# Youth in Plural Cities

Policy Challenges &
Opportunities

# 11th International Metropolis Conference

- Engaging Ethnocultural Minority Youth in the Practice of Citizenship: Policy Challenges and Opportunities in Australia, Canada and France
- Panel, Lisbon, Portugal, 2-6 Oct 2006
- Presentation, Synthesis Paper,
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# Presentation Plan

- Introduction

- Tri-Country Comparison: Australia, Canada & France

- Reflection and Critique

- Policy Recommendations

# Introduction

- Youth matter
- Many childhoods, changing over time: angel/demon, consumer, citizen
- All is not well for many young people
- Diverse and multifaceted lives
- See beyond broad social images of childhood and youth
- Strength, legitimacy, vitality

# Tri-Country Comparison

- **Australia**, a settler society, abandoned its whites-only policy in 1973, turned towards multiculturalism in 1989

- **Canada**, a bilingual country, known for its multiculturalism policy & laws since 1971, with a long history of immigration

- **France**, a republican nation-state, migrants from former colonies, notably Magreb – north of the Sahara

# Youth Identities, Community & Belonging

- Creative, nuanced images in each country
- Clearer policy effect
- A: Non-linear image of youth's transitions, struggles and community participation
- C: Transcultural processes, school completion, racial & spatial attachments, social networks of immigrants, changing understandings of friendship
- F: systemic racism, strain to hear youth's voices, struggle to find ways to cope with social cohesion, non-recognition of its plurality

# Barriers to Integration & Impact

- Similar in three countries: A, C, F
- Issues of
  - equality of opportunity
  - equality of treatment
  - equality of outcomes
- In educational institutions, settlement services, workforce and daily life

# Barriers to Integration & Impact

- A: Recent migrant integration into labour market, with greater spread in lower level of economy, with limited knowledge of English, credentialing issue; youth gangs;

- C: Provision of language services, youth gangs, recent exclusion from workforce + credentialing, attitude towards difference; knowledge-as-power

- F: systemic racism, spatial exclusion, harsh education, oppressive policing, massive unemployment of youth, huge race-poverty gap

# Innovative Approaches to Youth Integration

- Very different approaches…
- A: discourse of cultural diversity to maximise economic benefits from diversity & workforce;
- C: multicultural policy & laws promote cultural retention & diversity
- F: 2006 as Year of Equality of Opportunities; private sector initiative – Charter of Diversity in Business

# Youth Opportunities & Engagement

- Perception of youth as apathetic; yet evidence to the contrary
- C: Most youth believe in multiculturalism, value freedom, equality and pluralism;
  - Recognize their power to interact to solve problems
  - Immigrant youth decry loss of values, family communication & social framework
- Some youth have 3 views of citizenship: (a) as universal – everybody a citizen; (b) voting only for workers & owners; & (c) helping others and contributing to society, i.e. informal participation

# Types of Policies & Effects

- At issue - the recognition of cultural rights
- C: Cultural & linguistic policies as constitutional law; allows multiple cultural identifications, two official languages, political identity as Canadian
- A: multicultural policy by ministerial decree; non-legal basis of cultural policy; recent discourse of economic exploitation of diversity
- F: No cultural policies or laws; universalism = French language & culture

# Types of Policies & Effects

- Relationship between policy type and today's youth concerns

- F: most widespread revolt, over three years, spread into 300 communities; extreme poverty and exclusion of youth

- A: inter-group tensions a problem for multi policy

- C: more muted, subject to economic, social & political disadvantage

- Globalisation – all youth experience economic disempowerment & political disenfranchisement

# Reflection & Critique

*Issues of Language & Discourse*

- Categories & Constructs limit our views & visions of our societies; can flaw policies

- 'Race' for 'people of colour'

- 'Integration' in Canada = conformity; in France = assimilation

- 'Ethnicity' ill-suited for colour complexity of plural cities & societies

# Reflection & Critique

*Construction of Youth*

- Emerging adulthood – postponement of commitment, greater array of choices, return to school, depending on prior achievements & constraints on life plans

- Need differentiated routes through adolescence

- Effective youth policy needs to be inclusive

- Assure all youth able to take advantage of opportunities

# Reflection & Critique

Construction of Difference

- Today, think affirmatively about identity without freezing or dissolving difference among groups

- Successful integration = granting citizenship & allowing them to exercise rights, including right to challenge status quo

- Youth citizenship = altruism, political action, awareness-raising, youth leadership, all as engagement

# Research & Policy Capacities

- Building capacities to refine multiculturalism & citizenship
- Networks of researchers, policy makers & practitioners to develop a lexicon of identity and youth, to examine relationships between policy & practice, knowledge & politics

- Ideal of multiculturalism increasing attractive in a globalising world
- Without basis in law, implementation procedures, clear understanding of integration, multicultural policies doomed to failure

# Policy Recommendations

- *Policy of difference as commonplace and integrative citizenship, that lives every day and recognizes every person*

- **Long term perspective**, rather than short term fixes

- Favour the development of ways to live together peacefully.

- **Duty to the future** which, for youth, means the development of a **life project** for the future, that is revisited from time to time

# Policy Recommendations

In favour of life projects, policy & programmes to

- **Develop friendship networks** based on relationships between youth learners, friends, family, teachers, adult workers, etc.;

- **Reward young people for what they already do, helping others, as valuable citizenship contributions;**

- **Create authentic workplace experiences** wherein youth enrolled in studies, learn to take on the responsibilities of work, without neglecting their studies or dropping out of school;

- **Create new cultural forms and flows, within Canadian and global frames of reference.**

# Policy Recommendations

**Government would join with communities, cities & other partners, philanthropic interests, to:**

- **Sustain community-based programs which positively extend and enhance youth's learning and their social networks and that support parents**

- **Establish public spaces and resources for cultural expression, recreation and sports**

- **Establish world-class centres for global citizenship which cater to youth**

# Policy Recommendations

- **Create and sustain public glocal spaces, where difference is commonplace and is taken for granted;**

- **Create institutions and workplaces that eliminate systemic exclusion;**

- **Develop housing and urban areas that eliminate spatial segregation; and**

- **Adopt an economic model that eliminates poverty, economic disempowerment and political disenfranchisement**

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