Full title: The form of children's political engagement in everyday life

Short title: Children's political engagement

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Abstract

This article explores the form of children's political engagement, considering the politicization of events, their political understanding and alignments. It draws on research into memories of childhood and social change in the latter half of the 20th century and builds on academic debates about children's political participation. Children's experience of policing, industrial unrest, popular dissent, social movements and party politics is discussed. Children's political engagement involves three elements. They must navigate different political perspectives, their understanding grows through feelings of concern and empathy, and they align to groups they can relate to and feel might make a difference.

Biography

Dorothy Moss works in Childhood Studies at Leeds Metropolitan University. Her research and publications are in the area of the sociology childhood and feminist sociology.

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Introduction

This article draws on research into memories of childhood and social change in the latter half of the 20th century, to consider the form of children's political engagement. It argues that this develops in relation to experiences, relationships and wider social change. First, children must navigate different political perspectives, secondly, develop their own understanding and thirdly, align to groups they feel might make a difference.

Problematizing everyday experience **of wider social change** increases insight into the relationship between personal and political change (Smith, 1987). The focus here is how children make sense of their experiences, and from this develop political alignments. It is important to recognize that children's political engagement is grounded in relationships and involves feelings of fear, care and concern. The article discusses how social events are politicized in childhood, how children's political understanding develops and how they politically align. **Rather than focusing on government, party politics and children's formal participation, it explores** children's everyday experience of social change, giving greater visibility to the 'ruling relations' that 'hook [children] in' and 'organize [their] everyday lives' (Smith, 2005, in Nichols, 2008 p. 686).

First, the research is situated in current debates about children's political participation. Then the research approach is discussed and following this, different aspects of children's experience, including of policing, power cuts, animal rights, and Enoch Powell's 'Rivers of Blood' speech (1968). Then children's developing alignment is discussed in relation to social movements and party politics. Material is selected to explore some common features, as well as the diversity of children's political engagement. Although drawn from previous times, the relevance to current debates is drawn out in the conclusion.

Children's political participation

Children's political engagement is underestimated when the lens is on, 'narrowly defined concepts of civil society and socio-political participation at the macro level' (Nolan, 2001 p. 308). Cockburn (2007 p. 447) calls for a 'radical pluralist approach' that recognizes the diversity of children's experiences. If participation is measured through children's engagement with formal organizations, then it will be underestimated, 'Media and government continue to portray children and young people ... as "politically apathetic" and disinterested in politics and the life around them' (p. 446). In relation to participation at a formal level, children may be invited as, 'guests in ritualized political or administrative occasions', rarely within the realms of their everyday life but at, 'targeted points of diffusion into the official sphere' (p. 449). Rather than conceptualizing children as ill informed and disengaged, Drakeford and others (2009) argue that children become engaged if questions are broached meaningfully. Youth and community work has consistently demonstrated the importance of engaging where and how young people live their lives. A deeper understanding of the form of children's political engagement should strengthen strategies for their more formal inclusion.

Reynaert and others (2009) argue that scholarly attention to children's rights has focused on particular themes, creating some pitfalls. In the past children's interests were commonly subsumed with those of their families. There is now more emphasis on their autonomous rights which has been

vital to securing these. However this may have lead to an emphasis on individualism, rather than the complex relationships that inform childhood. The over 'dichotomizing' of children's and parents' rights may have lead to an underestimation of shared interests. Although families involve conflict and unequal child-adult relations, there are important shared experiences.

There has also been a focus on the mechanics of children's participation, perhaps at the expense of the diverse ways that they politically engage. Although there is little evidence that children's formal participation has impacted on major policy (Sinclair, 2004), there is evidence that children have exerted political pressure that has led to social change, for example, the schools boycott in apartheid South Africa. This article stresses the relationships between family, community and state in childhood; the way wider social events are politicized and the ways children weave different threads of political narrative in order to make their own political choices.

The research approach

The article draws on a qualitative study into childhood based on adult memories from the second half of the twentieth century. The aim was to explore childhood in relation to events more usually associated with adults, such as war, religion, migration, policing, employment and so forth, in order to reconsider the relationship between childhood and wider social change. Rather than focusing on those with direct experience of particular

events, the aim was to widen the lens on childhood, to generate a wide canvas and identify a diverse sample that reflected a range of positions. Sixteen respondents were selected of different ethnicities, class, sex and so forth. Although based in England, several spent part of their childhood in other countries. It was important that respondents were committed to the aims of the research because of the sensitive areas being covered, time commitment and limited resources. This sample was therefore selected from researcher professional networks related to children and young people. The research received ethical approval in May 2007; informed consent was gained and all names have been changed. This article discusses the findings related to children's political engagement. The key research question being addressed here is 'How do children politically engage, considering the politicization of events, their own understanding and the ways that they politically align?'

The research was informed by the sociologies of social memory, space and time. In relation to social memory, Halbwachs (1925/1992) argues that **collective memories provide social frameworks which individuals rely on in order to socially engage. These, for example, inform systems of political organization in different societies. Because adult interests have dominated; most of these systems have formally excluded children. It is relatively recently that children's formal participation has been advocated. It is important to bear in mind that social memories are also shared in family and community and it is in these spheres, rather than the sphere of formal politics, that the form of**

children's engagement may be most visible. In relation to space, Lefebvre (1991) argues that individuals are actively involved in the social production of space. Although formal politics may be associated with particular age groups, institutions and types of representation, Lefebvre draws attention to the wider spatial relations of children's political engagement, for example, their involvement in the less formal spaces of social and youth movements (Ben-Ariah and Boyer, 2005). In relation to time, the dominant interpretation of political time involves the official 'clock' times and calendars that regulate political representation (Adam, 1995). A less common interpretation involves recognizing that political engagement is a process that involves weaving many temporal influences and linking, '…memories in the present of the past, expectations and desires in the present of the future' (Jacques, 1982 p. 22).

Informed by these ideas, two semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire were developed. In the first interview, respondents were encouraged to remember childhood through a wide social lens; to share memories of wider social change. It included questions directly concerned with politicians and party politics. In the second interview they were asked for recollections of the spaces of childhood related to everyday experiences, such as care, play, schooling and so forth. The questionnaire was used to gather information related to social position, mobility and family heritage.

Data from the three tools were analyzed and triangulated in relation to different research questions. In the analysis, consideration was given to the selectivity of memory, silences in the memory, differences across space and time and the way that children carve out space and time for themselves (Moss, 2010). As will emerge, the form of their political engagement became more visible when respondents shared memories of wider social change, rather than the official politics of their time. There was evidence of some distance from '[the] specific institutions of democracy' (Nolan, 2001, p. 308).

Working with adults remembering childhood involves drawing on memories as 'pockets of history' (Brannen, 2004 p. 425). Experiences are filtered through selective remembering. Contemporary ideas may influence the selection and evaluation of memories. It was therefore important to provide clear guidelines to respondents in order to draw out memories of areas of social life not usually associated with childhood, such as industrial and civil unrest. Despite the difficulties of memory based research, the findings discussed here are grounded in verifiable events from the past, some described through 'flashbulb' memories that cluster around major events but are personally differentiated (Misztal, 2003 p.81). This casts light on how similar events are politicized differently. The events discussed here were mainly experienced in England, but also Northern Ireland and South Africa. Unless otherwise stated, respondents were born in England, of English heritage.

Policing

Memories of policing are discussed to introduce the complexity and form of children's political engagement. Respondents' remembered policing as protective, to be respected, as a source of amusement and to be feared. The police were experienced as part of the furniture of every day childhood, 'They used to come in [to school] and do the cross code ... I won a colouring competition for the best colouring in of a Belisha Beacon' (George, b.1958). Children learned that the police had status and were authorized to protect them from crime, 'My father was always very worried about burglary and robbery. We ... referred to the front door as the ... drawbridge... every morning to unlock it and every evening to lock it up' (Pamela, b. 1955).

Born in 1961 in Northern Ireland, James lived in a protestant community affected by violent conflict. The police were more allied to his community's political interests, 'Guardians of "You do not do" ... a respect and an aura that surrounded the police … uniforms … badges and emblems ... signaled a particular allegiance to one side of the divide.' The understanding that the police provided protection was qualified by knowledge of their power to discipline, 'We knew if we did anything wrong they'd give us a clip around the head' (Lara, b. 1964, of St Lucian/Italian heritage). Children were uncertain and policing was a source of attention and sometimes humour,

Bumbling Bobbies … officer was hiding in a hedge and his legs were

sticking out ... trying to catch somebody … I used to think, "What an

idiot" … but he was in a position of authority ... I took other people's

authority seriously (Claudia, b.1954 of German/Romanian heritage).

Five respondents became aware that some were policed differently. James

learned this through the conflict in Northern Ireland. Apara was born in

Nigeria in 1968, of Nigerian and English heritage. At 5 she moved to

England. She learned of the police killing of Liddle Towers, whilst she was

at primary school in 1976. He had died in police custody and the enquiry

verdict was justifiable homicide by the police (Hansard, 1977). Her mother

worked where Liddle was killed, 'That frightened me, the idea that you

could be beaten to death and it was "justifiable" ... the law itself could be

above the law'. Paulina (b. St Kitts, 1956) also came to England when 5.

She recalled the police killing of David Oluwale in 1969. He was a

homeless Nigerian she had seen living rough (Aspden, 2008). She began

to connect this to wider events and personal experiences,

 I had seen him ... a vagrant ... scared of him ... I used to be one who'd

 be in front of a mirror with a towel and imagine being [in the police] ... his

 pictures … what happened to him, especially when you heard the things

 about him being weed on by the police ... at the same time, there was

 something happening in France, which was to do with peoples' colour ...

 looking at my skin and thinking, "What is it, what's this about, why?"

Richard (b.1961) emigrated to apartheid South Africa when 3. He also came to realize the power invested in the police, remembering news of violent deaths in custody,

Mainly White ... completely armed ... guns ... rhino tails on sticks ... frightened of the idea of them, frightened of them, being aware that they were unjust, that they were arresting people who were trying to change the system ... using torture as a routine way... acutely aware of all that … [from] 12 onwards ... the story of the Biko murder and others started to come out.

From a young age, George was also aware of the police potential to punish him. Later, he faced aggressive policing because of his sexuality.

I was attracted to other boys from 8 or 9 ... it wasn't legal ... always frightened, 'cause I knew that it was 'bad' ... The police were always tinged with that ... When I was 19 ... driving in a car with my then boyfriend ... four policeman, on motorbikes, drove up and started hammering on the windows of our car and shouting "Puff".

In the late 1970s, the policing of intimate relations was contradictory. Failures to police abuse inside the home contrasted with heavy state intervention in relation to consenting gay and lesbian relationships, whilst homophobic violence was ignored.

State functionaries such as police were experienced as part of childhood; their status and functions learned early. Respondents learned they were subject to their authority; pleased to be praised, glad to be protected and fearful of punishment. Their attention was drawn to policing which could be the subject of humour. Some learned that the police could be dangerous, go beyond the role permitted by law; act on behalf of particular groups and against others. Paulina, remembering David Oluwale, encapsulates the complex form of children's political engagement. She remembered playing at being in the police. Her fear and anxiety at David's death was a turning point that she connected to her colour and community. She looked at media coverage of riots in France and made political connections. Policing was politicized in different ways through family, community and state and she reevaluated police power. Her political understanding deepened through emotions of fear and concern (empathy, connectedness). It has been argued that such emotions represent the disjuncture between dominant representations of how things should be and personal experiences (Jaggar, 1996). Emotions involve political engagement, 'What emotional paradox are we apparently trying to resolve in order to live the life we want to live?' (Hochschild, 1998 p.11). Nolan argues (2001, p. 210) that fear informs political understanding; 'the lived realities and identities of young people must be negotiated through a nexus of social fears and aspirations - and exclusions.' Apara, James, George, Paulina and Richard, in different times and places, remembered fear. The form of children's political understanding (their acceptance and resistance in

relation to policing) varies at different times, in relation to different events, leading to particular political alignment (see below).

Power cuts

This part focuses on power cuts in the UK in the1970s to explore the 'background noise' informing children's political understanding. The 'flashbulb' memories discussed here disrupt and relate to everyday home life. Apara was 5 at the time and recalled,

  A link to being in Nigeria … sitting around at night by the light of the fire
  ... candles … had to be very careful ... we'd all be in the same room
  together and it was cozy and the adults would talk ... you could eaves
  drop.

Her family was supportive of industrial action, 'My grandfather was unemployed for 8 years through the depression ... talked about the general strike and the fact that we "bottled out."' Pamela's father, however, in a more privileged home, politically opposed the power cuts. She was in her teens, '... doing my homework by candlelight ... father saying … "These people should not be going on strike ... This is disgusting" ... I quite enjoyed them actually ... thought it was quite exciting ...'   Cathy's parents also expressed anger and she too, aged 10, found events exciting,

Marvelous thing … happy memories … sitting round the candles in the

dark … quite exciting and different … my parents ... being very angry …

the feelings that it was a fairly cataclysmic thing, "The whole country

should have come to this."

George was 13, from a working class community with a strong street

culture. He remembered power cuts as bringing people together,'... would

go into each other's houses with candles.' Lara was also from a working

class community but lived in a family more isolated because of racism. She

was 7, at the time and fear was uppermost, 'Scared of the mice ... only just

dawn and I turned over and there was mice in my sister's hair ... I never

understand why they wouldn't let us have electricity'.

In Northern Ireland, power cuts in the 1970s were related to strikes

organized by the Ulster Workers' Council. James, in his early teens, was

very aware of the power involved,

Went on for three years ... wiping out the whole of the city lights, for

days … lots and lots of times, sitting with candles and having meals …

there's somebody out there that's doing this and they are very, very

scary people that control to such an extent as that, but at the same time,

knowing it was sort of on the same religious side, there was no fear.

Respondents' memories of power cuts involved excitement, some fear,

different home arrangements, darkness and candle light. There was

political background noise as events were politicized differently. For Apara, the memory contained coziness and continuity, including threads of memory from her birth place in Nigeria and a family past of working class struggle. Pamela's and Cathy's excitement was interrupted by rumbles of discontent with references to 'these people' and fears for 'the country' ('enemies within'). George enjoyed the sense of community but for Lara, fear was dominant; she felt alienated from and confused by events.

There were similarities and differences in children's experience of events and the ways these were politicized, related to age and circumstance. Events were politicized through different back ground noise. Some children, such as James, were more 'locked in' to their family perspective. For some, the political back ground noise felt a distraction from their more immediate enjoyment or fear. Nevertheless, the absence of power (the cuts in energy) was a powerful learning experience in relation to political power.

Animal rights

Children who share common ground may politically engage in very different ways. Kate and Tessa, White and from relatively well off families, responded differently in relation to animal rights. Kate (b. 1950) from an urban middle class area loved animals and identified with the animal rights movement. At school, 'We had to give a talk on something that we were

interested in and I chose the cruelty associated with mink farms.' Tessa
(b.1969) also loved animals, but was caught up in struggles defending fox
hunting where she lived. She participated in hunts and was told that animal
rights activists had been paid to protest, implying they were mercenary and
only interested in violence, 'We used to call them rent-a-crowd ... if you'd
paid them ten pounds they'd have supported fox hunting.' Fox hunting was
legal and associated with a powerful landowning lobby and some rural
workers. Tessa remembered repeated encounters with protestors,

> The antis were trying to get to the hunt, the hunt were trying to keep out
> of the way ... the foot followers and a couple of farmers ... would block
> roads ... quite scary ... I saw somebody ... they pulled him so the horse
> came over ... a local farmer who'd lost all his fingers in a farming
> accident and I can remember vividly thinking "Well it's not fair cause he's
> only got one hand."

Those involved in the hunt were people she knew and cared about, who
were struggling with people she didn't know and feared.

These two similar children, one in the countryside and one in the town,
nearly twenty years apart, developed very different political positions
because events were politicized differently. Kate understood the animal
rights movement as compassionate; Tessa as callous. For both, their
political understanding deepened through feelings of care and
connectedness (with people and animals) as well as some fear.

'Rivers of Blood'

Children who share little common ground may politically engage in very similar ways. Martin (b. 1951) and Rehana (b.1960) shared hostility to Enoch Powell's 'Rivers of Blood' speech (1968) even though they were from very different backgrounds. Rehana came to England at 11, to join family. She was 8 and living in Pakistan when Powell, a Conservative Unionist politician, who had actively recruited immigrant workers (including her family) to the UK, positioned them as 'outsiders'. Her community was in a weak political position. If elections were to go the 'wrong' way her family might be at risk,

Very aware of [the National Front] … and Powell … 'Rivers of Blood' ... I knew that there was an anti-immigrant feeling ... the elders always voted for Labour … All the Asians would ring each other up and say, "Don't forget to vote Labour". I don't think anybody ever voted Conservative.

Although not directly affected, Martin was 17 at the time of Powell's speech and remembered it because of the wide publicity. He lived a relatively privileged life in England, attending boarding school. His father had taught him not to discriminate and introduced him to Kenyan colleagues,

There was a lot of anti-immigration feeling ... I was probably fairly politically naïve … but I was certainly of the view that these people were actually contributing to British society and they had every right to be here as we did ... Having an argument with ... a couple that lived down the road about immigration.

These two children, of different sex, class, ethnicity, age and country heritage, shared a perspective on Powell's speech. Rehana's community developed a pro-Labour stance. The older Martin drew on family and the social movements of the time (see below) to politically resist anti-immigrant views. Both he and Rehana understood 'Rivers of Blood' with concern about what it represented for the future, drawing on a different mix of political influences.

Children's political alignment

Having considered different politicization of events and how children's political understanding deepens, this part focuses on their political alignment, considering popular unrest, social movements and political parties.

Paulina's awareness of police brutality was shared amongst Black young people in her community. She remembered 'Bonfire Night 1975' which she didn't attend, but brothers did, '... a pitched battle between the police and

the people in the community… The year before that, people had said, "That's it, if they come back next year and bother us, we're not going to put up with it"'. Respondents remembered very different perspectives on such popular discontent. Three remembered civil unrest in the early 1980s. Apara, remembered riots in Liverpool when she was 13 and felt 'a real connection', linked to her Nigerian heritage, 'My mother had a friend … who lived in Nigeria, but she was actually from Liverpool and we'd visited her once'. Cathy, who was 19 at the time, felt scared and confused, '... coming in to the parlour ... watching images on the television ... thinking it was in South Africa ... they said they were in ... [Liverpool].' Rachel, at 17, felt distance, 'I was a product of a typical middle class suburban upbringing ... it wasn't actually impacting on my immediate life.'

In apartheid South Africa, young Black people had been involved in a wide range of resistance. White friends of Richard's sister joined this, 'I felt proud, but on the other hand … some of the people she associated with, were actually arrested ... interrogated ... made to feel frightened ... there was always that edge to, that kind of darkness there.'

Very few of the respondents directly engaged in street protest, but such events had political impact. They disrupted established frameworks for understanding their lives; introducing new fears and for some, new possibilities for alignment. They aligned differently with the social and youth movements of their times; close up and at a distance. In the 1960s, the animal rights movement was important to Kate; civil rights and anti-war

movements, to Martin when he was at University. In the 1970s, Rachel was coming out as lesbian. Having experienced sex discrimination, she was drawn to feminism,

as soon as I could look outwardly ... very early teenage years ... because of very, very stark memories of injustice ... There was a newspaper seller ... I'd circle him about ten times before I'd pluck up the courage to go and ask for the gay newspaper.

These movements politicized events differently, resonating with everyday experience and emotion, and providing a means to imagine a different future, 'I can remember ... writing for the school newsletter ... even in primary school, I was campaigning for girls' rights to do stuff.' In the early 1990s, Madhi (b.1978, of Indian heritage) learned from Black political movements, 'Malcolm X was released in the cinemas ... the Black kids ... were becoming aware of the civil unrest ... strong desire to get back in touch with their roots.' Place, time and shared memories positioned children differently in relation to different struggles and movements.

In relation to party politics, most, but not all, respondents found it harder to remember significant events, bearing out arguments about children's distance from the civic and political sphere at a formal level (Wyness and Buchanan, 2004). Memories of politicians and parties were wrapped up in significant social and life events and the sharing of familial memory.

Through her grandfather's swearing, Apara remembered Thatcher's Conservative election victory in 1979,

Quite frightening ... the only time I'd heard my Grandfather swear ... news bulletin on about Margaret Thatcher ... out for a certain section of the country and we weren't in that section and even if we had been ... that still would have been wrong.

Similarly, Rehana learned to vote 'Labour' to protect her family's immigration and other rights (see above). Tessa was distressed by the assassination of Conservative politician, Airey Neave (Hansard, 1979) who was a friend who visited her grandfather. 'The bodyguards taught us how to play ... 'bodyguard patience'… He was blown up ... not very long after... it was the first person I knew that had been killed.'

In relation to the mechanics of elections, memories were scarce. Unless politicians were connected to significant childhood experience, there were fairly surface associations, some amusement and puzzlement, 'My parents used to deliberately vote to cancel each other's vote out … ' (George). Some, such as Cathy had no memory of party politics ever being discussed at home, although she experienced 'political background noise' during the power cuts. The most memorable aspect of elections might be, 'They would close school, and that was a good thing' (George). As they got older, some were drawn into electoral processes, whether these were 'mock' elections' at school, or real elections. Two remembered first voting,

'[In1970] … My mother, my father and myself went to vote. My mother had voted Conservative, I'd voted Labour and my father had voted Liberal (Martin). Rachel's father was Conservative. She first voted in 1982, '… out of rebelliousness ... in terms of human rights ... Thatcher … constant battles of the [Greater London Council] who were trying to do lots of things … I was only ever gonna be a Labour voter'. For Martin and Rachel, these political decisions were more possible because of their access to ideas from the social movements and cultural arrangements of their times. For James, it was not possible to divert from Unionism, 'deeply intertwined with the Fence... no real interest, to be honest, of the politics … very, very clear, you voted this, or you had allegiance to that, full stop … no real choice'.

Political alignment involved navigating landscapes where social events were politicized in different ways, through family, community and state. Popular unrest, youth cultural arrangements and social movements may have added to fears and also increased the range of political choices. Respondents aligned to groups that they felt connected to their everyday lives, fears and concerns. Some learned early the significance of party politics; that particular parties may protect their own and their families' interests related to social class, ethnicity or particular sides in violent conflict. For others, the mechanics of voting and formal participation felt more distant. This does not mean they lacked political engagement.

Conclusion

This article has considered three aspects of children's political engagement that may enrich understanding for their more formal political inclusion and support calls for a more radical and pluralist approach (Cockburn, 2007).

First, wider social events are politicized in complex ways in everyday childhood. There are different political frameworks available to evaluate everyday experience. Political back ground noise accompanies major social events. Children navigate politicized landscapes that include a cacophony of voices about right, wrong and how things might be changed (Lefebvre, 1991). They are already differently included in complex political processes, learning politics through their engagements in family, community and state. Selective social memory is shared at all these levels, tying children to different times, places, groups and political beliefs (Halbwachs, 1925/1992). Apara's childhood involved a political education in her family that linked her to a much earlier period of struggle in the depression of the 1930s. The place where James lived was rigidly differentiated by politics and religion, 'You meet somebody in the street and they asked you a question and the question has one of two answers … it's called survival'. These divisions cut across childhoods where he lived.

Second, political engagement has a deep emotional aspect. Children's
political understanding develops in relation to experiences, fears and
caring connections with others. Because the places they occupy are
differently politicized, similar children, like Kate and Tessa, develop
different political understanding. Both cared deeply about people and
animals, but one identified with and one feared the animal rights
movement. It is important to recognize the emotional paradoxes children
face and that emotions are uppermost in informing how and whether they
politically engage (Jaggar, 1996; Hochschild, 1998).

Third, children's political alignment is a temporal process (Adam 1995).
Children weave connections between their many everyday experiences,
political influences, people and social organizations. Their alignment draws
on the past and involves hopes for the future. It may be the outcome of a
long process of exclusion; this is how Rachel came to feminism. It may
involve critical turning points, such as Paulina, learning of a death in
custody. It may be a temporary or more permanent alignment; with other
children and with adults. Children such as James may have a very limited
range of choices because they live in conflict areas. Children may feel
distance from processes of formal political representation; unless they feel
their everyday significance and that they provide safety for the people they
care about. Rehana, for example, learned the importance of supporting the
Labour party because of direct threats to her community. Children 'have to
negotiate their agency through social spaces of their own changing times'
(Nolan, 2001 p. 310) and may feel more immediate connection to the less

organized spaces of community. As with Rachel and Martin, it may be in social or youth movements that 'the genuine political participation of children', is seen (Ben-Ariah and Boyer, 2005 p.49) but there are many other sites for children's political participation related to their shared interests with and concern for adults.

Clearly it is not possible to generalize from the past experiences discussed here to the lives of today's children. Nor is it possible to draw linear causative connections from past events to explain personal political alignments (Neale and Flowerdew, 2003). However it is possible to gain deeper understanding of the form that children's political engagement takes, to give more attention to their connectedness with others, their emotional ties and their feelings of fear and empathy in relation to the particular places and times they occupy. At the time of writing, children are visible in different protests related to war, the treatment of refugees, and cuts in education and welfare. This is despite a continued refrain that they lack seriousness and political understanding. The form of their political engagement is not necessarily different to that of adults, but may be more transparently grounded in feelings of fear and care, as well as less cluttered by ideas about formal representation. It is essential to support Cockburn (2007 p.454) and look beyond formal forms of representation when encouraging children to make their own political claims, 'The onus should not be put on young people to change ... the surroundings must change to suit the young people'. Children's engagement is not formulaic; what is important for one group and one generation may differ. However

shared memories and experiences generate political links across and

within generations.

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