



The city as an inspiration: defining urban youth

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This paper discusses the results of expert interviews with ‘urban legends’ –key figures in the urban scene who come into contact with urban youngsters on a frequent basis- to gain insight in how the concept ‘urban’ is perceived. These interviews served as a guideline for recruiting respondents in the context of a project that aimed at mapping the digital skills and media habits of urban youngsters in order to develop a new media format to reach them. Results show that ‘urban’ cannot be used as a general term for one type of adolescents who live in urbanized areas. According to the experts, at a first level, two kinds of urban adolescents can be distinguished: urbans of which both parents were born in Belgium and urbans of which one or both parents are not born in Belgium. Both groups are connected to *street culture*, but in a different manner. Allochthonous urbans are connected to street culture by ‘*hanging around*’ in the city, while their autochthonous peers are connected to *street culture* engaging in *street activities* linked to subcultures. According to the experts, allochthonous urbans are less likely to connect to certain subcultures, due to their ‘struggle’ in combining two identities, in particular the Belgian one and that of their country of origin. The city environment and local elements such as local shops and local branding play an important role in the identity construction of urban youth. However, both groups engage in ‘bricolage’ of identities, resulting in a sort of ‘multisubculturalism’ among urban youth. In sum, our study has shown that there is a large variety among urban youth and in order to reach them, more than one approach will be required.