

# Rethinking Youth Culture and Identity Symposium

**CIESC & SOCINET**



**CANADIAN SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF EDUCATION**

3 June, 2008  
Vancouver, BC

# Rethinking Youth Culture and Identity Symposium

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## OVERVIEW

Even in these postmodern times identity continues to be the site of intense work on the part of youth and scholars. In the contexts of globalisation and neo-liberal ideas favouring extreme individualism, we are interested in exploring new ways of looking at youth as phenomenon, thinking about youth activity and identity formation, examining linkages with cultural policies and/or other forms of civic pluralism, so as to better understand contemporary realities of young peoples lives and future directions of youth studies. Accordingly, this symposium offers a number of sessions that will explore, theoretically and empirically, various themes such as youths relationship to citizenship, pluralism and democracy; consumerism, individualism and youth; multiraciality and multiethnicity; youth subcultures; emerging theories and re-conceptions of youth.

Youth today are at the very heart of pluralism and democracy. Given the unethical and immoral excesses of the corporative private sphere as well as excessive individualism, schools are expected to take up a moral duty of care. Teachers are expected to take up these issues as curricular topics or themes for contemporary and further studies. How then do youth negotiate difference and come to understand democracy? Do youth today understand themselves to be citizens who take up community-based duties and responsibilities, who develop national or political identifications, who share common democratic values, and who realise national, regional, and group identifications? How do multiculturalism policies and laws in Canada and many countries reflect this new dynamic? Do these policies and laws need to be modified and changed?

Youth culture is reportedly market-driven. Youth's passing fancies supposedly inform market choices and yet young people are subject to intense pressure to spend their part-time wages and to access parental finances to purchase leisure items and fashion, thus serving both as worker and consumer in the neo-market economy. Boys and girls each have their own culture, imbued in networked constellations of friends, each hyper-sexualised in the neo-market. A band playing and singing world music becomes very popular and then falls away after its few weeks of international fame, as yet another band achieves global recognition, in continuous cycles, forever replenished by other eager if cynical youth bands, all

managed professionally. A young lad who exclaims, “I am nothing without the latest T-shirt”, recognizes the significant impact of icons and yet, realizes that he simply cannot catch up with style changes every two months. And so on... What then is the impact on young girls’ sense of self and autonomy? Where and how do girls learn to take on feminist stances and to gauge male/female relationships? Where and how do boys develop a sense of self, autonomy, masculine stances, and gauge female/male relationships? Do market pressures in the form of advertising, film and other performances, heighten the young person’s sense of self or of gender? Why do some young people reject logos and market pressures whereas others seem to create themselves as market-based identifications? What discursive and inner meanings are assigned to such identifications: pervasive or passing, profound or superficial phenomena?

Yet youth culture is much more than consumerism. Today young people are creating their own subcultures, from skater girls and straightedgers in sporting culture to avatars in cyber culture, there are many more options for identification for today’s youth than the traditional school divisions into jocks and geeks. Youth are also actualising their lives at the intersection of many races, cultures, ethnicities, real or imaginary, in local, global and glocal spaces. How can and do racial affiliations change and shift for young people, especially as members of a generation, social class, or cultural group? How do bi-racial youth and/or multi-racial youth understand multiculturalism in Canadian and international contexts, especially as second generation, that is born in the country of adoption of immigrant/migrant parents? How do young people conceptualise themselves as consumers and as citizens? Are these notions mutually exclusive of one another for young people? If the young people work and study, both part-time, then are they fully citizens? How do young people engage in civil society, to work for the common good and live harmoniously with others? How is it possible to do so, with or without regard to gender, race, ethnicity, culture? How are identities, be these national, political, or cultural, grounded in spatial as well as interpersonal relationships? How is interpersonal trust established within social networks of young people in school, family and community contexts? Why is this even important?

Of particular interest are papers which examine conceptual and policy issues from critical studies perspectives and which are both theoretical and data-driven. What kind of theory is needed to examine and explain such complex phenomenon? How do we as researchers revitalise old analytic concepts such as social class, gender and generation for new subjectivities, realities, discourses, and meanings? How do we get beyond the definitional issues that currently haunt the field of youth studies? How does the conceptual fit of bi- or multi-racial youth of second generational origins problematise multiculturalism as difference? How does the perpetual structure-agency debate of the social sciences impact on youth and researcher

today? How or perhaps why, do youth's cultural connections and weavings of old and new metaphorical threads into new subjectivities and realities constitute forms of creativity? What theoretical and practical advantages does the new-world concept of transculturation as a creative process have with respect to cultural hybridity, third space, (anti)essentialist and critical multicultural perspectives?

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## PROGRAM DETAILS

**Symposium on Rethinking Youth Identity and Culture  
CIESC & SOCINET, at CSSE, 31 May – 3 June in Vancouver**

**ALL SESSIONS IN ROOM 1211, EDUCATION BUILDING, UBC**

**8:30 – 9:45, Session 19.17**

***Collectivity and Transcultural Flows: Identity and Institutional Passages  
Collectivité et flux transculturels : Passages identitaires et institutionnels***

*Chair: Yvonne Hébert (University of Calgary)*

*Discussant: Handel Wright (University of British Columbia)*

*Negotiating Cultural Institutions: Bangladeshi Youth in Montreal/  
Négocier les institutions culturelles : Jeunes d'origine Bangladeshi à Montréal  
Ratna Ghosh (McGill University)*

*From Global to Canadian? Or Canadian to Global?/  
Du global au canadien? Ou est-ce du canadien au global?  
Mehrunnisa Ali (Ryerson University)*

*Identity and a sense of belonging among marginalized students in university/  
Identités et appartenances chez les étudiants universitaires marginalisés  
Carl James and Leanne Taylor (York University)*

**10: 00 – 11:15, Session 20.19**

***Youth Engagement and Networks: Everyday, Socio-Cultural, Virtual Practices  
L'engagement et les réseaux des jeunes: Pratiques quotidiennes, socioculturelles,  
virtuelles***

*Chair: Handel Wright (University of British Columbia)*

*Discussant: Ratna Ghosh (McGill University)*

*A Distancing from, as identity construction: Youth selected engagements in the Canadian Diaspora/Une distanciation en construction identitaire : Engagements sélectionnés chez les jeunes en diaspora canadien*

**S. Nombuso Dlamini (University of Windsor)**

*Youth's Social Networks as Respect: Friends, Family, and Supported Learning/Les réseaux sociaux en tant que respect chez les jeunes: Amitiés, familles et apprentissages*

**Yvonne Hébert and Ernie Alama (University of Calgary)**

*Update Your Status: Identity and Learning in Viral Youth Networks/Mise à jour de son statut: Identité et apprentissage en réseau viral de jeunes*

**Michael Hoechsmann (McGill University)**

**11:30 - 1:00, Session 21.16**

***Cultural History, Schooling and Symbolic Representations: Inter/national Perspectives / Histoire culturelle, scolarisation et représentations symboliques : Perspectives inter/nationaux***

***Chair: Yvonne Hébert (University of Calgary)***

***Commentatrice: Annie Pilote (Université Laval & Observatoire Jeunes et Société)***

*Quel passé pour les futurs enseignants?/ What past for future history teachers?*

**Stéphane Lévesque (University of Ottawa)**

*Culture and Development: An African Case Study and Implications for Schooling and Education/Culture et développement: une étude de cas africain ayant portée sur la pertinence de la scolarisation et l'éducation*

**George Sefa Dei (OISE, U Toronto)**

*L'histoire sur les murs/ History on the walls*

**Jean-Pierre Charland (Université de Montréal)**

**1:15 - 2:45, Session 22.14**

***The New in Flux, Community Complexities and Consumerism  
Nouveauté en flux, complexités communautaires et consommation***

*Chair: Jrène Rahm (Université de Montréal)*

*Discussant: Carolyn Shields (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)*

*New Youth, New Times, Liquid Communities/  
Nouvelle jeunesse, nouveaux temps, communautés liquides  
Handel Wright (University of British Columbia)*

*Identifications multiples dans une société d'homogénéité linguistique: Les jeunes  
des écoles anglaises au Québec et françaises hors Québec/ Multiple Identifications  
in a linguistically homogeneous society: Youth in English-Language Schools in  
Québec and French-Languages Schools outside Québec  
Annie Pilote (U Laval et Observatoire Jeunes et Société)*

*Consumerism, Identity and the Stereotypes of Youth/  
Consommation, formation identitaire et stéréotypes chez les jeunes  
Lori Wilkinson (University of Manitoba)*

**3:00 – 4:15, Session 23.09**

***Re-Thinking Youth Identities and Cultures/Repenser les identifications et les  
cultures des jeunes***

*Chair: Michael Hoechsmann (McGill University)*

*Discussant: George Sefa Dei (OISE, University of Toronto)*

*Rethinking Youth Identity in the (Micro) Policy Context of US Schools/Repenser les  
identifications des jeunes dans le micro-contexte politique des écoles états-  
uniennes*

*Carolyn M. Shields (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)*

*Re-conceptualising Youth Subcultures: On the Move with Girls and Cultural Practices/ Bouger avec les filles et leurs pratiques culturelles : Vers une ré-conceptualisation des sous-cultures des jeunes*

**Deirdre M. Kelly & Dawn H. Currie (University of British Columbia)**

*The complex identities of South Asian high school boys: discourses of pathologisation and entitlement/Les identifications complexes des garçons d'origines indo-canadiennes: tendances discursives pathologique et de d'affranchissement*

**Anish Sayani (University of British Columbia)**

**4:30 – 5:45 pm, Session 24.03**

***Theoretical, Policy and Methodological Challenges of Identity Complexities  
Compréhensions théoriques et défis méthodologiques de la complexité identitaire***

***Chair: Carl James (York University)***

***Discussant: Lori Wilkinson (University of Manitoba)***

*Citizenship through multiple views: Framework for non-formal citizenship education for first-generation immigrant youth/Multiples vues de la citoyenneté: Cadre pour une éducation non-formelle à la citoyenneté pour jeunes immigrés*

**Maryam Nabavi (University of British Columbia)**

*Policy Implications of a Critical Analysis of the Role of Schools in the Identity Construction of Multi-Ethnic Youth/ Implications pour les politiques d'une analyse critique du rôle des écoles dans la construction identitaire des jeunes d'origines multiethniques*

**Erica Mohan (University of British Columbia)**

*Diverse Youths' Hybrid Positioning Work in their Lived and Imagined Worlds and its Implicit Methodological Challenges/ Le travail de positionnement hybride des jeunes dans leur monde conçu et vécu : Défis méthodologiques implicites*

**Jrène Rahm (Université de Montréal) & Jennifer Vadeboncoeur (University of British Columbia)**