

ABSTRACT

I am I ... get to know me and you will know who is I:
An Ethnographic investigation into Youth Culture within Trinbagonian Mall
Society

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This research examines the representations and performances of youth within Trinidad and Tobago's mall society between August 2010 and June 2011. The cultural practices of youth were observed within three specific malls; Gulf City Mall, La Romaine, Trincity Mall, Trincity and Gulf City Mall, Lowlands. An ethnographic methodology was used to acquire data in the field. Subsequently, various definitions of the term "youth" as well as seven categories of youth groups were uncovered in the mall. Drawing on anthropologist Arjun Appadurai's characterization of the global cultural economy, the mall was identified as an instrument of globalization which allowed youth to negotiate youth ideologies within frameworks founded on local and global ideologies and foreign products. These youth ideologies re-conceptualised stereotypes and myths, and reproduced heteronormative gendered performances. Moreover, it allowed youth to subscribe to particular fashions and principles within music texts. Furthermore, youth society in the mall is dependant on hierarchial structures of esteem which affirms and disaffirms specific cultural practices.

Keywords: mall culture; youth culture; popular culture; music and music videos; global cultural economy; ethnography; stereotypes and myths; gendered performances.