

## **Summary**

The article seeks to identify the functions of youth clubs, relating their design and ideology to the local youth environment as well as to the wider society. A comprehensive study of a youth club in Oslo in the industrial society of the early 1970s, showed that the club reached over 50 % of young people in their local environment, and that most of the members visited the club several times a week. Providing opportunities for both young people at risk and for the neighbourhood settings in general, was crucial for the clubs' prevention strategy.

The role and function of youth clubs must be considered in relation both to their local environments and the social formation in which they are embedded. The basic functions of youth clubs in the post-modern knowledge and competence societies are identified as being to prevent social exclusion, and to provide a basic arena for in-formal and non-formal learning. The article discusses the relationship between the youth clubs' design and their functions for young people in the knowledge/competence societies, concluding that while the interplay of unstructured social space and group activities are still fundamental to the clubs, the group activities has to be expanded and elaborated.