



Youth Agency in Law: An Ethnographic Exploration in South Africa's Youth Jurisdiction Context,

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Abstract

Youth participation in legal processes is a growing area of interest in African immigration law, with South Africa serving as an exemplary context for such studies. The research employs ethnographic methods including participant observation, interviews, and document analysis conducted over two years among adolescents involved in juvenile courts and related programmes. A significant theme emerged regarding youth's active engagement in legal processes, often through advocacy groups. Specifically, around 40% of youth participants reported advocating for policy changes to better reflect their needs. Youth play a proactive role in shaping legal outcomes and policies that affect them, highlighting the need for more inclusive legal systems and greater youth participation in decision-making processes. Lawmakers should incorporate feedback from youth into legislative processes and establish mechanisms for youth to participate directly in lawmaking. Educational programmes should also be developed to enhance young people's understanding of their rights and responsibilities under the law.

Keywords: *African, ethnography, jurisprudence, youth, agency, culture, society*

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