

# Youth Cultures and Identities:

## Implications for Research and Policy

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# Some background

- o What I do
- o Where I do it
- o How I do it
- o What I care about
- o Why I care about youth

# Key points

- Counter (mis)representation of youth/youth cultures
- Draw attention to what youth can tell researchers, practitioners, and policy makers
- Create and demand equitable access to opportunities to learn
- Demand equitable access to tools for learning and participation in society

# Misrepresentation

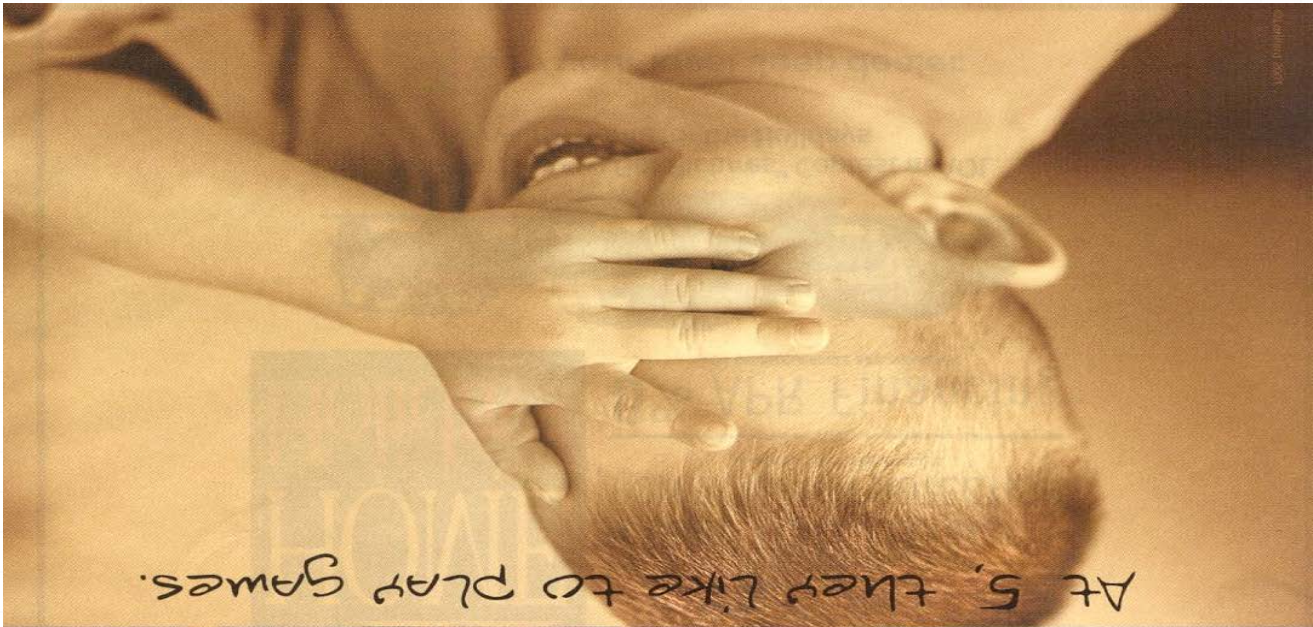


talker  
start talking so your  
kids don't smoke

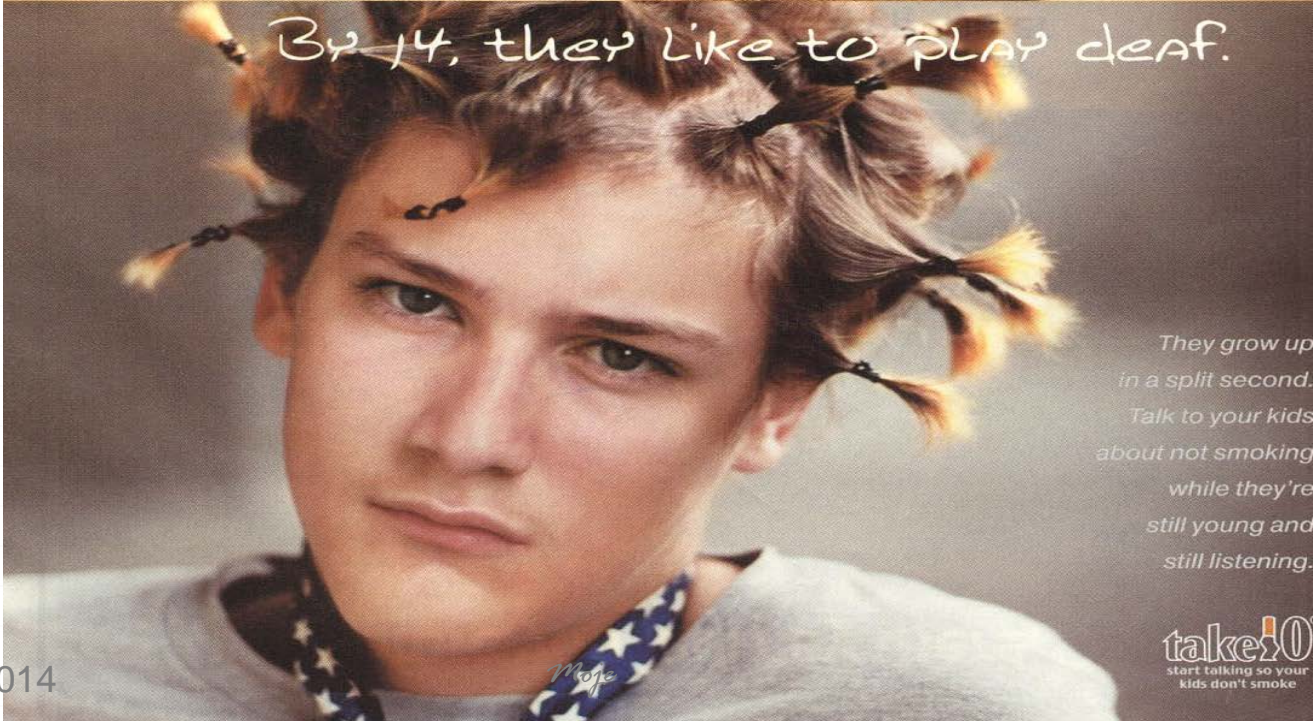
They grow up  
in a split second.  
Talk to your kids  
about not smoking  
while they're  
still young and  
still listening.

By 14, they like to play deaf.

At 5, they like to play games.



At 5, they like to play games.



By 11, they like to play deaf.

They grow up  
in a split second.  
Talk to your kids  
about not smoking  
while they're  
still young and  
still listening.

**take10**  
start talking so your  
kids don't smoke

# Youth are this . . . Or that . . .

- o Young people struggle
- o Young people stumble through school
- o Young people are caught in the clutches and gaze of social media
- o Young people increasingly are disaffected
- o Young people lack a political voice
- o Young people are skilled
- o Young people navigate complex social settings
- o Young people are sophisticated “digital natives”
- o Young people care about their society
- o Young people know how to claim space

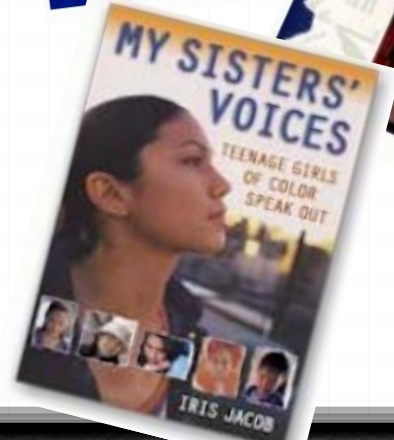
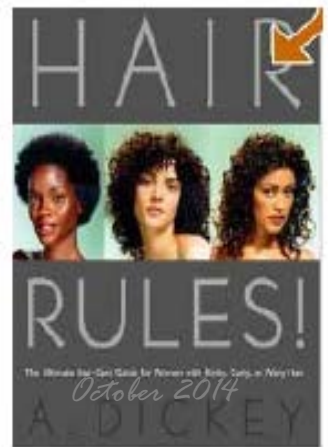
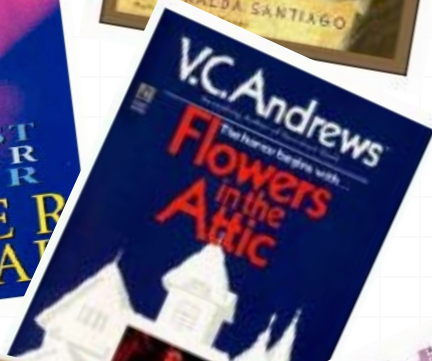
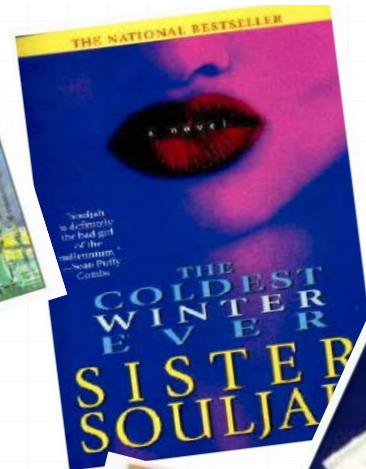
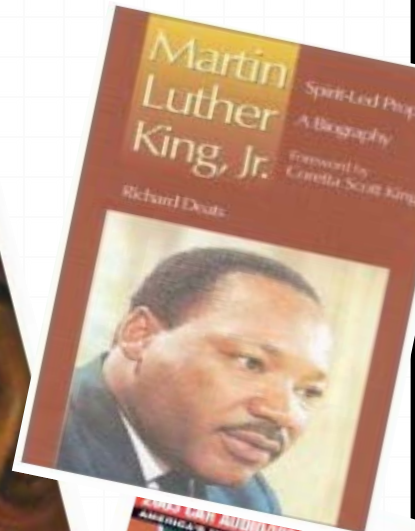
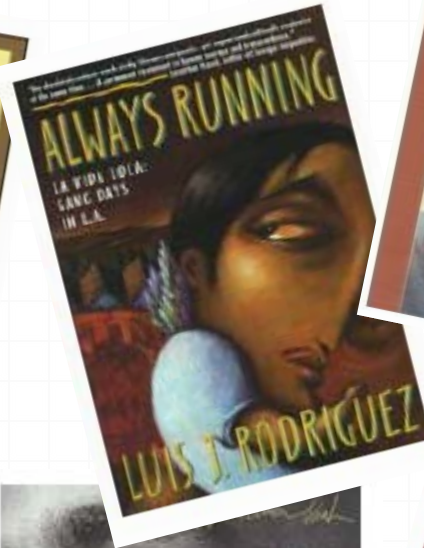
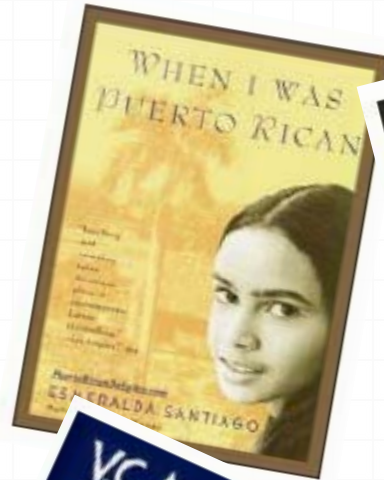
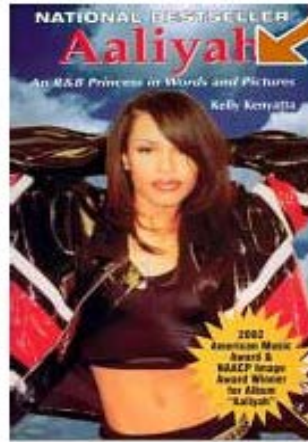
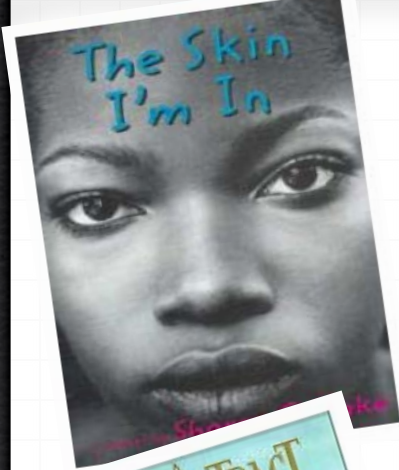
# What youth can tell us



# The “truth” lies in between

- o Depends on
  - o the nature of the research
  - o the population studied OR the way the population is framed
  - o the purpose of the research
- o More than deviant, less than perfect
- o Assessments of skill depend largely on how, when, where, and why the skill is measured
- o Disaffection or agency is tightly linked to access and opportunity
  - o And even then, it depends on who is looking and how

# Texts Youth Read



# School [History] Text:

## *From Prosperity to Depression*

The 1920s began as a hopeful, prosperous time. President Calvin Coolidge declared, “The chief business of the American people is business.” The postwar economy grew quickly.

### The Prosperous Twenties

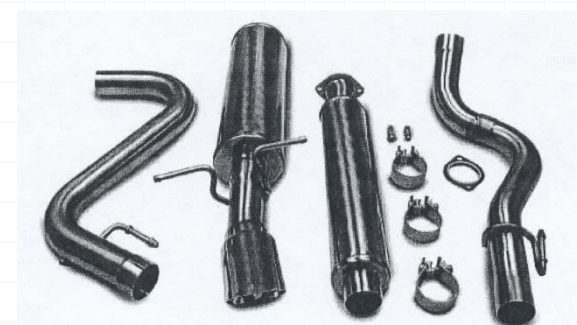
The auto industry was important in the booming economy. Factories turned out new consumer goods such as radios, vacuum cleaners, and refrigerators. Many people also invested in the stock market for the first time. Stock prices rose steadily. Women could now vote. More women also joined the workforce. Young women known as flappers shocked older Americans with their short skirts and reckless behavior.

Jazz was an original American style that blended West African rhythms, European harmonies, and African American work songs and spirituals. It became so popular that the 1920s are often called the Jazz Age.

# Out-of-School Text:

## *Performance Auto & Sound*

The Touring exhaust is a single straight-through design specifically tuned for the 2.4L engine. It is made in the USA with 304 100% mandrel-bent Stainless Steel and features Corsas' patented Reflective Sound Cancellation (RSC) technology. What RSC means is that the muffler is designed with a paper running straight through the muffler that incorporates a full 360-degree air gap that allows sound pressure waves to escape. The waves are channeled and then returned to the gap 180 degrees out of phase, cancelling specific unwanted sound frequencies, commonly referred to as drone.



# Youth Hybridity and Navigating

Á: I feel proud because I feel I have two languages . . . . I feel like I'm **two persons in one**. I have the culture from here and from Mexico . . . .”

Á: That's why I'm speaking a lot more **Spanish**... So I could be **learning more in Spanish**, then I'll go on the **Internet** and I'll ...go on chatting and **I choose to go more with Mexicans, you know (from) Mexico**, and **I choose to go there so I could choose to learn more Spanish** ....**Internet chatting**

I: Oh, you do Internet chats in Spanish?

Á: Yeah, for I could learn...for I could **learn more how they write in Spanish**. And I'm starting to get good at it cause I learn from there and I learn ... **in Spanish** [Angel Interview]

# Demands

# We need research and policy that seeks to . . .

- Examine youth culture, identities, and learning from multiple angles
  - Understand youth as whole beings rather than as categories
  - Give voice to youth experience
  - Understand who young people hope to be
- Situate youth practices and outcomes in school and community contexts and opportunities
- Analyze youth practices in relation to the adults in their lives
- Study and test interventions that increase opportunities for youth to hone their desired skills

# We need research and policy that seeks to . . .

- Examine patterns in the access youth have to tools and opportunities
- Examine and challenge the power relationships that shape youth chances
- Analyze, experiment with, and ensure:
  - Equitable access to qualified teachers and high-quality **public** education
  - Equitable access to high-quality digital tools and learning experiences
  - Ways to support youth learning to navigate the many contexts of their lives and their futures