

Sudhir, Alladi Venkatesh and Ronald Kassimir, eds.

Youth, Globalization, and the Law

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Concern with globalization and its impacts has emerged over the past 20 years as a key issue within a variety of disciplines including Sociology, Anthropology, Economics, Law, Social Work, Psychology and Policy Analysis. Most research has been international and macro-level in its sweep; research relating to how globalization impacts on the local context has been less common. Fortunately, this key issue has garnered increasing attention in the past few years. *Youth, Globalization, and the Law* is an interesting and thought-provoking collection of case studies of the criminalization of youth and responses to it, attempts to regulate youth behaviour, and the contradictions of youth empowerment. It provides a solid foundation for academics, policy analysts, students and others interested in understanding the impact of globalization on youth and the law in local contexts.

While this volume has much to offer to readers, it is uneven, with some articles being quite effective and others being less so in linking globalization to local contexts. The first two chapters set the stage for understanding the local implications for globalization and the complexity of the concept of globalization. Muncie's challenging rethinking of globalization for youth justice and the governance of young people is particularly effective. Less effective are those chapters where the connections between globalization and the local are not fully articulated, in part because of how globalization is conceptualized. Coughlin, for example, broadly defines globalization as resulting in local forces alone not determining the punishment of youth in the US system or in countries adopting US forms of punishment. This hardly captures the complexities of globalization, such as deterritorialization, interconnectedness, the accelerated velocity of social activity, or that it is a relatively long-term and multi-pronged process manifest in many different (economic, political, and cultural) arenas of social activity. As a result the connections between the events in the American context and globalization remain unexplored and undeveloped.

Another tension in the collection is the failure to articulate how global trends enter the local and, perhaps more importantly why only selected discourses are evoked. Consider two examples: Terrio uses a case study approach to detail the relationship between youth (im)migration and juvenile law in France while Venkatesh and Murphy focus on social order in the ghetto. They link local events to the global through global trends: a shift from rehabilitation to retribution, and the downloading of responsibility from the central state to the local environment respectively. But these links are tenuous, because there is no detailed analysis of why these particular global discourses are implicated in local practices while other global discourses, such as restorative justice practices, are not. It is critical to address the selective use of such discourses for understanding the intersection of the global and the local context and to document the dialogue between global practices, theories and legislation, and the complex way in which they are realized in local contexts.

However, most of the articles are persuasive and effective in linking local practices to global discourses. For example, chapters by Boyle et al., Guidry, and Bunting and Merry are each able to establish how specific dimensions of globalization interact generally or within the local context. Boyle et al. begin with a focus on children as quintessentially local. They then detail how international laws regarding children shape childhood and control youth. They link globalisation not simply to the impact of global capitalism but to the power relations that operate on children, in

particular the related forces of individualism and universalism. Though the chapter never arrives at the local context and its complex particularities come into “dialogue” with international legal trends, it does establish a clear analytical frame to approach the local. Guidry presents a detailed case study of the Vila da Barca and the contradictions that emerge as both global and local processes shape the development of youth legislation in Brazil. He effectively shows the role of transnational actors in shaping local law and practices, and how neoliberal economic policies restricted the nation state’s ability to fund and expand social programs. Bunting and Merry’s chapter demonstrates the different implications of globalization for young women than for men. Through the interventions of transnational, national and local activists working to intervene in the lives of young women in Nigeria, they reveal how global and local and competing discourses come together.

Overall, this collection offers much to readers in a range of disciplines. It is an accessible volume for students seeking an informed introduction to questions on youth, globalization and the law, with many of the articles providing a nuanced understanding of globalization and its impact, within the legal arena, on young people around the world.

Katharine Kelly

Carleton University

Katharine_Kelly@carleton.ca

Katharine Kelly is an associate professor of Sociology with research interests in the areas of youth crime, local crime prevention practices, and local community responses to crime prevention. She has published in the areas of restorative justice, community-based crime prevention, and youth homicide.

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