New Terrain in Youth Development: The Promise of a Social Justice Approach

Shawn Ginwright and Julio Cammarota

Toward a Social Justice Model of Youth Development

POPULAR NOTIONS OF URBAN YOUTH HAVE LED THE PUBLIC TO BELIEVE THAT YOUNG people create more problems than possibilities. This idea is most evident in public policy that tends to view them as delinquents, criminals, and the cause of general civic problems. For example, in California, the passage of the Juvenile Justice Crime Bill (Proposition 21), which allows courts to try juveniles as adults, and other similar measures across the nation demonstrate how public policy reflects a fear of urban youth. Central to these initiatives is the notion that young people, particularly urban youth of color, are a menace to society and therefore need to be controlled and contained. The "get tough on youth" crime discourse has turned our attention from the powerful social forces and structural barriers that create and maintain problems to explanations of group behavior. As a result, researchers and practitioners have not paid serious attention to the impact of racism, the influence of poverty, and the effect of unemployment and instead have favored explanations of urban youth problems that focus on individual and/ or group pathologies.

The limits of current youth development models are bound by an inability to examine the complex social, economic, and political forces that bear on the lives of urban youth. A discussion of these forces is particularly important for youth who struggle with issues of identity, racism, sexism, police brutality, and poverty that are supported by unjust economic policies. For example, in 1997, although minority youth represent only 34% of the U.S. population, they comprised 62% of incarcerated youth. Additionally, African American youth are six times more

SHAWN GINWRIGHT, Ph.D., is Assistant Professor of Sociology and Ethnic Studies, Department of Anthropology and Sociology, at Santa Clara University (e-mail: shawn@leadershipexcellence.org). In 1989, Dr. Ginwright founded Leadership Excellence Inc., an organization dedicated to training African American youth to address problems in their schools and communities through personal and social change. Dr. Ginwright's research examines the ways in which youth in urban communities respond to the constraints of poverty, and continues to work with youth, parents, schools, community-based organizations, and local, state, and national offices on urban youth-related issues. JULIO CAMMAROTA, Ph.D., is a research associate in the Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology at the University of Arizona (e-mail: Julioc@email.arizona.edu). He conducts research on Latino youth and teaches graduate-level courses in the area of applied anthropology and education. Dr. Cammarota's dissertation focuses on the perceptions and experiences of work among Latino youth from Oakland, California. He has also published several papers on the relationship between work and schooling for Latino youth and the impact of race and gender on academic achievement.

likely to be incarcerated and receive longer sentences than do their white counterparts. Youth of color bear the brunt of discriminatory sentencing practices, and they have few educational and economic opportunities. In California, for example, Proposition 187 attempts to deny undocumented immigrants public benefits; Proposition 209 bans affirmative action policies; Proposition 227 bans bilingual education; and Proposition 21 gives courts greater authority to sentence youth, as young as 14, as adults. These state actions seriously impede the life chances that once were available to urban youth of color.[1]

This assault on youth of color treats individuals, families, and communities as the causes of their own problems and does not adequately address the most significant problems facing urban youth. Policymakers, educators, and youth workers must pay greater attention to how young people navigate racism, poverty, and unemployment in their communities. To understand these challenges, we must look beyond the narrow parameters of individual, family, or community behavior. Developing effective policy requires a thorough examination of the larger economic, social, and cultural forces that bear upon the actions, behaviors, experiences, and choices for urban youth.

This article presents a youth development model that demonstrates how these extrinsic societal forces significantly influence the day-to-day lives of urban youth and argues that our knowledge of their experience must be developed in three ways. First, the lives of urban youth are conceptualized within the terrain of the changing political, economic, and social landscape where they and their families struggle for economic survival, sustainability, and mobility. Second, we recognize how urban youth define, negotiate, and struggle for their identities in oppressive environments. Third, we explore how they, with an awareness of social justice, respond to forces that deem them powerless, develop a sophisticated knowledge of the root causes of social problems, and generate unique ways to contend with the larger political forces. We argue that an effective approach for working with urban youth is through a social justice framework, which accounts for the multiple forms of oppression youth encounter and highlights the strategies they use to address inequities plaguing their communities.

Background

Throughout the 1980s and into the early 1990s, psychological theories of human development dominated the youth development field, explaining how children progressed through natural stages or rites of passage leading to adulthood. Much of what we know about adolescents is therefore based on psychological models of development. Although this theoretical work has informed our knowledge of youth, its central focus is identifying youth problems such as delinquency, substance abuse, and violence. This is particularly the case with research on African American and Latino youth, where numerous studies attempted to explain or show the causes contributing to high drug use, dropout rates, violence, early

sexual activity, and other behaviors that jeopardize their healthy development. Much of the research during this period focused on preventing problems of "at risk" youth. Similarly, in the decade between 1985 and 1995, nearly 70% of the all the articles in the leading youth and adolescent research journals focused on youth problems, pathology, or prevention primarily for African American and Latino youth.

In the early 1990s, the youth development field began to promote youth assets, rather than focusing on youth problems. By promoting youth assets, scholars reconceptualized policy and practice by placing an emphasis on emotional health, empowerment, and exploration. Additionally, youth development practitioners and researchers reframed their most basic assumptions about youth in ways that viewed them as agents and acknowledged their self-worth and self-awareness. For example, Pittman and Fleming (1991) argued for a paradigm shift from thinking about youth as problems in need of fixing to positive youth development, which emphasized developing young people through skill and asset building.

The positive youth development model has been successful in challenging the problem/prevention model of youth. This shift in thinking has moved the field by challenging stakeholders to rethink how to better create programs and policy that provide greater support for youth and broader opportunities for their development. Although the focus on supports and opportunities for youth is necessary, this approach does not go far enough to account for the powerful social forces that affect young people. Young people's choices are bound up by complex relationships between peers, family, school, work, and the political and economic resources available to them (Wyn and White, 1997). As a result, the positive youth development model has been limited in two ways. First, the strategy to promote youth assets runs the risk of dismissing serious social, economic, and political influences in the lives of urban youth. Consequently, we are left with an over-romanticized, problem-free view of youth. Recent formulations of the positive youth development model have acknowledged the capacity for young people to change communities while simultaneously developing important life skills. The discussion of youth as community agents is another step forward to understanding how they can respond to pressing community issues. However, we still pay too little attention to the complex social forces affecting their lives, as well as to the oppressive community conditions that require youth action.

In the attempt to distance itself from the older problem-driven paradigm, the positive youth development model overcompensates by promoting supports and opportunities as the only factors necessary for positive and healthy development of youth, and does not examine thoroughly the ways in which social and community forces limit and create opportunities for youth. Despite the conceptual shift to positive youth development language, low-income and urban youth still encounter debilitating effects of poverty, discrimination, drugs in their neighborhoods, police violence, and the burden of supporting their families by earning

money and assisting with raising siblings. These realities create different, yet significant types of challenges for youth in urban communities.

Second, current formulations of positive youth development are based on universalistic, white middle-class conceptions of youth. This view of youth homogenizes their experiences, simplifies their identities, and conceptualizes them through one dominant cultural frame. Consequently, the relevance of culture, race, class, gender, and sexual identity in the positive youth development model are never fully developed. Accordingly, the influences of racism, sexism, homophobia, and poverty on the identities of young people are under-theorized. The positive youth develop model's attempt to shift from the problem/prevention model reproduces some of the conceptual limitations of its predecessor, namely the inability to analyze the effects of oppression on young people. Such an analysis would reveal how discriminatory practices limit opportunities and stifle healthy development.

Both models (problem/prevention and positive youth development) obscure our understanding of urban youth of color more than they explain, because they assume that youth themselves should be changed, rather than the oppressive environments in which they live. In lieu of conceptualizing youth as if they were somehow separate from their environments, we argue that the problems confronting youth today are the result of social and economic patterns that support deeply rooted racist, sexist, classist, and homophobic practices in urban communities. We shift our unit of analysis from individual behavior toward social and community forces and their impact on youth. By focusing on the societal context of young people's experiences, we enhance our knowledge of how they navigate and respond to the oppressive forces that affect their lives.

Supports, Opportunity, and Risks: Youth Development in a Social Context

An understanding of social context provides us with an opportunity to "look beyond" the problem-driven and asset-driven assumptions about youth behavior and allows us to examine how their supports, opportunities, and risks are circumscribed by larger political, economic, and social forces. These forces often create intense social, political, and economic pressures that profoundly affect young people's physical, emotional, and psychological well-being. Racism, mass unemployment, pervasive violence, and police brutality are serious threats to their families and their general health. Young people's choices are bound up by complex relationships between peers, family, school, and work, as well as with the political and economic resources available to them (Wyn and White, 1997). James Garbarino (1995: 61) argued that the presence of violence and poverty in urban communities generates "social toxins..., a term used to represent the degree to which the social world has become poisonous to a person's well-being." Drawing from environmentalists who have identified environmental toxins such as lead

paint, found in older homes and building, pesticides in our soil, or poor air quality from local refineries, Garbarino identifies social equivalents to physical toxins. These might include violence, poverty, domestic and sexual abuse, family disruption, and racism. Children and youth in poor communities are often most vulnerable to the presence of these toxins, and just as physical toxins can reach dangerous levels, social toxins can severely affect healthy development. Symptoms of high levels of social toxicity might include depression, despair, hopelessness, fear, anger, and pain. For youth in urban communities, toxicity manifests itself through apathy, fatalism, and self-destructive behaviors.

For example, Poussaint and Alexander (2000) found that racist police violence, racial discrimination in employment, and unfair and racist public school practices resulted in unresolved rage, aggression, depression, and fatalism. He pointed out that from 1980 to 1995, suicides among black youth increased 114%, and attributed this rise to increased racial violence in low-income urban communities. Post-Traumatic Slavery Syndrome, a term he used to describe the long-term impact of racism on the lives of blacks, reveals how black youth engage in ongoing life-threatening activities such as drug use and gun violence. He argued that the impact of racism has contributed to high rates of stress-related illnesses in the black community. According to Poussaint (*Ibid.*):

> The impact of racism itself, independent of poverty, still appears to exact a toll on the minds and bodies of the descendants of men and women brought to this continent as slaves, straining their capacity to adapt successfully in America.... Racism has contributed to high rates of stress-related illnesses in the black community.

For youth in urban environments, social forces such as racism, unemployment, and violence impede productive development. Young people who are expected to develop under hostile conditions are placed at greater risk than are those living in stable and safe communities. Risk here is not merely a set of unproductive youth behaviors, but rather a distinct set of destructive forces that disrupt healthy development. These destructive forces might include unsafe neighborhoods, lack of health care, racist school practices, lack of livable wage-earning jobs, and few productive after-school opportunities. These conditions ultimately threaten the overall well-being of neighborhoods and communities.

Youth as Agents of Social Change

Although young people are influenced by oppressive social forces, they still have the capacity to respond to forms of social control. Mokewna (1998: 17) argued that youth researchers and practitioners need to acknowledge "the structural constrains placed on young people without discounting the different (often resourceful) ways that young people deal with them." Citing White (1989), he

explained that young people are "subjected to wider relations of social division and social control, and agency is really about how young people negotiate, contest, and challenge the institutionalized processes of social division within which they are situated" (p. 17). Similarly, Wyn and White (1997: 73) argued that although young people have agency, it must be understood in terms of how it is "circumscribed by social structure." Youth in urban communities are subjected to political decisions and economic realities that impose significant constraints and become important reasons for resistance. Central to our understanding of urban youth, then, is precisely the relationship between institutionalized processes of social control and how they negotiate, challenge, and respond to these forces.

Our thesis is that larger social, political, and economic forces can negatively affect the well-being of urban youth, while local community practices can promote healthy youth development. Building from the youth development field, we expand the current terrain of youth development to include practices that encourage youth to address the larger oppressive forces affecting them and their communities. We believe that this is a more complete model of positive youth development, because it examines the processes by which urban youth contest, challenge, respond, and negotiate the use and misuse of power in their lives. This understanding of youth development acknowledges social contexts and highlights the capacity for youth to respond to community problems and heal from the psycho/social wounds of hostile urban environments. We call this model Social Justice Youth Development.

The Promise of a Social Justice Approach to Youth Development

Social justice youth development (SJYD) pays particular attention to the relationship between critical consciousness and social action. Critical consciousness can be described as an awareness of how institutional, historical, and systemic forces limit and promote the life opportunities for particular groups. Our understanding of critical consciousness parallels education scholar Paulo Freire's term *conscientizaçao*. Freire describes *conscientizaçao* as an awareness that the contents of people's day-to-day lives are not immutable facts of reality (1993). This awareness that life is not predetermined is the first step toward changing these conditions, and taking control over our fate. However, people can only truly "know" that they can exercise control over their existence by directly engaging the conditions that shape their lives. We argue, therefore, that social action and critical consciousness are a necessary couplet; that is, acting upon the conditions influencing one's social experience leads to an awareness of the contingent quality of life. This interdependence between critical consciousness and social action is what Freire calls "praxis: reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (1993: 33). We become closer to our humanity and agents of our own development when we reflect and act to transform the conditions influencing our existence.

The integration of critical consciousness and social action is how young people

make sense of, and begin to transform, their social world. Through their own praxis, they explore their own and others' experiences with oppression and privilege. Critical consciousness and social action provide young people with tools to understand and change the underlying causes of social and historical processes that perpetuate the problems they face daily. In the summer and fall of 1999, for example, thousands of young people in the San Francisco Bay Area protested against police brutality and legislation that would allow California courts to try youth as adults. Youth organizations held marches and rallies, and picketed and occupied the headquarters of major corporate sponsors of Proposition 21, the Juvenile Justice Crime Bill. On February 19, 2000, Bay Area youth held "Get on the Bus!" — guerilla street theater where youth boarded city buses and performed poems and short skits to provide political education and to distribute flyers with information about the initiative. On March 8, 2000, nearly 400 youth outraged by the passage of the proposition the day before flooded the lobby of the San Francisco Hilton Towers Hotel and chanted slogans, carried signs, and staged a peaceful sit-in. One participant commented,

> It was really powerful when we took over the lobby of the Hilton Hotel in San Francisco because I felt we could actually do something.... When we all got arrested, we were taken away, but while we were in jail, we bonded and shared stories. It really deepened my understanding and commitment to change things.

Critical consciousness and social action are intimately tied to the concrete ways that young people respond to oppressive forces in their communities. In San Francisco, youth responded by forming alliances with other youth organizers and educating peers as well as adult allies through hip-hop concerts and nonviolent protests. Youth participants often chanted the slogan, "Ain't no power like the power of youth, cuz the power of youth don't stop." The capacity for youth to respond to pressing social and community issues transforms both youth and the environments in which they live. Promoting praxis rather than community service encourages youth to channel energy into avenues where they can address real everyday problems. Additionally, unlike community service or service learning, praxis provides a way for young people to understand the roots of social inequality and encourages them to exercise power to change how inequality structures their lives.

Fostering Praxis Among Youth

Promoting the praxis of critical consciousness and social action among urban youth requires that they progress through three levels of awareness. The first type, *self-awareness*, focuses on self-evaluation and self-exploration to achieve a positive sense of self and social and cultural identity. The self-awareness stage encourages young people to explore identity issues related to race, class, gender,

and sexuality. Here awareness is facilitated by not merely celebrating ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity, but rather through an analysis of how power, privilege, and oppression threaten their identities and capacity for self-determination. Over a two-year period, we observed how young people develop their racial, gendered, and sexual identities, which are both personal and political, in two youth programs that provide youth of color (ages 14 to 18) with opportunities to embrace positive perspectives of their racial identities and organize to address community problems in Oakland, California. This study emerges from our participation and observation of how youth of color respond to social problems in their schools and communities. For the past eight years, we have worked with youth in Oakland through two unique organizations, Leadership Excellence Inc. and Youth Together. Both organizations support youth of color in activities that prepare them to address school and community problems. For example, one young man participating in the Leadership Excellence program commented,

> America has not given us the credit that we deserve. I mean, black people built the United States and if they don't recognize that, then we'll be here to keep reminding you of the condition we live in.

Another young women from Leadership Excellence commented,

> I know a lot of people stereotype us and think we're stupid because of the color of our skin. It does make me mad, but it's unique being black, ya know. I wouldn't be anything else because I am proud of who we are. There's so much behind being black, ya know, it's not just the color of your skin, even though that's very beautiful too.

Key to self-awareness is an understanding of how identity is closely tied to privilege or oppression through the use and/or misuse of power. Once young people see the connection between identity and power relationships, they develop a healthy self-awareness that recognizes how oppression and privilege mark their own struggles and the struggle of others.

The second stage of a critical consciousness is *social awareness*. Social awareness is intimately linked to self-awareness and fosters an understanding and ideology about how their immediate social world functions. It encourages the capacity to think critically about issues in their own communities. The ability of young people to provide an analysis of complex community problems is a powerful tool they can apply throughout their lives. Although social awareness can be described as a knowledge base about social issues, it is also a set of cognitive skills that promote investigation, analysis, and problem solving. Similar to self-awareness, an analysis of power is central to knowing how groups and institutions sustain or ameliorate inequalities at the community level. For example, one youth commented about injustice in his community,

> My community has entire families that don't have a place to sleep at
> night, kids with nowhere to stay. And we got all these abandoned
> buildings. If there ain't nobody living in these big buildings, and people
> are sleeping on the street, I would just put two and two together — put
> the people in these abandoned buildings! People could warm up at night,
> even if we just tell them, y'all got to leave at eight in the morning. At least
> they would have a place at night that is safe and warm, ya know.

Unlike "service learning," where youth learn through participation in commu-
nity service projects, social awareness places an emphasis on community problem
solving through critical thinking that raises questions about the roots of social
inequality. For example, a service learning approach might encourage youth to
participate in a service activity that provides homeless families with food, while
social awareness encourages youth to examine and influence political and eco-
nomic decisions that make homelessness possible in the first place. Reflected in
this example is a critical understanding of how systems and institutions sustain
homelessness. Through an analysis of their communities, youth develop a deep
sense of how institutions could better serve their own communities and initiate
strategies to make these institutions responsive to their needs. This critical
understanding of the social world provides young people with an analytical
foundation to achieve greater equality for themselves and for others in their
communities.

Youth accomplish an effective and complete praxis through the last level of
awareness, which we refer to as *Global Awareness*. Global awareness encourages
them to practice critical reflection in order to empathize with the struggles of
oppressed people throughout the world. From this perspective, global awareness
takes form through action at two levels. First, young people become familiar with
the various historical forms of oppression and with the larger processes and
systems that have caused the suffering of many people around the globe. Youth
become critical of how capitalism exploits people's labor in almost every country;
or how European colonization intended to culturally and economically dominate
the entire world; or how white supremacy identifies all people of color as inferior;
or how patriarchy renders women subordinate to men in almost every culture in
existence. Second, global awareness is achieved through forms of consistent
behavior that demonstrates connectedness with others, empathy with suffering,
and resistance to oppression. One young person commented that:

> I think that there are slaves today all over the world. Look, you got a
> million black people being locked up in jail making one penny an hour,
> people in Indonesia working with no benefits or medical care, and they
> don't have the right to strike. These are slave-like conditions.

Young people who have reached a global awareness often view the world as

a place of possibilities and change. In their everyday behavior, they work toward creating a better world through the type of work they choose, the form of recreation they participate in, and even the kind music they listen to. They become more intentional about their life choices and strive to value the "humanness" in everyone. Leadership Excellence and other similar organizations can support youth in developing critical consciousness by exploring how youth interpret and respond to social problems. One place to examine how youth respond to social problems is through youth culture, which can serve as an effective vehicle to transfer social criticism and political awareness.

Praxis Through Youth Culture

For many youth, hip-hop culture has been used as a politicizing tool to inform youth about significant social problems.[2] Since the mid-1980s, groups such as Public Enemy seized the attention of many urban youth of color because of their ability to boldly criticize and reveal serious contradictions in American democracy. Rap artists such as Chuck D, KRS1, and Arrested Development called for youth to raise their consciousness about American society and become more critical about the conditions of poverty. Hip-hop groups such as Dead Prez, The Coup, and the Roots now provide them with an analysis of racism, poverty, sexism, and other forms of oppression. For example, Dead Prez is known for their ability to politicize youth through explicit lyrics about social conditions.

> You have the emergence in human society of this thing that's called the State. What is the State? The State is this organized bureaucracy. It is the police department. It is the Army, the Navy. It is the prison system, the courts. This is the State — it is a repressive organization. But the reality is the police become necessary in human society only at that junction in human society where it is split between those who have and those who ain't got.

In many ways, progressive hip-hop encourages young people to move through the various levels of awareness, change their thinking about themselves and community problems, and act toward creating a more equitable world. Although progressive hip-hop culture functions as the voice of resistance for America's youth, it also provides a blueprint for the possibilities for social change.

At the self-awareness level, young people use hip-hop culture to express pain, anger, and the frustration of oppression through rap, song and poetry, or the spoken word. At the level of social awareness, they use hip-hop culture to organize, inform, and politicize at the community level. For example, while youth organized to defeat Proposition 21 in California, youth organizations, community activists, and local hip-hop artists joined forces and organized hip-hop concerts to conduct mass political education and distributed flyers with youthful graffiti art that

encouraged disenfranchised youth to vote and participate in the political process. A well-known Bay Area hip-hop artist and participant in the organizing effort commented:

> Culturally, a lot of young people do not read newspapers or even if you pass them a flyer, they might read it, but it's not as real to them because it's an old way of organizing. So hip-hop can bring us new tools to organize people with.

Social, community, and political action can be facilitated through hip-hop culture. Although we acknowledge that hip-hop can be politically inspiring, it is also sometimes fatalistic.[3] The key is to acknowledge the politicizing, and therefore healing, potential that hip-hop culture holds for disenfranchised youth.

At the global awareness level, hip-hop culture carries some possibility to unite youth through common experiences of suffering and common struggles of resistance. For example, the Black August festival[4] in Cuba unites hip-hop artists throughout the globe to share experiences of oppression and promote a common vision of self-determination and social change. Although hip-hop has the potential to promote a global awareness of suffering and unite youth around a common vision of social justice, there are limited examples of such action. Activists, community workers, artists, youth, and scholars must work together to push the art form to a level in which it can open young people's eyes to the larger picture of historical and systemic forms of oppression.

Healing as an Outcome of SJYD

SJYD youth development focuses on ways to foster critical consciousness among young people and encourages them to act toward achieving a sociopolitical vision. As a result, reaching "healthy" adulthood is not the only final product. Rather, one outcome from SJYD is healing — the process of fostering emotional, spiritual, psychological, and physical wellness. Young people heal from the impact of racial and economic suffering when they comprehend and address the complex, hidden social and economic forces fomenting their everyday challenges. Creating a social space where young people have the opportunity to share, listen, and learn from each other is a central strategy for engaging young people in the healing process. Through dialogue, young people develop a sense of optimism, emotional stability, intellectual stimulation, positive self-regard, and general resilience when facing personal, family, or community challenges. Ultimately, the process of healing provides young people with a sense of meaning and life purpose. The process of praxis and healing is central to the SJYD model because it assumes that social transformation begins with self-transformation and provides a way to connect individual actions with social change. (See Table 1 at the end of the article.)

Conclusion: Expanding the Terrain of Youth Development

The challenges of daily life for youth can be mitigated by innovative organizational and youth development practices. For young people in urban communities, the capacity to address pressing social and community problems opens the door to uncharted possibilities. A social justice model contributes three key contributions to the field of youth development. First, by shifting our attention from individual and psychological frameworks, we gain a richer understanding of the everyday needs and problems confronting young people. An ecological approach or contextual lens forces us to examine larger sociopolitical and economic factors that contribute to everyday youth struggles. These larger sociopolitical and economic factors present formidable barriers for healthy development. Stated differently, these forces often harm the psychological, mental, and spiritual well-being of young people. As a result, our second contribution to the field is that young people must have opportunities to heal from the impact of hostile environmental forces. Youth development practices that place healing at the center of their work will facilitate psychological, mental, and spiritual wellness. Third, through critical consciousness and social action (praxis), our model encourages young people to explore the causes of community and social issues and act toward addressing social problems. Here social justice emerges by fostering a deep awareness of social inequality and providing opportunities for young people to change the social and community conditions that prevent a positive, healthy process of development.

There are two practical implications of this model for policymakers and youth workers. The first highlights the idea that youth exist in communities, not simply in programs or schools. Knowing this should encourage those who are involved with young people to "go deep" to understand the day-to-day challenges youth face and explore how young people might channel their energies to redress toxic community conditions. Second, quality of youth programs rather than quantity of youth served should be given greater emphasis among stakeholders. The emphasis on serving greater numbers of youth on the part of foundations, governmental agencies, and nonprofit organizations is counter to youth development innovation because it rarely allows youth workers to develop a critical analysis of social conditions.

Young people have always been in the vanguard of social change. We believe that these contributions will push the current boundaries of the youth development field to be more intentional about the type of social world it seeks for its young people. A social justice model for youth development provides youth workers, researchers, policymakers, and young people with a new lens for examining old problems. Thus, in reply to our own question: Youth development for what? We reply, youth development to achieve a higher quality of life through a more equitable world.

Table 1:
Critical Consciousness and Youth Outcomes for Social Justice

Awareness Level: Self
Forms of Action: Critique of stereotypes; active engagement in identity development. **Community/Social Outcomes:** Political awareness and actively engaged citizens; general emotional, spiritual, psychological wellness. **Youth Social Justice Outcomes:** Pride of ethnic physical features; positive self-regard, racial, and ethnic esteem. Empowerment and positive orientation toward life circumstances and events.

Awareness Level: Social
Forms of Action: Community organizing; political education; youth exercising power in community institutions. **Community/Social Outcomes:** Equitable institutional practices; innovative solutions to community and social problems. **Youth Social Justice Outcomes:** Social problematizing, critical thinking, asking and answering questions related to their social environment. Capacity to change personal, community, and social conditions. Feeling of being a part of something meaningful and productive.

Awareness Level: Global
Forms of Action: Connection to others' struggles. **Community/Social Outcomes:** Safe and healthy community; social well-being. **Youth Social Justice Outcomes:** Sense of life purpose, empathy with the suffering of others, optimism about social change.

NOTES

1.   We define urban youth as young people between the ages of 15 and 25 who come from working-class or poor families in urban communities. We focus on youth of color because they make up the ethnic profile of many urban communities.

2.   We acknowledge that not all youth participate in hip-hop culture. For example, first-generation immigrant ethnic groups and/or rural youth may participate in their own youth culture. Our premise, however, is that youth culture can facilitate social action.

3.   For a good example of fatalistic hip-hop, listen to Tupac Shakor's "Machievelli." For political inspiration, listen to Lauren Hill or Dead Prez.

4.   Black August in Cuba is exceptional in the global scene of hip-hop. Major music companies dominate the global market and distribute a form of hip-hop to every corner of the world that glamorizes material wealth rather than raises political consciousness.

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