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Institution: Durham University

Proposition: 15 minute presentation

Topic for discussion: Young LGBTQ identities and communities

Abstract:

Deaf culture is defined as someone who possesses the core elements of fluency in sign language, residential school experience and Deaf parents (Mindess, 2006 p76), although the closure of many residential schools for the Deaf in recent years, have affected this cultural identity of many younger Deaf people. Additionally, Deaf people's differences are marked by political, historical or geographical separation (Padden & Humphries 1988 p3).

Strong and openly gay identities are prevalent in many parts of the world and Fulcher and Scott (2011 p182) argue that gay cultures have given 'gays a voice, and identity, a positive image, and a collective organisation that could provide mutual support and campaign on their behalf to demand an end to discrimination against them'.

So, consider when a person is Deaf *and* gay. What is their identity and culture? Who gives them a voice? Do they have a positive image? The lack of empirical research into the subject means that these and many other questions are yet to be answered in order to provide us with insight and understanding of this community.

My current research in the Department of Modern Languages and Cultures at Durham University is focusing on the *Identity and Culture of the Deaf Gay Community* and will look to establish how Deaf gay people, including those who are young and new to the gay community, identify themselves as a minority within a minority. My presentation will give an insight into findings to date and an indication as to what future research could be conducted.

References:

Fulcher, J., and Scott, J. *Sociology*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2011.

Mindess, A. *Reading Between the Signs*. USA: Intercultural Press, 2006.

Padden, C., and Humphries, T. *Deaf in America: Voices from a Culture*. USA: Harvard University Press, 1988