

## CHAPTER 4

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**GLOBAL SOUTH YOUTH  
STUDIES, ITS FORMS AND  
DIFFERENCES AMONG  
THE SOUTH, AND  
BETWEEN THE NORTH  
AND SOUTH**

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C4.P1 THIS essay comprises the reflections of scholars from different regions and continents, mainly from the South, fused with comments and ideas from Northern scholars, to form both a patchwork quilt and integrated dialogue concerning globalized youth studies. It focuses on the development of youth studies in Africa, Latin America, parts of Asia, and the Caribbean, keeping in mind that the field may not yet exist in some of these regions. This has been a very difficult and unwieldy exercise. Studies of young people have emerged for different reasons, including academic, governmental, and international contexts, making comparison and integration awkward. For this reason, the essay simply lists contributors in alphabetical order, all of whom contributed parts of the essay.

C4.P2 The essay is longer than the others in this series, mainly because of the substantial reference list, which can serve as a useful resource in places away from the mainstream. The essay should support youth studies in, from, and for the South (Cooper et al., 2018), which are emerging as a result of struggle: struggle to get recognition as a ‘discipline,’ struggle to theorize outside dominant Northern frameworks, struggle to move outside

state-led developments, and struggle to be heard on and in international forums. Being heard and being critical therefore remain a challenge for all of the authors, yet something they are keen to develop. This struggle is demonstrated, for example, by reference to Latin America, where political crisis stifled the voices of critical thinkers, while youth studies in the Caribbean have been marginalized as a result of its size and location.

- C4.P3 Paradoxically, while struggle is partly due to being eclipsed by Northern scholarship, youth studies from the South are strongly influenced by the work of Northern scholars. For example, Northern approaches that are ‘generational’ or ‘biographical’ have recently been influential in Latin America. The early influence of youth cultural studies and hip hop as a political movement have impacted African studies of young people. The growth of a more critical sociology of youth in Asia is a result of a particular group of Northern scholars.
- C4.P4 The authors of this essay also show how Northern ideas struggle to explain their local contexts and there is therefore a need for more localized knowledge and theorizing to make sense of young people’s lives outside the Global North. For example, traditional notions of youth transition fail to grasp the fluidity of youth in Africa. In its place, the idea of seeing ‘youth’ not as a fixed category but as a form of ‘social shifter’ is proposed. This discursive instrument not only captures this fluidity of meaning associated with youth (as age is not a good measure) but also helps explain the relationship to power. What these reflections suggest is that the ‘default position’ of Northern approaches needs, at the very least, to be reconfigured and integrated with local knowledge and theorizing. When this is done, a more sophisticated and realistic understanding of young people’s lives in the South emerges. It also reminds us not only about how the North has been so dominant in defining and framing what we mean by youth in the South, but also that dichotomous or oppositional views between North and South are not always useful, insightful, or true representations of various ‘real worlds.’
- C4.P5 Finally, these reflections highlight the political nature of youth and that struggles over the meaning of youth, within particular contexts, are highly political. For example, in parts of Africa, anticolonial and liberationist movements co-opted youth as ‘agents of change,’ while in Latin America the success in creating an ‘independent’ infrastructure for studying youth saw new specializations emerge that enabled reflections on social change and new understandings of the ‘youth condition.’ Such developments are not unique to the Global South, but it is important to recognize that how the concept of youth is understood and used emerges out of political processes.

C4.S1

## AFRICAN YOUTH STUDIES

- C4.P6 In his now famous essay, *Engaging Postcolonial Cultures: African Youth and Public Space*, Mamadou Diouf (2003) made the crucial point that “the condition of young people in Africa, as well as their future, is heavily influenced by the interaction between local and global pressures” (p. 2). This insight links youth experiences in Africa with larger politi-

cal, economic, and cultural forces, offering an entry point for reflecting on African youth studies. African youth experiences have been emphatically shaped by multidimensional social and cultural shifts that are simultaneously local and global. The situation is sensitive partly because most framings continue to enter academic discourse through Northern-based scholarship, underlining the tensions between youth studies' Northern origins and their applications and adaptations to Southern contexts. All of this means that African youth is a highly charged political and cultural category, the study of which is a delicate endeavor.

C4.P7 Despite these cautionary notes, research points to a number of general findings. Anticolonial and liberationist movements coopted youth as powerful agents of change in the nationalist and pan-Africanist struggles; postcolonial nation-building projects embraced youth as the bearer of the newly independent nations' futures (Straker, 2009); the political crises of the 1980s and 1990s saw them at the heart of a "culture of violence" (El-Kenz 1996, p. 55); and today's development agenda has identified youth "as a target of policy interventions" (van Dijk et al., 2011, p. 2). African youth are therefore situated and 'produced' at the nexus of various postcolonial aspirations, interests, and fears (McKeon, 2018; Newell, 2012; Uberti, 2014).

C4.P8 These depictions of young Africans contrast radically with the socioeconomic contexts associated with the genesis of youth studies in the 1950s, meaning that conceptual and theoretical frameworks in the field should be utilized with caution. Postwar prosperity brought about teenagers with high cultures of "consumption, style and leisure" (Valentine et al., 1998, p. 4). Youth studies had shifted dramatically by the early 1980s, as urgent concerns with "survival," "under-employment," "defensiveness," and "anxiety" (United Nations, 1981, p. 3) emerged in global discourses associated with youth. Young people were now not only considered to be endangered, "at risk," but also "a risk" in itself (Cieslik & Pollock, 2002; Macdonald et al., 1993; Wulff, 1995). The rising scholarship on youth in the last four decades has consistently made insightful connections between the new global economic order—neoliberal globalization and late capitalism—and the precarious situation of young people. The central argument has been that the emerging crises of youth, beginning from the 1980s, are intricately interconnected with global economic, political, scientific/technological, and cultural trends (United Nations, 1981).

C4.P9 Most African youth bear the brunt of these conditions and suffer most acutely from global inequities. Aware of, yet unable to access the abundance of consumer goods in other parts of the world, African youth occupy a precarious position defined by powerful political-economic and cultural forces outside their immediate sphere of control (Hoffman, 2017; Honwana, 2012; Philipps, 2013; Weiss, 2005). Attempts to access consumer goods and overcome alienation and marginalization became tools for fashioning African youth cultures, creating capacities among youth to subvert and disrupt gerontocracy and regimes of neoliberal globalization. Here, hardly any example is more illustrative than the rise of hip hop culture and other popular forms of youth media in Africa (Alim et al., 2009; Alridge & Stewart, 2005; Androutsopoulos, 2009; Auzanneau, 2003; Ntarangwi, 2009; Osumare, 2007; Pennycook & Mitchell, 2009; Perullo, 2005; Roth-Gordon, 2009; Schneidermann, 2014).

- C4.P10 To backtrack slightly, the disruptive potential of youth in the African postcolony was initially highlighted by Achille Mbembe's *Les jeunes et l'ordre politique en Afrique noire* (1985). Mbembe rightly predicted that African states would face unprecedented social and political demands by a young generation that had hardly experienced colonization but were fed up with postcolonial one-party states and dictatorships. Their often-violent political participation and contestation across the African continent in the 1980s and 1990s inspired much contemporary research (for overviews, see Burgess, 2005; Durham, 2000; Klouwenberg & Butter, 2011; Philipps, 2014). Some was sensationalist, depicting African young men as a nuisance—a gender bias that persists in African youth research (Abbink, 2005). This work challenged the state-centered Africanist political sociology of the 1980s and 1990s, which accorded little to no political leverage to youth (Bates, 1981; Chabal & Daloz, 1999). Some pointed out that although youth disrupted African political formations, they were unlikely to provide alternatives and were easily coopted (Bayart, 1986). A recurring theme was also the notorious child soldier in war-torn Africa, a symbol of the vulnerability and victimhood of African youth, hemmed in by a ruthless global neoliberal economic order on the one hand, and relentlessly exploited and weaponized by an insensitive, corrupt, and greedy postcolonial elite, on the other (Hoffman, 2011; Honwana, 2006; Peters, 2011; Richards, 1996).
- C4.P11 Despite these structural constraints, African youth research opened new political perspectives from the vantage point of youth themselves. Diouf (1996, p. 225) highlights “the extraordinary vitality of African youth in the political arena” as an indication “that African societies have broken with the authoritarian enterprises inaugurated by the nationalist ruling classes.” The new generation, usually at the heart of antiauthoritarian protest movements, was no longer situated within the nationalist projects prescribed by postcolonial state elites, family elders, and the educational system. Instead, youth were actively constructing “new solidarities” and a “form of citizenship that disavows the biases of tradition and challenges authoritarianism” (Diouf, 1996, p. 249). Young people’s subversion of norms across sociopolitical spheres—the family, politics, popular culture, sexuality, or education—also inspired new entry points for researchers to retrieve the dynamism of African urban spaces in particular, a dynamism that had been lost to a fixation on Africa’s supposed political stagnation due to the overpowering forces of clientelism and patronage. African youth research highlights young people’s agency in the face of multifold structural predicaments, as they navigate and fashion both their own lives and the social dynamics around them (e.g., Christiansen et al., 2006; Swartz et al., 2012; Ugor, 2013; Ugor & Mawuko-Yevugah, 2015).
- C4.P12 Aside from its concern with dynamism and sociopolitical transformation, youth research in African studies has been wedded to the idea of youth’s ambiguity and ambivalence. Key works in the field include: *Makers and Breakers* (Honwana & de Boeck, 2005); *Vanguards or Vandals* (Abbink & van Kessel, 2005); and *Hooligans and Heroes* (Perullo, 2005). Honwana & De Boeck (2005) describe “children and youth as plural and heterogenous categories,” as simultaneously “creative and destructive forces,” and as “extremely difficult to pin down analytically [because] they often occupy more

than one position at once” (pp. 1, 3). With this focus on ambivalence, researchers sought to transcend the tropes that frame youth in terms of dichotomous extremes: as personifying dreams and nightmares, “idealizations and monstrosities, pathologies and panaceas” (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2005, p. 20).

- C4.P13 While these tropes appear in different guises across the globe, their critical deconstruction in the African context seems particularly urgent. Here, the entrepreneurial trope of Africa’s so called demographic dividend (Drummond et al., 2014), as well as the apocalyptic depiction of Africa’s youth as a harbinger of “The Coming Anarchy” (Kaplan, 1994), constitute conceptual backbones of neoliberal development and security policies. They are the ‘theoretical’ basis of a largely quantitative research apparatus focused on demographics using decontextualized and ahistorical approaches to legitimize outside interventions (Cincotta, 2009; Urdal, 2006).
- C4.P14 This is not to say that demographics do not matter. Given Africa’s median age of below twenty, compared to the world’s average of over thirty, and that Africa’s youth is predicted to grow, whereas youth populations in the rest of the world are projected to shrink, demographic debates are likely to continue with unabating urgency (United Nations, 2017). What is needed is a more critical approach to interpreting aggregate statistics and their underlying assumptions.
- C4.P15 The absence of methodological critique in mainstream debates on Africa’s youth is even more problematic given the fluidity of the youth concept in African contexts. Whereas ‘youth’ in the Global North tends to be associated with an age group, youth in Africa tends to indicate a social status, so that even people in their fifties may be considered youth if they have not founded a family of their own and remain dependent on their extended family and elders (Hansen, 2005; Vigh 2006). As such, youth is at the heart of negotiations over hierarchies, respect, family relations, education, inter-generational obligations, and political contestations (Marguerat, 2005; Ruel, 2002). This has led African youth research to enter intriguing conceptual debates. Durham (2004), for instance, considers youth not a fixed social category, but a versatile “social shifter”:
- C4.P16 When invoked, youth indexes sets of social relationships that are dynamic and constructed in the invocation. As people argue over who youth are and how they behave, they index shifting relationships of power and authority, responsibility and capability, agency and autonomy, and the moral configurations of society. (p. 591)
- C4.P17 From this perspective, African youth is not a particular age group, but rather a discursive instrument (like gender, race, ethnicity, or class) to position people in relation to one another and to stabilize and shift social levers of power (Durham, 2004). This fluidity of the idea of African youth perhaps says something about the future direction of African youth studies—that it is as fuzzy and unpredictable as the ungraspable subject matter of the subdiscipline itself. The very leaky nature of the idea of African youth; the multiple and varied ways in which this highly charged political and cultural category

has responded to both local and global forces that impact their lives; and the ongoing local-global contestations about the internationalization of culture, identity, and power suggest that this muddy concept will continue to feature as a significant discourse in African cultural studies for a long time.

C4.S2

## YOUTH STUDIES IN LATIN AMERICA

- C4.P18 Latin American social science studies increased greatly in the second half of the 20th century, with implications for the genesis and development of youth studies in the region. While Marxist and neo-Marxist theories predominated in the 1960s, the dictatorial governments of the 1970s repressed critical thinking, which led intellectuals into political exile. The democratic transition of the mid-1980s spawned new approaches and middle-range theories, catalyzing new theoretical paradigms applied to the problems of Latin American societies (Bendit & Miranda, 2017). Youth studies emerged at that time, focused on specific aspects of development, and seldom on macro studies framed in broader theoretical frameworks (Braslavsky, 1989). In the social context of democratic transitions, where political participation worked jointly with cultural production and dissident youth identities, the United Nations promoted the International Year of Youth and the activities of CELAJU (Latin American Center on Youth). This provided institutional support for research on youth policies, especially those related to youth culture and participation. A hybrid and generalist field emerged with knowledge built in relation to social, governmental, and cooperation organizations, where different theoretical perspectives converged, including functionalist, neo-Marxist, and Latin Americanist.
- C4.P19 Youth was understood as a normative transition, a social status change involving a moratorium dedicated to education and waiting for adult social roles such as worker and/or parent (Margulis & Urresti, 1996). ‘Youth’ was consequently restricted to a minority of social groups with access to economic resources that would allow this postponement or moratorium. The student, especially at secondary or higher education level, was strongly associated with ‘youth’ (Miranda, 2007). During the 1990s, youth research was supported by governments and multilateral cooperation agencies. Youth surveys were conducted in Paraguay, Uruguay, Chile, Bolivia, Guatemala, Mexico, and Colombia, producing information for diagnostics and policy making (Perez Islas, 2006; Rodriguez, 2008). The work of *Instituto Mexicano para la Juventud* (Mexican Youth Institute), especially through the publication of *Jovenes, A Journal on Youth Studies*, and CIDPA (Center for Social Studies) in Chile with the journal *Última Década*, allowed the dissemination of knowledge in a time when computer networks were still incipient. Additionally, the Ibero-American Organization for Youth enabled integration with research from Spain and Portugal, with a positive impact on the region, especially in the works of Casal and colleagues (Casal et al., 2010) and Machado País and colleagues, and the Youth Research Program from The Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences

(FLACSO) in Argentina, which pioneered publications and postgraduate education in the field of youth studies.

- C4.P20 At the beginning of the 21st century, academic activity started to become independent from institutional influences, facilitating academic specialization or ‘a field’ that existed beyond public and social policies. This provoked epistemological rupture with the social moratorium concept (Balardini & Miranda, 2000), and the development of theoretical frameworks that sought to reflect social change like the ‘youth condition’ paradigm (Krauskopf, 2010). A set of studies with greater theoretical and analytical depth featured young people in the region (Abad, 2002; Miranda, 2007; Reguillo, 2000). This supported the consolidation of different topics, among them: health and youth participation, youth culture/subculture, violence, political participation and social movement, migration, gender, transition, and youth trajectories. Emerging subjects set new agendas with the sociopolitical situations of each country determining the most relevant topics to be addressed. For example, in the southern region, studies about labor insertion and political participation developed, whereas in the Andean region and Central America, studies focusing on social conflict, identity, migration, violence, and youth culture were more prominent (Abramovay, 1999; Cerbino, 2012; Duarte Quapper, 2005; Urzua Martinez, 2015; Valenzuela, 2015a, 2015b).
- C4.P21 Generations, social generations, and life course were common concepts, with strong influences from the studies of Leccardi and Feixa (2011) and Woodman and Wyn (2013). An original concept was formulated by Bendit and Miranda (2017), constructing the notion of a ‘grammar of youth’ as a sociological concept which addresses the contexts, rules and institutional spaces, working in a structuring manner where young people grow and develop in their daily experience. This grammar of youth proposes to study the determining context of youth experiences in different areas and analyze the agency of young people (Bendit & Miranda, 2017).
- C4.P22 According to Sainz (2019), there are two dominant approaches to Latin American youth studies: 1) The ‘generational’ approach, where young people represent changing values, integrating the culturalist perspective; and 2) the biographical perspective that allows observation of the interaction between agency and structure, including aspects of identity (Sainz, 2019). This is a distinction that resembles Shildrick and MacDonald’s (2006) typology, which suggests the existence of two Global North traditions: a) the so-called cultural/subcultural studies, with a dominance of ethnographic approaches and qualitative research; and b) the youth perspective studies focused on structural aspects and with a greater development of quantitative, longitudinal studies, and biographical approaches (Shildrick & MacDonald, 2006). Although progress is being made on a better vision (Woodman & Bennett, 2015; Woodman & Wyn, 2013), there are still theoretical and methodological specificities characterizing these ideas.
- C4.P23 To expand upon these two dominant approaches, Latin American cultural studies of youth explore processes of social conflict, starting with descriptions of consumption and cultural productivity. Notable contributions include studies by Vila (1985); Reguillo (2000); Valenzuela (2015a, 2015b); Cruz Sierra (2006); Duarte Quapper (2005, 2009); and more recently Alcazar (2019), in a feminist perspective. This is a highly productive

approach for public intervention in situations of deprivation, social exclusion, and conflict in Latin America. As part of this tradition, studies on gangs provoke great interest, especially in the works of Feixa and Cerbino (Cerbino, 2012; Cerbino & Barrios, 2008; Feixa & Romaní, 2014). At the same time, studies on generational factors in political participation were being developed by the CLACSO (Latin American Council of Social Sciences) network, where studies by Vommaro and Vazquez (2008) stand out, having expanded on previous work by Balaridini, Krauskopf, and Rodriguez.

C4.P24 The biographical perspective encompasses a research tradition focused on social inequality through the study of youth transitions and trajectories (Dávila León, 2004). Different methodological strategies are used including longitudinal studies and macro and quantitative approaches, as well as qualitative research and life stories. As part of a vast tradition, there are prominent studies of groups from different geographical areas. Among the most significant authors are Perez Islas, Urteaga, Filardo, Jacinto, Miranda, Davila, Corrochano, Abramo, Guimarães and Mora Castro on labor and education trajectories (Abramo, 2005; Abramo et al., 2000; Corrochano, 2011; Filardo, 2010; Guimarães et al., 2018; Jacinto et al., 2007; Miranda, 2016; Perez Islas et al., 2001; among others). A set of studies addressed the idea of spaciality and social justice against the expansion of territorial segregation processes, integrating the developments of critical geography (Cuervo & Miranda, 2015). These studies state that, amid the particular characteristics of the region, inequality is perhaps the leading feature of youth trajectories, characterized in recent years by forms of segmented circulation in city and public spaces (Chavez & Segura, 2014; Grinberg et al., 2019; Salas & De Oliveira, 2015).

C4.P25 The work of multilateral agencies continues, focusing on living conditions and the social situation of young people with specific subjects including school dropout, unemployment, and inactivity and health. Likewise, various United Nations organizations such as the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Inter-American Centre for Knowledge Development in Vocational Training, formulated documents on NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) youth, early pregnancy, migration, digitalization, and competencies. An original network is currently developing an action research project with young people living in violence and vulnerability (Pérez Sáinz, 2019). Different approaches to social policies, youth, participation, health, and gender perspectives have also been influential at a regional level (Krauskopf, 2004; Llobet, 2011).

C4.P26 The field of youth studies in Latin America is therefore comprehensive and dynamic. It has a history of more than forty years of producing original local studies. Researchers participate in regional and international forums, congresses, and publications. Spanish is the main language for communication and publication in academic exchange networks. Nevertheless, there has been an increase in interest in and diffusion of Latin American youth studies internationally thanks to new academic social networks, a trend that will hopefully continue and grow.

C4.S3

## YOUTH STUDIES IN ASIAN CONTEXTS

- C4.P27 Asia is one of the largest geopolitical configurations in the world, bounded to the North by the Arctic Ocean, the Pacific Ocean to the East and the Indian Ocean to the South. It comprises many highly diverse countries. While some North Asian countries, such as Japan, were never colonized and industrialized rapidly after World War II, Southeast Asian countries like Laos and Burma experienced waves of colonization and remain very poor. There are vastly different histories, languages, cultures, religions, economies, and systems of governance within the Asian region. In short, subsuming the entire region of Asia in the category ‘Global South’—as that term is generally defined—is a dubious claim. Given that the conditions experienced by youth are highly varied across the region (Naafs & Skelton, 2018), and there are concerns about unproductive generalizations, most youth scholars working in Asian countries focus primarily on their own country (Sutopo, 2019; Yoon, 2006), or groups of similar countries (Williams & Kamaludeen, 2017).
- C4.P28 Overall, practice and theory in youth research in Asia remain strongly shaped by academic knowledge flows from the North. First, those training social science scholars in research are frequently influenced by their own postgraduate studies, or those of their mentors, in western countries. Second, colonial powers in the past, as well as economic development aid projects, relied on obtaining statistical data about populations, and those techniques are still widely practiced. The result is that, in most Asian countries, youth phenomena are primarily investigated using quantitative methods. When it comes to review of literature for a youth research project, the main source is likely to be material published in the West, which tends to carry far more prestige than research published in-country and in the local language. Notably, when it comes to theoretical interpretation of youth phenomena, psychological and criminological frameworks are much more common than critical sociological approaches (Williams & Kamaludeen, 2017). In some countries, this represents the legacy of political oppression, when ideas with emancipatory or revolutionary potential were banned.
- C4.P29 Nevertheless, in recent years, there have been laudable challenges to the Eurocentric view of adolescence (Brown et al., 2002), as well as attempts at the *inclusion* of various Asian cultures and societies in accounts of young lives globally (for example, Heathfield & Fusco, 2016; Helve, 2005; Helve & Holm, 2005; Nilan & Feixa, 2006; Parker & Nilan, 2013). These efforts are necessary in order to go beyond traditional Western notions of adolescence and youth (Erickson, 1968; Hall, 1904), because those static concepts do not recognize that the material conditions under which youth grow up are so fundamentally different in Asian countries. Some of these advances in critical thinking about youth come from international academic engagements among the youth scholars of the Sociology of Youth Research Committee (RC34) of the International Sociology Association. Since the 1990s, through conferences, forums and symposia, RC34 has sought to include and engage youth scholars from across the Asian region (Chisholm, 2004;

Helve, 2005; Helve & Holm, 2005). Among these engagements were international conferences and symposia held in China (Macau, Hong Kong, Beijing); India; and Sri Lanka. Australian-based scholars are also helping produce local knowledges on youth in Asia. This represents active coengagement between Global North and Global South youth scholars in knowledge sharing.

- C4.P30 In light of the many challenges and complexities, some key questions for youth studies in the region include: how have youth in Asian societies experienced life course transitions in the recent past, what contextual changes shaped these transitions, and what are their lived experiences in comparison with youth in the West (Arnett, 2002, 2005). There is still much to be done in documenting diversity and gathering accounts of alternative forms of young lives in Asia. For example, research (Batan, 2014, 2016, 2018; Hettige et al., 2014; Hettige & Mayer, 2002; Parker & Nilan, 2013) suggests that, in many Asian countries, transitions to adulthood remain simultaneously tied to both traditional and changing social structures, and conditions of postcolonial precarity.
- C4.P31 In analyses of youth studies in the Asian region, framing findings using *rigid* divisions between the Global North and Global South is inadvisable. The vast region of Asia does not lend itself to such a generalization—ideas are not always fixed to a geographical place. They travel across space, influencing human thinking and action, including ideas about youth. In fact, global flows of academic knowledge to different parts of Asia come from many sources, not just the Global North. For example, scholars in several Asian countries have made use of the theory of “necropolitics” formulated by African philosopher Achille Mbembe (2003). This includes Pae (2020), writing on South Korea, and Balce (2016) writing on the Philippines. Moreover, while some of the older concepts used in western youth studies are not useful in Asian youth studies, others are relevant and are taken up and expanded upon by scholars in the region. For example, Herrera (2017) argues that the conceptualization of Arabic youth in West Asia must incorporate the notion of the ‘precariat’ and the condition of ‘precariousness’ because these terms describe not so much western, as global, conditions for young people trying to make lives for themselves now.
- C4.P32 In the strong economies of countries like China and Japan and in emerging market economies, such as India, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Indonesia, there is steady integration with the rest of the world (FocusEconomics, 2019). Accordingly, many youths from diverse social backgrounds have become highly mobile within the region and beyond, not only pursuing education but also traveling for employment. For instance, the Middle East and Northeast Asia have become significant destinations for migrant worker youth from South and Southeast Asia (Aldaba & Ang, 2010; Hettige & Mayer, 2001; Little & Hettige, 2013). That mobility requires analyses of youth conditions not just in the Asian country of origin, but also in the destination country, where remittance income is produced.
- C4.P33 The very diversity of youth experiences within Asia itself suggests fruitful theoretical exploration, including: (a) the multiculturalism and diversity of lived experiences of young people in the Asian region; (b) mediations of state interventions as well as

nonstate forces; and (c) continued embeddedness in traditional social structures and cultural forces, such as ethnic identity, caste, gender, religion, and historical memory. In Northeast Asia, for example, it is unclear whether Confucian ideals have ever really gone away. Also in Northeast Asia, there may be a rich vein of theoretical promise in analyzing the extraordinary phenomenon of youth activism in Hong Kong, where it seems as though an entire youth generation took to the streets in protest.

- C4.P34 In short, while rapid economic and social transformations in Asian countries have had a moderating influence on traditional identities and beliefs of youth (Graner et al., 2012; Hettige et al., 2014; Hettige & Mayer, 2002), this trend is linked to diverse, but strong, state-led development initiatives in recent decades. Much work therefore remains for Asian youth scholars in the upcoming years, particularly in attempting a productive synthesis of innovative critical insights and frameworks that might have a wider application to the region. A deeper Global South perspective on youth, enriched by insights from Asia, is something that can be achieved.

C4.S4

## CARIBBEAN YOUTH STUDIES

- C4.P35 Notwithstanding the demographic dominance of youth in developing countries, their stories are rarely included in international youth scholarship. Moreover, narratives from small (island) developing states and regions—where youth represent over 60 percent of populations—are often considered too insignificant to matter, in a context where generalizable theories of youth are encouraged. A new body of youth research focusing on the Global South has the potential to reverse this history of exclusion.
- C4.P36 Admittedly, Caribbean youth studies have not, hitherto, developed as a distinct area of research. Instead, Caribbean research on the experiences of youth and on youth as a social class has been supplementary to wider postcolonial development studies and social studies, which focus on the imperatives of socioeconomic development in small states within the global order. Stories of Caribbean youth are intertwined with various narratives of state interests and politically oriented social movements *inter alia*. For example, treatments include the role of Caribbean students in Black power and socialist Movements (Quinn, 2014); the role of youth in the social reproduction of Caribbean societies (Lewis, 1995); the positioning of the Caribbean youth organizations vis-à-vis Commonwealth and global youth development agendas (Charles & Jameson-Charles, 2014); and the conceptualization of youth as economic agents of a regional single market (Gilbert-Roberts, 2014). Accordingly, Caribbean research on youth has been development-policy focused.
- C4.P37 At the same time, the intersection of size and insularity in the Caribbean encourages self-study with a global outlook. Conversely, global theorizing marginalizes or excludes the empirical experience of small postcolonial contexts. The assumption is that small development policy-oriented research offers little intellectual value to the esoteric

Northern approaches. However, there is a lot within the diverse intellectual traditions from the ‘small South’ that can strengthen the emerging discourse on Global South youth studies (GSYS). This includes shifting the focus from the quantitative significance of Southern youth, to celebrating the diversity of Southern youth experience and Southern intellectual traditions. GSYS must avoid homogenizing the Southern experience.

C4.P38 There are three trends in Caribbean political thought that provide practical lenses through which to study youth in the Global South in a more authentic way, respecting diversity and inclusion. First, Caribbean intellectual traditions emphasize the importance of self-study as a means of raising the political consciousness of oppressed groups. Best (1996) and Beckford (1984) encouraged Caribbean scholars to study their own contexts and to privilege the observations of the ordinary Caribbean person. That approach encourages GSYS to engage with localized youth-led and youth-participatory research approaches which engage self-study as an emancipatory act for young people and their societies.

C4.P39 Secondly, without contradiction, Caribbean political thought emphasizes building on self-realization to engage the world. Influenced by dependency theory understandings of the position of the Caribbean in the world, there have been strong diasporic connections in Caribbean scholarship on the lived experience of postcolonial people. Hall and Jefferson (1975) studied Caribbean youth in the UK subculture, while Rodney (1969) taught African history to poor Afro-Jamaican youth as a means to strengthen their sense of self-identity and empowerment, as well as to encourage their political activism. GSYS must also seek to connect the South by first acknowledging the value of each constituent part.

C4.P40 Thirdly, the concept of regional solidarity heavily influences the study of development in the Caribbean (Abdulah, 2008; Demas, 1965; Girvan, 1997). Coalition-building among oppressed groups has been a longstanding subject of study in small states, since it represents an imperative within racially and class-divided countries as well as among diverse but interdependent small states (Jones et al., 1997). Inspired by that perspective, research into the establishment and functioning of youth coalitions, within and among states, becomes important. The study of National and Regional Youth Councils as sites of (trans)national solidarity is essential. This includes the study of transregional youth organizations that represent a large proportion of global youth through the nine Commonwealth Youth Networks which promote African-Asian-Caribbean diasporic connections within a postcolonial context.

C4.P41 In summary, the Caribbean political tradition encourages the integrated study of local, regional, and global experiences, without rendering any one site of investigation subordinate to another. The emergence of a strong GSYS tradition could redress the intellectual exclusion of Caribbean perspectives from Northern-led research. However, it must avoid promoting, unwittingly, a homogenous body of thought, dominated by large developing countries. This would contradict scholarly traditions in the ‘small South’ which value equitable space for diverse, regionalized, marginalized, and localized ideas and voices to contend in global discourses.

C4.S5

## AFTERWORD

- C4.P42 Research from the four Southern regions illustrates a variety of perspectives and ongoing initiatives, and also the fact that the study of young people is integrated and organized differently in different places. Asian youth studies is still an inchoate enterprise, in need of organization, similar to the situation in the Caribbean. By contrast, youth studies in Latin America are a more cohesive enterprise, and in Africa, young people as a force of change has been studied extensively. Each section emphasizes inequalities within these regions and in relation to Northern countries.
- C4.P43 Implicit in the contributions is a tension related to forces perceived to be inside or outside the region in question, creating a kind of ‘us’ and ‘them’ logic to the enterprise of knowledge production. This sentiment has parallels with and could learn from conflicts between disciplines—contestation that have occurred in the Global North. From a disciplinary perspective, no one owns youth studies (Côté, 2014a). It is often equated with sociology, and to some extent cultural studies. However, its origins arguably lie in early 1900s American psychology (Hall, 1904), and the field of adolescent psychology has been vibrant since, influencing other disciplines such as criminology and demography. Yet, from the beginning, sociologists and psychologists have contested this ownership, with sociologists rejecting the very concept of adolescence itself as a culturally specific reification (e.g., Hollingshead, 1949). A more recent fissure involves the concept of ‘emerging adulthood,’ with many psychologists rejecting this term as yet another culturally specific reification (e.g., Côté, 2014b).
- C4.P44 The point of this brief history is that researchers talk past each other if they assume that youth studies can be ‘owned’ by a particular discipline. Aspirations for ownership produce various self-contained, and to some extent self-serving, ‘silos’ of like-minded researchers separated in terms of basic ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions and preferences. The veneer of these antagonisms between silos can be seen in various political agendas and value-priorities (e.g., conflict/change vs. order/regulation; advocacy/liberation vs. facilitation/guidance; see Côté, 2014a), resentments over which can undermine cooperation amongst social scientists.
- C4.P45 The challenge therefore lies in avoiding the ‘us’ and ‘them’ mentality, while simultaneously ensuring that groups of people are not silenced and are given the opportunity for self-representation, particularly when inequalities exist in terms of resources. It should also be acknowledged that a particular youth studies issue looks different depending on one’s ‘locus of enunciation’ (Grosfoguel, 2007), which does not mean that knowledges are relative, but that knowledge production and use is shaped by geopolitical contexts.
- C4.P46 A global social science of youth should therefore strive to transcend divisions and infighting, find common ground upon which best to understand ‘youth’ conceptually, help those in need, and acknowledge historical differences and power dynamics. One way of doing this is to proceed in an inclusive manner, cognizant of the variety of disciplines, regions, and perspectives that can contribute to the field, while striving for cooperation toward emancipatory ends. This essay aims to serve as one example of this vision.

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