Youth in Plural Cities

Policy Challenges & Opportunities
Engaging Ethnocultural Minority Youth in the Practice of Citizenship: Policy Challenges and Opportunities in Australia, Canada and France

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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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