

[Home](#) > Venkatesh, S. A., & Kassimir, R. (Eds.). (2007). *Youth, globalization, and the law*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

VENKATESH, S. A., & KASSIMIR, R. (EDS.). (2007). YOUTH, GLOBALIZATION, AND THE LAW. STANFORD, CA: STANFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS.

Jacqueline Flicker and Kathryn McGinn

Youth, globalization, and the law explores how the experiences of young people all over the world are changing as societies become more interconnected and as the law becomes (paradoxically) more punitive as well as protective of youth. The editors propose that the law is a particularly useful framework through which youth in different cultures can be examined, as it is through the law that societies articulate their beliefs about the rights and responsibilities of young people. Venkatesh and Kassimir emphasize that while this book explores globalization and considers issues from an institutional level, this text also strives to examine practices and beliefs on a local level. At the same time, the editors believe that by adopting a global perspective, this book illustrates the commonalities shared by youth in different societies.

The book is divided into three sections. The first section, "Criminalization and Urban Governance," focuses on youth in El Salvador, America, and France. In all three countries, there has been a general shift in youth-related public policies. While policies once emphasized the communities' responsibilities towards their members, recent policies tend to focus on the responsibilities that individuals have towards their communities. For example, in her chapter about refugee gang youth, Zilberg explains that El Salvador has new "zero tolerance" policies, which involve harsher penalties for youth involved in gang violence. However, the country fails to address many potential social causes of this violence. In their chapter, "Policing Ourselves: Law and Order in the American Ghetto," Venkatesh and Murphy discuss the relationships between law enforcement officials and youth in Chicago. Law enforcement strategies take two forms: enforcement and neglect. When law enforcement officers believe that they can enforce the law, they will act, and then, often, the offenders face strict penalties. In other cases, officers may provide unofficial assistance to a community, but essentially leave the residents to settle disputes on their own.

The second section, "Institutional Regulations and Youth Response," illustrates how economics works on both global and local levels to shape institutional policies that affect youth. Chapters in this section discuss youth in the context of the French judicial system, the U.S. penal system, and public and private spaces in Australia. For instance, in "Prison Walls Are Crumbling," Coughlin describes how prisons provide local communities with jobs; these jobs are sorely needed when many other forms of employment are being out-sourced to foreign countries. As prisons become important industries in many communities, they impact more youth; it thus leads to a phenomena of more young people knowing adults who are either incarcerated or who work in prisons. In "Youth, (Im)migration, and Juvenile Law," Terrio considers economics from a slightly different angle. She explains that one's economic status affects the treatment he/she receives in French courts. Terrio provides vignettes that illustrate how the French justice system is more likely to punish immigrant and minority youth than other young people.

The final section, "Contradictions of Youth Empowerment: Rights and International Law," examines the current paradox of youth-related policies in the world—while youth often face harsher penalties when they are convicted of crimes, they have also received more rights and protections from the law. In the first chapter in this section, Boyle, Smith, and Guenther examine international treaties as a way to evaluate the relationships that exist between nations, families, and children. These youth-related treaties emphasize that children are individuals with rights, and that the role of the state is often to protect children from their families. The final two chapters of this section examine specific ways in which global regulation has tried to protect children's rights in Brazil and Nigeria.

This book concretely depicts many global issues encountered by youth. The chapters often include ethnographic data and provide personal accounts of how particular policies impact individuals. For example, Zilberg paints a compelling picture of the struggles a transnational violence prevention organization encounters as it tries to help El Salvadorian youth. Using vivid case studies, Terrio clearly conveys the discriminatory nature of the French justice system as she follows two boys through their trials in the juvenile courts. In addition, while the text explores local contexts in detail, it also examines these issues on a global scale. By including issues from a variety of countries, this book demonstrates that many struggles youth encounter transcend national boundaries.

While the book provides a wide range of perspectives, not all of the chapters examine youth, globalization, and the law to the same extent. Frequently, a chapter focuses on two of these topics but does not incorporate the third as strongly. For instance, while Coughlin clearly describes the connection of globalization and the law in "Prison Walls are Crumbling," she focuses less on the impact that the increasing number of prisons have on youth. On a different note, while this book is not an ethnographic study, the chapters that contain cases studies and specific examples are compelling and most clearly substantiate the authors'

claims. More of these concrete examples and vignettes throughout the book would have helped illustrate the different arguments in a more explicit way.

Though each chapter draws on a wide variety of theorists, they all provide a strong critique of neoliberal social and economic policies. Therefore, individuals interested in critically examining neoliberal ideals would benefit from reading this book. In addition, people who are interested in issues relating to globalization would appreciate the variety of contexts in which globalization is explored in this text. Some of the issues in the book might resonate with urban educators, as the text frequently considers issues that relate to the marginalization and criminalization of poor and minority youth. With that said, this book is dense and potential readers would be advised to focus on specific chapters that they find relevant to their situations or interests. Fortunately, each chapter can stand on its own in addition to contributing to the overall message of the text.

Jacqueline Flicker

Jacqueline Flicker is a doctoral student at the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education. Prior to attending Penn, she taught 6th grade math and science and was the dean of academics at a public middle school in New York City. Her experiences have encouraged her to continue her own education. Currently she is pursuing a degree in Teaching, Learning and Curriculum with a focus in elementary math education. She can be reached at jflicker@dolphin.upenn.edu.

Kathryn McGinn

Kathryn McGinn is a first-year doctoral student in the Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum program at the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania. Prior to coming to Penn, she taught high school English in Philadelphia for six years. Her current research interests include urban education, in particular urban school reform. She can be reached at kmcginn@dolphin.upenn.edu.

[Report accessibility issues and request help](#)

Copyright 2025 The University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education's Online Urban Education Journal

Source URL: <https://urbanedjournal.gse.upenn.edu/archive/volume-5-issue-2-spring-2008/venkatesh-s-kassimir-r-eds-2007-youth-globalization-and-law-sta>