* Boston, United States: Pearson.

Boston, J., & Chapple, S. (2014). *Child Poverty in New Zealand*. Wellington, New Zealand: Bridget Williams Books.

Brannick, T., & Coghlan, D. (2007). In defence of being "native": The case for insider academic research. *Organizational research methods*, 10(1), 59-74.

Cammarota, J., & Fine, M. (2008). Youth participatory action research. *Revolutionizing education: Youth participatory action research in motion*, 1-12.

Statistics New Zealand. (2013). *Demographic Report Card Manurewa*. Retrieved from: http://www.stats.govt.nz

Checkoway, N., & Gutierrez, M. (2006). Youth participation and community change: An introduction. *Journal of Community Practice*, *14*(1-2), 1-9.

Coghlan, D. (2007). Insider action research: opportunities and challenges. *Management Research News*, *30*(5), 335-343.

Coghlan, D., & Holian, R. (2007). Editorial: insider action research. *Action Research*, *5*(1), 5-10.

Cooke, B., & Kothari, U. (2001). *Participation: The new tyranny?*.London, United Kingdom: Zed Books.

Cox, M., Stokes, F., & Dixon, H.. (2015) *Giving New Zealand Philanthropic Funding*. Prepared by BERL (Business and Economic Research Limited) for Philanthropy New Zealand, Retrieved from: http://www.berl.co.nz.

Creswell, J. (2003). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (2nd ed.).* CA: Sage Publications.

Dasgupta, A., & Beard, V. A. (2007). Community driven development, collective action and elite capture in Indonesia. *Development and change*, *38* (2), 229-249.

Dwyer, S. C., & Buckle, J. L. (2009). The space between: On being an insider-outsider in qualitative research. *International journal of qualitative methods*, *8*(1), 54-63.

Easton, B. (2014). Economic inequality in New Zealand: Update to a user's guide. *New Zealand Sociology*, *29*(3), 7.

Effendi, S. (1990). Letter written on behalf of Effendi, S, to an individual, 17 February 1933 - in *Conservation of the Earth's Resources*. London, United Kingdom: Baha'i Publishing Trust.

Eruera, M. (2010). Ma te whānau te huarahi motuhake: whānau participatory action research groups. *MAI Review*, *3*, 1-9.

Escobar, A. (2011). *Encountering development: The making and unmaking of the Third World*. London: Princeton University Press.

Finlay, S. (2010). Carving out meaningful spaces for youth participation and engagement in decision-making. *Youth Studies Australia*, *29*(4), 53.

France, A. (2008). From being to becoming: the importance of tackling youth poverty in transitions to adulthood. *Social policy and society*, *7*(04), 495-505.

Freire, P. (1973). *Education for critical consciousness (Vol. 1)*. London, United Kingdom: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Freire, P. (1997). Foreword. In Smith, E., Willms, G., & Johnson, A (Eds). *Nurtured by knowledge: learning to do participatory action-research.*.Essex, United Kingdom: Apex Publishing.

Freire, P. (2012). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York, USA: Bloomsbury Publishing Inc.

Garbarino, J. (1995). *Raising children in a socially toxic environment*. San Francisco, USA: Jossey-Bass Publishing.

Ginwright, S., & James, T. (2002). From assets to agents of change: Social justice, organizing, and youth development. *New directions for youth development*, *2002*(96), 27-46.

Gore, J. (1991) On silent regulation: emancipatory action research in preservice teacher education. *Curriculum Perspectives,* 11(2), pp. 47-51.

Ginwright, S., & Cammarota, J. (2002). New terrain in youth development: The promise of a social justice approach. *Social Justice*, *29*(4 (90), 82-95.

Ginwright, S., Cammarota, J., & Noguera, P. (2006). *Beyond resistance!*. Oxford, UK: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

Grant, L., & O'Hara, G. (2010). Spotlight on The Spirit Level, by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett. *Geography, 95*, 149.

Guijt, I., & Shah, K. (Eds.). (1998). *The myth of community: Gender issues in participatory development* (pp. 1-23). London, UK: Intermediate technology publications.

Harris, A. (2006). Introduction: Critical perspectives on child and youth participation in Australia and New Zealand/Aotearoa. *Children Youth and Environments*, *16*(2), 220-230.

Hayden, R. (1979). *Community development: learning and action.* Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press.

Hickey, S., & Mohan, G. (2004). *Participation-from tyranny to transformation?: Exploring new approaches to participation in development*. London, United Kingdom: Zed books.

Hodkinson, P. (2005). 'Insider research' in the study of youth cultures. *Journal of Youth Studies*, *8*(2), 131-149.

Hodgkinson, H. L. (1957). Action research--A critique. *The Journal of Educational Sociology*, *31*(4), 137-153.

James, T., & McGillicuddy, K. (2001). Building youth movements for community change. *The Nonprofit Quarterly*, *8*(4), 1-3.

Jeffrey, C. (2013). Geographies of children and youth III Alchemists of the revolution?. *Progress in Human Geography*, *37*(1), 145-152.

Jennings, B., Parra-Medina, M., Hilfinger-Messias, K., & McLoughlin, K. (2006). Toward a critical social theory of youth empowerment. *Journal of Community Practice*, *14*(1-2), 31-55.

Kemmis, S., McTaggart, R., & Retallick, J. (2004). *The action research planner (2nd ed.)*. Karachi: Aga Khan University

Leventhal, T., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2000). The neighbourhoods they live in: the effects of neighbourhood residence on child and adolescent outcomes. *Psychological bulletin*, *126*(2), 309.

Lewin, K. (1946). Action research and minority problems. *Journal of social issues*, *2*(4), 34-46.

Lockhart, A. (1982). The insider-outsider dialectic in native socio-economic development: A case study in process understanding. *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, *2*(1), 159-168.

Loxley, A., & Seery, A. (2008). Some philosophical and other related issues of insider research. *Researching education from the inside*, 15-32.

Malone, S. (2003). Ethics at home: Informed consent in your own backyard. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 16(6), 797-815.

Mannheim K (1972 [1936]) The problem of generations. In Altbach P and Laufer R (eds) *The New Pilgrims: Youth Protest in Transition*. New York, USA: David McKay and Company.

Mansuri, G., & Rao, V. (2004). Community-based and-driven development: A critical review. *The World Bank Research Observer*, *19*(1), 1-39.

McFarlane, C. (2006). Crossing borders: development, learning and the North–South divide. *Third World Quarterly*, *27*(8), 1413-1437.

McTaggart, R. (1994). Participatory action research: Issues in theory and practice. *Educational Action Research*, *2*(3), 313-337.

Merriam, B., Johnson-Bailey, J., Lee, Y., Kee, Y., Ntseane, G., & Muhamad, M. (2001). Power and positionality: Negotiating insider/outsider status within and across cultures. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*,20(5), 405-416.

Ministry of Education. (2016). *Education Counts*. Retrieved from: http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/indicators/main/education-and-learning-outcomes/1781

Ministry of Social Development. (2014). *Monitoring household incomes*. Retrieved from: https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/monitoring/household-incomes/index.html

Ministry of Youth Development. (2016). *Working with young people*. Retrieved from: http://www.myd.govt.nz/working-with-young-people/

Montero, M. (2009). Methods for liberation: Critical consciousness in action. In Montero, M, & Sonn, C,. *Psychology of liberation*. New York, USA: Springer New York.

Nairn, K., Sligo, J., & Freeman, C. (2006). Polarizing participation in local government: which young people are included and excluded?. *Children Youth and Environments*, *16*(2), 248-271.

Putnam, D. (1993). The prosperous community. *The American Prospect*, *4*(13), 35-42.

Riele, T. (2006). Youth 'at risk': further marginalizing the marginalized?.*Journal of education policy*, *21*(2), 129-145.

Rashbrooke, M. (2014). *The Inequality Debate: An Introduction*. Wellington, New Zealand: Bridget Williams Books.

Rashbrooke, M. (Ed.). (2013). *Inequality: A New Zealand Crisis*. Wellington, New Zealand: Bridget Williams Books.

Shor, I., & Freire, P. (1987). *A pedagogy for liberation: Dialogues on transforming education*. Westport, USA: Greenwood Publishing Group.

Shor, I. (1993). Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy. *Paulo Freire: A critical encounter*, *23*.

Smith, L. T. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. London, United Kingdom: Zed books.

Smyth, J. (2007). Toward the pedagogically engaged school: Listening to student voice as a positive response to disengagement and 'dropping out'?. *International handbook of student experience in elementary and secondary school*, 635-658.

Smyth, J., & Australia, S. (2000). *Listen to me I'm leaving: Early school leaving in South Australian secondary schools*. Adelaide, Australia: Flinders Institute for the Study of Teaching.

Somekh, B. (2005). *Action Research: A Methodology For Change And Development*. London, UK: McGraw-Hill Education.

Stiglitz, J. (2012). *The price of inequality*. London, UK: Penguin.

Statistics New Zealand. (2014). *Snapshot of New Zealand*. Data retrieved from: http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/snapshots-of-nz/nz-social-indicators/Home/Education/18-year-olds-with-higher-qualif.aspx

Statistics New Zealand. (2011). *Health and Pacific peoples in New Zealand.* Report retrieved from:
http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/people_and_communities/pacific_peoples/pacific-progress-health.aspx

Taylor, A. (2002). I honestly can't see the point: youth negotiation of the ideology of school completion. *Journal of Education Policy*, *17*(5), 511-529.

The Universal House of Justice. (1996). *Wellspring of Guidance: Messages 1963-1968.* Wilmette, USA: Baha'i Publishing Trust.

The Universal House of Justice. (2010). *Letter written to the Baha'is of the World - Ridvan message 2010*. Retrieved online from: http://www.bahai.org/library/authoritative-texts/the-universal-house-of-justice/messages/

Unluer, S. (2012). Being an insider researcher while conducting case study research. *The Qualitative Report*, *17*(29), 1.

United Nations. (2015). *Transforming our world*. statement retrieved from: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld

Williams, L. (2007). A contemporary tale of participatory action research in Aotearoa/New Zealand: applying a power–culture lens to support participatory action research as a diverse and evolving practice. *Educational Action Research*, *15*(4), 613-629.

Woolcock, M. (1998). Social capital and economic development: Toward a theoretical synthesis and policy framework. *Theory and society*, *27*(2), 151-208.

Woolcock, M., & Narayan, D. (2000). Social capital: Implications for development theory, research, and policy. *The world bank research observer*, *15*(2), 225-249.

Wilkinson, R. and Pickett, K. (2009) *The Spirit Level: Why more equal societies almost always do better*. London, UK: Penguin.

Zavala, M. (2013). What do we mean by decolonizing research strategies? Lessons from decolonizing, Indigenous research projects in New Zealand and Latin America. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, *2*(1).

Zimmerman, A. (2000). Empowerment theory. In Rappaport, J & Seidman, E. *Handbook of community psychology*. New York, USA: Springer.