# The Context of Risk Decisions:
# Does Social Capital Make a Difference?

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**Abstract**: The traditional approach to risk in youth research has focused on the identification and weighting of risk factors in what has been called the "risk prevention paradigm". This paradigm has been critiqued, not least for its lack of engagement with contextual and structural issues. This article draws on recent empirical work which attempts to foreground issues of context and structure in its investigation of young people and risk, and in particular the role of social capital in risk decisions. We argue that two major paradigms underpin the debate about youth and risk: the "Prudential Human" who will make rational and normatively correct choices—balancing benefits against costs, and the "Gambling Human" who positively embraces risk-taking even "against the odds", and whose risk choices are often characterised as irrational and imprudent (ADAMS 1995; KEMSHALL 2003). Drawing on empirical work from "Young People, Social Capital and the Negotiation of Risk" carried out under the "Pathways into and out of Crime for Young People" network funded by the ESRC we argue that social capital plays a central role in the ability of young people to "navigate" risk decisions. We conclude by considering the types of social capital that provide the resources for young people to cope, manage and make informed choices about risk, and to act upon them, literally what it takes to be a risk navigator.

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# 1. Introduction

Youth and risk have become intrinsically linked, and contemporary policy and practice is risk infused (ARMSTRONG 2004; GOLDSON 1999, 2001). This is particularly acute in the crime arena where young people are seen as problematic and persistent young offenders have been singled out for much policy and practice attention (YOUTH JUSTICE BOARD 2001; KELLY 2001). The association of crime with youth has persisted throughout the 1990s and into the twenty first century despite evidence that youth crime is falling (ARMSTRONG

2004), resulting in what Barry GOLDSON (1997) has called a "moral panic" about children either presenting a "risk" or being "at risk". This preoccupation with risk has two key components, individualisation and responsibilisation (FURLONG & CARTMEL 1997), although the process and impact of individualisation on young people is disputed (LEHMANN 2004). As Andy FURLONG and Fred CARTMEL (1997, p.109) put it: "The paradox of late modernity is that although the collective foundations of social life have become more obscure, they continue to provide powerful frameworks which constrain young people's experiences and life chances". [1]

In brief, the argument is that the discourse of risk—whether "at risk" or "dangerous" youth— individualises risk, and responsibilises youth and their families for its effective management (ARMSTRONG 2004; KELLY 2001). [2]

The individual is seen as responsible for his or her own risk management and individuals are responsible for the exercise of prudential choice e.g. healthy eating and safe sex (ROSE 1996). Prudential citizens are required to negotiate the inherent uncertainty of the "risk society" (GIDDENS 1991, 1998a, 1998b; BECK 1992) and to shape their own worlds "making decisions according to calculations of risk and opportunity" (PETERSEN 1996, p.47). This requires high degrees of reflexivity and the ability to make well informed, strategic choices on risk. Paradoxically, this individualisation of risk focuses increased attention on the individual's strategic competence on risk (GIDDENS 1991) but does not take sufficient account of the structural or contextual constraints within which such competence is exercised. This is the first generation of young people to live through post-modernity and to experience significant life transitions and risk negotiations within the "risk society" (WYN & DWYER 1999). This makes them an interesting site of study, not least for the conditions and resources under which they negotiate such risks. Two key questions are seen as critical: what are the individual's "power resources", that is, capacity and competency to act, particularly to choose alternatives and to implement them (BLOOR 1995; RHODES 1997), and what are the constraints (structural and contextual) upon these resources? In effect, this transforms the focus of attention from individual agency to situational agency (LAYDER 1993). [3]

This article will explore the role of social capital as a resource for situational agency in risk decision making. It is acknowledged that young people face a range of risks, including social, cultural and economic risks (FURLONG & CARTMEL 1997), and that many are beyond their capacity to control. Biographies and life trajectories are similarly uncertain (GIDDENS 1991, 1998) and youth transitions through the life course are variable presenting various risks and uncertainties (EGRIS 2001; MACDONALD & MARSH 2001). An understanding of the contexts within which youth negotiations of risk take place and how the agency of young people is bounded "by the surrounding opportunity structure is required" (MACDONALD & MARSH 2001, p.383). However, prior to embarking on this analysis the article will briefly review the traditional approach to risk and youth, and the alternative approach within which our work is located. [4]

## 2. The Traditional Approach to Risk and Youth

The traditional approach to risk and young people has focused on the identification and weighting of risk factors. The approach has been labelled the "risk prevention paradigm" and utilises aggregated data to identify the risk propensity of particular groups or individuals—a methodology derived from the public health literature (HAWKINS & CATALANO 1992; FARRINGTON 1992, 1996, 2002). Research has largely been policy driven, concerned with identifying "at risk" youth and targeting services and interventions to prevent future/further crime (FARRING-TON 2000) and other risky behaviours (FRANCE 2000). However, crime risks have predominated, and crime and risk have meshed in policy preoccupations with youth (ARMSTRONG 2004). [5]

Young people are seen as repositories of risk markers, which if appropriately identified can be targeted for interventions and future crime prevention (FARRINGTON 1992, 1995). These risk factors can be extensive, and it is acknowledged that risk propensity is multi-factorial (FARRINGTON 2002). However, linking particular risk factors to future criminality has been empirically difficult, well expressed by David FARRINGTON (2000, p.7) who asks how we distinguish between causal relationships and mere correlations, how we can attribute weight to different factors when causes may be multi-factorial, and how levels of risk can be calculated when risk "scores" are not merely additive? The statistical modelling and meta-analyses of this approach have not been able to explain why the individualised risk factor approach cannot predict the career paths of the majority of offenders (ARMSTRONG 2004; KATZ 1988; LOEBER, FARRINGTON & PETECHUK 2003). [6]

For David FARRINGTON (2000, p.7) the greater challenge is in establishing "processes or developmental pathways that intervene between risk factors and outcomes, and to bridge the gap between risk factor research and more complex explanatory theories". This may require the recognition that decisions about crime and risk are social processes that have multiple causes, and that such causes are not merely additive; and that subtle differences in initial conditions may over time produce large differences in outcomes (BYRNE 1998, pp.2-28). This would help to explain why children initially risked marked similarly (e.g. by individual and family risk markers) actually go onto have different crime pathways, and why a proportion of children "high risk" for later delinquency do not offend. [7]

More recent work has focused attention on choice and the influence of immediate setting on the propensity to take risks (WIKSTROM 2002). For Per Olof WIKSTROM (2004, p.7) the "perception of alternatives and the process of choice" is itself key. Risk decisions are the outcome of such choices, and of how individuals interact with their immediate locales. This approach begins to explain why children with similar risk markers can make significantly different risk decisions. [8]

Both approaches presume the rational choice actor, who is seen by the positivist criminological tradition as "free-willed … who engages in crime in a calculative,

utilitarian way and is therefore responsive to deterrent" (GARLAND 1997, p.11).
The actor is characterised as an "information processing unit" who will desist from
a crime risk (and indeed other risks) if the costs are made to outweigh the
benefits. This has been the basis of corrective programmes using cognitive
behavioural methods, prevention targeting "at risk" youth for interventions, and
dysfunctional families for parenting programmes (COMMUNITIES THAT CARE
2002; HAWKINS & CATALANO 1992; KEMSHALL 2002a, 2002b). Within the risk
literature this has resulted in the dichotomy of "homo prudens" or prudential
human, and "homo aleatorious" or "gambling human" (ADAMS 1995), with the
latter seen as acting irrationally and imprudently over risks. Much of the safety
and health promotion literature has traditionally presupposed this dichotomy and
has focused on turning gambling human to prudential human (ADAMS 1995;
PETERSEN 1996). [9]

## 3. An Alternative Approach

The rational choice actor has been much critiqued by the sociological risk
literature. Deborah LUPTON (1999) for example sees the interaction between
knowledge of a risk and subsequent action is seen as more complex, affected by
constraints on personal choice, limited opportunities to act otherwise, group
norms and influences (BLOOR 1995; FRANCE 2000; GRINYER 1995;
KEMSHALL 2003, p.60; RHODES 1997). Deborah LUPTON (1999, p.35) argues
that real risks are "inevitably mediated through … social processes and can never
be known in isolation from these processes". [10]

This approach focuses attention on negotiation processes and the context within
which young people navigate risks. It also introduces the notion of the social actor
as a navigator, navigating uncertain and sometimes unpredictable decisions in an
uncertain world, and therefore requiring high degrees of reflexivity (GIDDENS
1998a, 1998b). Anthony GIDDENS (1990, pp.36-37) has described reflexivity as
an almost constant state of self monitoring of action and its contexts, literally a
weighing up of options and likely outcomes. However, what does it take to adopt
and implement this highly reflexive approach to life? As Deborah LUPTON (1999,
p.107) expresses it: "The complexity of living in a late modern world, in which
change is rapid and intense and the number of choices to be made have
proliferated, renders choice-making very difficult and fraught with uncertainty".
Alongside this, individuals have to accept increased personal responsibility for the
choices subsequently made (ROSE 1996; LUPTON 1999), and increased levels
of blame when things go wrong. As Deborah LUPTON has argued, the self-
reflexive person presented by Ulrich BECK and Anthony GIDDENS (1999, p.114)
"is a socially and economically privileged person who has the cultural and
material resources to engage in self-inspection. Many people … simply lack the
resources and techniques to engage in the project of self-reflexivity", or as Scot
LASH (1994, p.141) has put it, there are "reflexivity winners" and "reflexivity
losers". In essence, those who have the personal and social resources to
navigate and those who do not. This article addresses the role of social capital in
the navigation of risk, with particular reference to crime risks. [11]

## 4. The Study

This paper is based on an ESRC funded 4 year study of pathways into and out of crime for young people. The main purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between social capital and young people's navigation of risk pathways, and the role social capital may play in young people's risk decision making and their resilience to risky pathways (KEMSHALL, FLEMING & BOECK 2003). The project used a staged methodology utilising combined qualitative and quantitative methods comprising: in-depth literature reviews of risk, and of social capital to build a strong conceptual and theoretical base; a pilot of a social capital framework through in-depth interviews and focus groups; pilot of a risk interview schedule; 24 in-depth interviews and 17 focus groups with 77 young people. Following initial analysis of this data (using NUDIST QSR 6) a survey covering risk and social capital was completed with 500 young people and analysed using both NUDIST and SPSS. Detailed analysis of the whole data set followed, and key findings were re-examined with a small sample (n=12) of serious and persistent young offenders through in-depth interviews. The sample was drawn from the Midlands area, in the age range 11-19, and comprised one hundred and thirty one young people accessed largely through young offender teams (YOTs), and those labelled as "at risk" accessed largely through youth inclusion projects (YIPs) which include both known offenders or those deemed to be "at risk" of offending. [12]

Four hundred and fifty eight young people were accessed through local schools and youth groups and may well contain some young people who have offended (for ethical reasons it was not possible to screen them out), but this part of the sample is largely constituted by non-offenders (total sample n=589). [13]

The purposively selected sample is representative, but creating a comparative data set between offenders and non-offenders was difficult due to access issues and higher attrition rates in the offending group. It was also difficult to establish that young people accessed through schools and youth groups were non-offenders as some offending activities may not be declared or known, and for ethical reasons the team did not ask this in interviews. However, it has been possible to compare across known and persistent offenders; those deemed to be 'at risk' of offending, and those who are either non-offenders or who have not officially entered the criminal justice system. [14]

The representativeness and generalisation of research samples has been the subject of much debate (PATTON 1980). However, Ian DEY (1993) usefully distinguishes between two kinds of generalisation: the first are generalisations derived from induction and based upon our empirical observations; and the second, are generalisations applicable to the population as a whole. The primary role of qualitative research is to establish the generalisations that the data will support and the conditions "under which our generalisations may hold true" (DEY 1993, p.263). In this sense, the sample is representative of the types of settings and locales encountered by young people and are spread over differing geographical areas in the region. [15]

The data has been analysed through an iterative process of describing, classifying and connecting data (DEY 1993; COFFEY & ATKINSON 1996; MILES & HUBERMAN 1994) within a general framework of "adaptive" grounded theory (LAYDER 1993). This analytic induction approach (extensively championed by GLASER & STRAUSS 1965, 1967, 1968; STRAUSS & CORBIN 1990), uses constant cross checking of the data and the pursuit of negative cases to confirm or deny initial hypotheses, and the use of mixed strategies of data collection to facilitate cross-checking (DENSCOMBE 1998), and to achieve triangulation (SHAW 2003). The study has attempted to meet the rigorous standards set by Alan BRYMAN (2001) for genuinely complimentary multi-strategy research. Through the stages of analysis initial inductive reasoning becomes increasingly deductive, a process Michael BULMER (1979) has labelled "retroductive" in which there is a "constant interplay between observation of reality and the formulation of concepts, research and theorising" (SHEPPARD 1995, p.274). In the early stages of the research process analysis tends to be general and descriptive with initial hypotheses largely tentative. Analysis gains greater clarity and explanatory power as negative cases are tested and conceptual saturation is achieved. "Staying close to the data" enables constant checking and greater certainty about the final explanatory model. [16]

This process as applied to the present study is presented in figure one:



1. NUDIST analysis of discussion groups and interviews informed design of Survey comprising of survey questions (SPSS) and open ended questions (NUDIST)
2. Triangulation of SPSS analysis with N6 analysis. Ongoing "cyclic analysis"
3. Findings of iterative analysis of qualitative and quantitative data (Stages 1 and 2) informed last stage of data collection
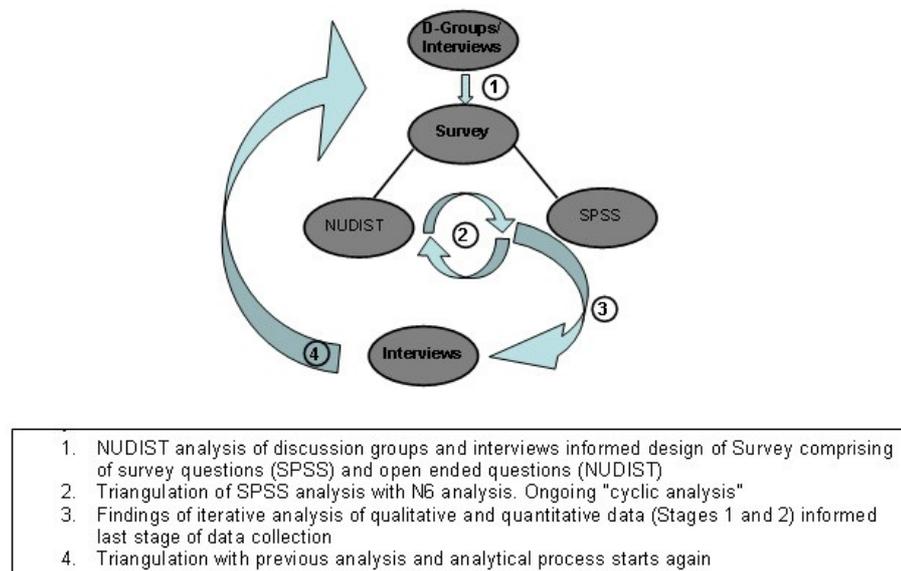4. Triangulation with previous analysis and analytical process starts again

Illustration 1: Iterative analysis [17]

Validity (defined here as reliability and shareability of the research process and knowledge produced) (SILVERMAN 1993), is safeguarded by the triangulation of research methods (SHAW 2003) and rigorously applied and documented analytic procedures which could be replicated by other researchers. The research has also integrated qualitative and quantitative data sets, to enable testing of initial findings from the interviews and focus groups. As Derek LAYDER (1993) has indicated, quantitative data can have a significant role in bridging the micro and

macro levels, and in this case helped to confirm which concepts had empirical and theoretical saturation (STRAUSS & CORBIN 1990). [18]

The survey data was analysed using SPSS according to standard practice for establishing bivariate correlations (MCQUITTY 1957). Using the qualitative data analysis on bridging and bonding social capital we used our preliminary findings to inform the choice of variables to be correlated (i.e. variables referring to networks, sense of belonging, diversity of networks, trust and outlook in life). We established the largest index of associations that a variable has with all of the other variables within the corresponding group. Every variable is then assigned to a cluster in terms of its highest index of association that in turn establishes patterns of responses and significant correlations. Clusters were established through Kendall's tau_b correlation with significance <0.05. [19]

## 5. The Relevance of Social Capital

Social capital has been associated with lower levels of crime in communities and greater resilience to crime (FIELD 2003; ROSENFELD, MESSNER & BAUMER 2001; PUTNAM 2000; OECD 2001), although the exact nature of the relationship has yet to be fully discerned (FIELD 2003; HALPERN 2005). However, social cohesion and higher levels of social trust have been seen as key factors in preventing crime (HALPERN 2001, 2005; KAWACHI, KENNEDY & WILKINSON 1997). As Robert SAMPSON and Stephen RAUDENBUSH (1999) express it, greater community cohesion leads to lower crime levels. Investigations of social capital and crime have predominantly taken a normative and regulatory view of social capital, characterised by arguments that link the lack of social investment and weak social bonds with delinquency and crime (FIELD 2003; HALPERN 2005). The presumption is that social capital will always facilitate compliance with pro-social norms, a position most recently critiqued on the grounds that highly bonded social capital is often associated with sectarianism, racist groups and organised crime (HALPERN 2005). It is increasingly recognised that social capital can have negative as well as positive outcomes and that "negative effects occur when social capital is used as a private rather than a public good, or when people or groups are isolated from certain networks" (HMSO 2003; see also FUKUYAMA 2001; HALPERN 2005). [20]

John LAUB and Robert SAMPSON (1993; see also SAMPSON & LAUB 1990; SAMPSON & LAUB 1993) have argued that "social capital and turning points are crucial in understanding processes of change in the adult life course" (301). Their work emphasises "the significance of continuity and change over the life course" (302), and the role of social control (particularly informal social control) in inhibiting deviance (see HIRSCHI & GOTTFREDSON 1995 for a critique of life course research). Following Glen ELDER (1985), LAUB and SAMPSON (1993) define pathway as a "line of development over the life span" delineated by "long-term patterns of behaviour and … marked by a sequence of transitions" (p.303). Transitions are marked by significant life events, such as leaving school, marriage, parenthood etc. They argue that both formal and informal social controls vary at different points of the life course. Importantly they are interested

in the "underlying processes that enable people to change the course of their lives" (p.310). They link John COLEMAN's (1997) notion of social capital to social control theory, and argue that lack of social investment and weak social bonds are correlated with deviancy. However, they define social capital as almost exclusively as social networks, and refer to individual's "embeddedness" and the informal social control(s) that follow from this. One can of course be deeply embedded but still criminal (e.g. "The Mafia"), and governed by the informal social control of such groups. Their use of social capital is also normative, presuming that social capital will always facilitate compliance with pro-social norms, a position more recently critiqued in respect of organised crime, racist groups and so forth (HALPERN 2005). Francis FUKUYAMA (2001) for whom, social capital is a private good asserts that social capital can produce both negative and positive externalities. His assumption is that if the "radius of trust, that is, the circle of people among whom co-operative norms are operative" (p.8) is larger than the group itself (i.e. what we would class as "bridging social capital") then the group produces more positive externalities. Groups with a "narrow radius of trust" (i.e. "bonding social capital") have a higher "in-group solidarity" which "reduces the ability of group members to co-operate with outsiders and often imposes negative externalities on the latter" (p.9). A Social Trends publication (2003, p.25) makes a similar point, "negative effects occur when social capital is used as a private rather than a public good, or when people or groups are isolated from certain networks". They give the example of high social capital in some strongly sectarian societies within groups (i.e. bonding social capital), but not between them (i.e. bridging social capital). [21]

Recent research attention to children and young people as social actors and capable of agency has also focused attention on young people and social capital (EVANS, RUDD, BEHRENS, KALUZA & WOOLEY 2001; HOLLAND 2005; MORROW 1999, 2001, 2004) and also upon young people, social capital and crime (WRIGHT, CULLEN & MILLER 2001). As Janet HOLLAND states, this work employs differential definitions and measures of social capital, but a key theme of the work has been the "extent to which young people access and/or generate social capital and exhibit agency in its acquisition and deployment" (2005, p.2). [22]

Debates on social capital, its meaning and how it can be explored and measured are rife (HALPERN 2005) and social capital is a much disputed term. Basing our framing and use of social capital within the social justice and social inclusion perspective (HOLLAND 2005) we emphasise that social capital is a resource, and based upon an extensive literature review of existing research we have developed a multi-faceted framework (BOECK & FLEMING 2005). This framework contains those key features of social capital most supported by research literature (e.g. participation in networks, trust, diversity) (ONYX & BULLEN 2000, p.89; PUTNAM 2000, p.16) and contains factors which were seen as related to social capital or which might influence the enhancement and development of social capital (i.e. sense of belonging, outlook in life) (MORROW 2002, p.138). [23]
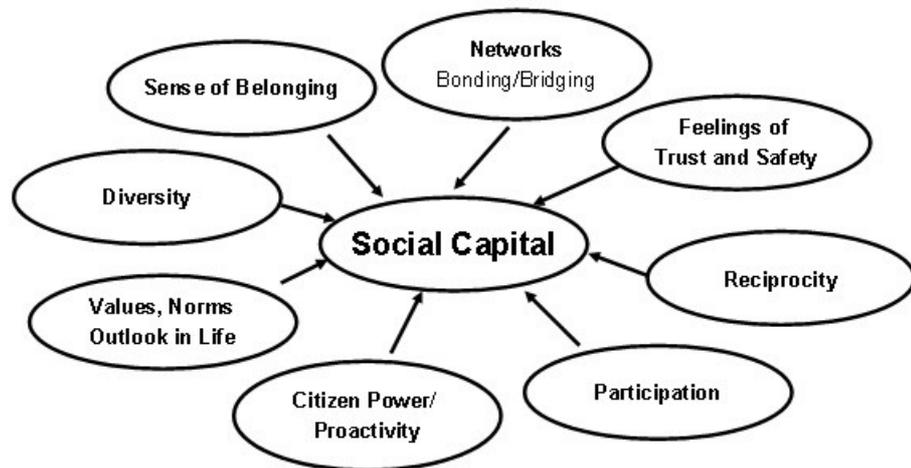
The following figure represents the framework:



Illustration 2: Social capital framework [24]

In this sense social capital is used as an "heuristic device" (FIELD 2003; BARON, FIELD & SCHULLER 2000; HALPERN 2005) to examine the social context within which young people make decisions about risk. Our research is not concerned with whether social capital can act as a cause of criminal activities but with how social capital might influence the pathways into and out of crime and the types of risks young people may take. Thus social capital is not treated as another "risk or resilience factor" but as the context in which young people make decisions about risk, and navigate their way into and out of crime pathways. [25]

## 6. Networks and Sense of Belonging

Networks, family and kin have been identified by previous research as central to young people's lives, and act as a considerable resource for them as they navigate key life transitions (MACDONALD & MARSH 2001; MORROW 2004). Such networks are intrinsic to self-identity (SULLIVAN 2002), and to a "sense of belonging" (MORROW 2004). Both groups and places give a sense of security and embeddedness (MORROW 2004), however, the range of these networks and places can vary from very restricted to very diverse. Our initial findings highlight two groups of young people, those with tightly bonded networks based upon their immediate locale of the street, local park and home; and those with a more diverse network centred on school or college. The tight networks are often small, static in nature and engage in a restricted range of activities (e.g. "hanging about the street", visiting friends' houses):

> Q: "So you said that you hang a lot around on the street?"
>
> A: "Yes because there aren't many places to go … just hang around the streets with my friends."

> Q: "If you think about important places in [xxx], which would you say were important places for you."
>
> A: "Important, my family's houses, I think that's about it really." [26]

They also share a similar outlook:

> "we are all alike, because we like to go out and have a good time together … We know the same people, we hang around the same area, we like the same things, we like the same clothes". [27]

The other group of young people have more extended networks, based upon school or college, these networks are more dynamic and young people engage in more "after school activities". These networks are more diverse and have more opportunity to connect with other networks beyond the immediate locale. [28]

By correlating the network groups (locality based networks and school based networks) with our sample of young people contacted through YIPs and YOTs and comparing them with those contacted through schools and colleges our analysis highlights a significant correlation between more "locally based networks" and young people contacted through YIPs and YOTs and a significant correlation between "school based networks" and young people contacted through schools and colleges. Whilst 60% of young people contacted through the YIPs and YOTs had medium to high locality based networks, 91% of young people contacted through schools and colleges had medium to high school based networks. There is an overlap between these two groups which suggests that there is a continuum and certain fluidity between these two network groups. It is important to mention here that a considerable percentage (70%) of the young people contacted through the YIPs and YOTs at the time of the survey were attending schools or colleges. [29]

Much previous research has highlighted that unsurprisingly young offenders tend to associate with other young offenders (POULIN, DISHION & HASS 1999; SAMPSON, RAUDENBUSH & EARLS 1997). However, our research suggests that the school is not facilitating more diverse networks for this group even when they are not subject to exclusions, and that opportunities "to act" and "to be different" are restricted by membership of a tightly bonded group (BLOOR 1995), and this restrictive social capital has implications for young people's (and in this case young offenders) outlook in life and perceptions of self-efficacy. [30]

Young offenders expressed a fatalistic and often hopeless outlook in life. This was evidenced in their passivity about their futures, and their perception that their own actions would have little impact on their life course:

> Q: "What do you think you will be doing in a year's time?"
>
> A: "Fuck knows."
>
> Q: "Next week?"
>
> A: "Dunno, slopping out." [31]

Their future aspirations were unrelated to present skills and competences, and in answer to what they would be doing in five years time responses varied from being "a footballer", to "being a millionaire" to "being in jail". Interestingly, this group were the least likely to involve anyone else in the resolution of problems in their life or in assisting them with crucial moments in the life course, again underlining their potential isolation. [32]

Elizabeth SULLIVAN (2002) has argued that perception of possible self, that is, the connection between present self, motivation, behaviour and possible or future self' (p.4) is essential to personal (and in some contexts community) change. On the basis of these initial findings, we can speculate that young offenders have a limited perception of possible self, and that this is compounded by membership of a tight network of similar persons. Conversely, access to more diverse networks enables an increased self-perception of alternative self (selves), as well as providing important structural opportunities for change (e.g. employment, training etc., AGUILERA 2002). [33]

## 7. Outlook in Life

Throughout our interviews with young people, especially those contacted through the YOTs, YIPs and YISPs, we were struck by an overarching sense of fatalism about their futures. Sometimes this seemed to be related to apathy, a sense of boredom and, at other times to hopelessness and frustration. [34]

We analysed the NUDIST data of all the people identified through SPSS as having bonding networks focusing on their responses on "outlook in life":

·   I am good at

·   I would like to

·   My aim is

·   Where do you see yourself in a year

·   Where do you see yourself in five years [35]

Prevalent in our sample of young people contacted through the YOTs (approx. 75% of the sample) was a sense of not knowing what they would like to do especially when it came to identify what they would like to do in five years time. Being a footballer, a millionaire a good mother or father, having a nice family all were rather vague categories and mostly not related to what they would identify as their skills or aims. A majority of our sample of young people contacted through Schools and Colleges (approx. 75%) however showed that they had a much clearer idea about their future, related to their identified aims and skills. [36]

The following chart highlights some typical "strings" of answers:

| # | Good at | Would like to | My aim is | In a year | In 5 years |
|---|---------|---------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| **YIP/YOT** | | | | | |
| 44 | football | be a footballer | to be a footballer | in a job | jail |
| 459 | some sports | be rich | to get a good job | flat and job | don't know |
| 48 | sports | be a millionaire | be a millionaire | at work | at home with kids |
| 480 | sports | mechanic or builder | to earn loads of money | at school | with a job |
| 5 | football | go on holiday | to get a job | hopefully working | still working and have a kid |
| 66 | sport | be a millionaire | to win the lottery | working | working |
| **School/College** | | | | | |
| 125 | football | work with computers | get a masters degree in IT | still at school | getting a masters degree in IT |
| 170 | communicat-ing | be a solicitor | to successfully be what I want to be | at DMU studying commercial law | finishing or finished uni (DMU) |
| 184 | | be a nurse | achieve the best in society | hopefully at university doing a useful career | having my course at university completed, being graduated, getting ready to get married |
| 190 | socialising | be a scientist | to be successful | still at college | in university |
| 214 | writing big essays and babysitting. | be a telephone operator | to achieve what I want to become and fulfil my parents ambition they have | I think I would apply for jobs at the end of the year or do more education on the career I want to be successful in | I think I would be doing my career job and buying a house probably and looking after my parents. Or further education |

| # | Good at | Would like to | My aim is | In a year | In 5 years |
|---|---------|---------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 345 | reading | be a military historian and writer | to be successful | still at school | at school |
| 409 | being a friend | be a lawyer or a doctor | to get a degree and a PhD | still at school | at school |

Table 1: Outlook in life [37]

## 8. Conclusion

Young people from the youth offending teams and youth inclusion projects express a more hopeless and fatalistic approach to their lives and to risk. These young people are in a state of what we call "risk stagnation", unable or unwilling to take the risk to leave their present situation, immediate network and locale. These young people are typified by strong bonds to a limited group, a restricted sense of belonging, and a fatalistic outlook in life. For these young people, leaving their present high risk and crime lifestyles is itself a risk, and one they are ill equipped to take. This resonates with a growing body of research such as that by Robert MACDONALD and Jane MARSH (2001) who noted that networks of family, kin and peers emerged as important aspects of their analysis of youth transitions. They have also found that whilst connections to local networks could help in coping with the problems of "social exclusion" and generate "inclusion", paradoxically they could simultaneously limit the possibilities of escaping the conditions of "social exclusion". In effect, horizons are limited, and opportunities and choice are restricted. Choice is reduced to fate, and personal agency is restricted (EVANS et al. 2001). [38]

This contrasts to those young people who are in a situation of "risk navigation". These young people are characterised by diverse and wider ranging networks, a sense of belonging to a wider locale, and a focused and active outlook in life. David HALPERN (2005) following Bob EDWARDS and Michael FOLEY (1998), argues that it is not just about the "size and density" of the network it is also about the resources that the network brings (p.23), and in this case providing greater access to Michael WOOLCOCK's "linking social capital" for some young people (1998, 2001). These young people are better able to navigate risks, manage life transitions, and to take the risks associated with "moving on" and leaving problematic situations. In effect, this group has the social resources to be "reflexivity winners" on risk and to successfully navigate their life course. [39]

## Acknowledgements

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