

PERSPECTIVES ON YOUTH

Young people in a digitalised world



Volume 4

Youth Partnership

Partnership between the European Commission
and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth



EUROPEAN UNION

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Editorial

Matina Magkou, Reinhard Schwalbach and Bram Spruyt

The *Perspectives on youth* series aims to function as a forum for information, discussion, reflection and dialogue on European developments in the field of youth policy, youth research and youth work.

Following this principle, for the fourth issue of *Perspectives on youth*, we took a conscious decision to link the publication with the Symposium on Youth Participation in a Digitalised World, a major event of the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth, which took place at the European Youth Centre in Budapest from 14 to 16 September 2015. It was rather a deliberate choice to maximise the impact of the Symposium and the publication in order to give further life to discussions that started with the Symposium as a framework and to invite more people to reflect on the results.

The call for papers invited interested authors to submit proposals touching upon these axes and relate their arguments to one or more of the key messages of the Symposium. The questions we wanted to tackle were:

- ▶ What is the role and/or form of digital participation in the creation and implementation of a holistic participation agenda for active citizenship among youth?
- ▶ How can we work towards blended teaching and learning approaches based on participatory principles that incorporate new instruments and educational tools (for example digital tools)?
- ▶ How can the transition of young people to the labour market be supported for increased, better employment and democratic participation in the economy? What are the skills needed for future jobs? How can we support quality jobs and entrepreneurship initiatives in the digital era?
- ▶ What approaches, policy efforts or initiatives are taken or should be enhanced to empower and protect young people in the digital era?
- ▶ How can marginalised and excluded groups of young people be part of the digital era? How can digitalisation help societies become more inclusive regarding vulnerable groups? What challenges and barriers remain?
- ▶ What is the role of youth work and youth workers as “connectors” and mediators between digital resources, stakeholders and young people?

In attempting to answer the questions above, the authors of the following chapters contribute to building knowledge and/or raising further questions with regard to youth participation in a digitalised world. From different corners of Europe (and beyond) they share with us findings from research, practitioners’ experiences and policy recommendations.

mobilise, debate and advocate for change. The chapter also explores to what extent these initiatives have influenced policies and raises questions about the ethics of social media use and issues of trust.

For this issue, we invited two people who had a significant role in the Symposium to be part of the editorial team. Manfred Zentner and Adina Marina Călăfăteanu were part of the preparatory team and had written two of the analytical papers that provided knowledge of the Symposium's thematic areas. They reviewed some chapters and provided comments on how to improve them as well as how the conclusions of the Symposium resonated with them.

Adina Marina Călăfăteanu's contribution "Online communication tools leading to learning, identity and citizenship for digital natives" is based on the analytical paper she wrote for the Symposium's thematic area of communication. She approaches the topic by examining the role that identity, citizenship and learning play in shaping the preference of "digital natives" in using non-traditional communication tools and underlines that this needs to be taken into consideration when designing youth policies and engagement strategies for young people.

Going a step further in the discussion regarding education, learning and skills in a digitalised world, Nuala Connolly and Claire McGuinness, in their chapter "Towards digital literacy for the active participation and engagement of young people in a digitalised world", claim that the original digital divide of physical access to the internet has evolved into a skills divide. They describe the components of and need for meaningful digital literacy education and reflect on the situation around Europe in both formal and informal settings, while highlighting recommendations for policy and practice.

On the one hand, digital literacy allows one to express opinions, share ideas and quickly organise a large number of like-minded people. On the other hand, it carries the risk of online hate speech, bullying and other sorts of crime. We could not close this issue of *Perspectives on youth* without referring to the No Hate Speech Movement, a flagship campaign of the Council of Europe. Editorial team member Antonia Wulff reflects on the initial stages of the conception of the No Hate Speech Movement, which took place when she was still President of the Advisory Council for Youth (2009-11). The rise of the extreme right, hateful online spaces and discussions and the wish to challenge the view of young people as just victims while exploring new ways of working with and supporting them were the driving factors behind conceptualising the No Hate Speech Movement, endorsed by the Joint Council on Youth and officially launched by the Council of Europe in 2013. Menno Etemma, No Hate Speech Movement co-ordinator on behalf of the Council of Europe, provides a perspective on the campaign, how it relates to the core values and programmes of the Council of Europe, and how to get involved.

Besides Antonia's and Menno's perspectives, we wanted to see how the campaign has been experienced in different countries around Europe. Therefore we asked Manu Mainil from Belgium, Ivett Karvalits from Hungary, Anne Walsh from Ireland and Aleksandra Knežević from Serbia – all campaign co-ordinators in their respective countries – to answer questions on the campaign's importance, national outcomes and challenges in implementation.

All in all, the contributions in this issue of *Perspectives on youth* illustrate nicely how the digitalisation of contemporary European societies offers opportunities and poses considerable challenges. While, for example, digitalisation removes formal barriers in terms of time and space, it also increases the risk of self-exclusion and the further homogenisation of social networks. In this way digitalisation bears the potential to both reduce and reinforce existing social inequalities. Similarly, new media and digital techniques allow for different and more accessible forms of learning and participation and provide a stepping stone for those groups that have traditionally faced difficulties in finding opportunities to learn and participate. However, more pessimistic interpretations suggest that new media can contribute to personal isolation and prejudices, reinforcing disillusionment and culminating in a loss of social capital. More examples are offered in the following contributions, but the main message seems to be clear: technical innovations such as digitalisation trends are not intrinsically good or bad. It is what we do with them that really matters.

In conclusion, we want to recognise the important contribution of Hanjo Schild in the making of *Perspectives on youth*. Hanjo is leaving the Partnership as these words are being written. An enormous thank you goes to him for his engagement, dedication to youth causes, knowledge of the field and warm heart. Hanjo, you are one of a kind and will definitely be missed.

Chapter 1

The transformation of young people's online and offline leisure time, spaces and media use in Hungary¹

Ádám Nagy and Anna Fazekas

INTRODUCTION

An age group can be considered to be a generation if it is characterised by some common immanent quality, generation knowledge and community feature, and three conditions are necessary for this: common experience; an actual orientation to each other of its members; and a shared interpretation of their situation, attitudes and forms of action (Mannheim 1978). Prensky has interpreted belonging to such an age group in relation to the information society (2001). We consider the development of Prensky's digital natives-digital immigrants model and incorporate it into the Strauss-Howe model (1991), according to which generation change in Mannheim's sense takes place in society roughly every 15 to 20 years. Through a theory of socialisation (Nagy 2013b), leisure time and media is seen to play the same role in post-modern society as school socialisation did in modern society and the family did in the pre-modern era. Thus, from the data on youth leisure time we can try to draw a picture of today's young (Y and Z) generations through their activities and media usage in this regard, confirming the differences between generations. We make use of Hungarian data here, because it derives from large-scale youth research conducted every four years and has been running for one and a half decades (Ifjúság 2000; Ifjúság 2004; Ifjúság 2008; Magyar Ifjúság 2012). This provides an overview of an 8 000-person sample that is representative of age, gender and settlement type in relation to the life situations and way of life of Hungarian youth.

1. This article is supported by a Bolyai Research Fellowship (Hungary).

YOUNG PEOPLE IN SOCIETY: XYZ GENERATIONS

Since the proliferation of information and communication technologies (ICTs), the world of young people has become quite distinct from that of young people from earlier eras. Their time structuring, family, education and labour market status has been transformed; they construct their free time differently and use it for different purposes and have different information-gathering and communication strategies. Their concepts of relationships, community and entertainment have also been transformed. One of the major problems of the information society era is how the generations born into the digital age transform their “knowledge society” and how they are influenced by it (Rab, Székely and Nagy 2008).

According to Mannheim (1978), an age group can be considered to be a generation if it is characterised by some common immanent quality, generation knowledge and community feature, and three conditions are necessary for this: common experience; an actual orientation to each other of its members; and a shared interpretation of their situation, attitudes and forms of action. Mannheim locates generational logic in parallel with the concept of class (i.e. a person does not enter a class but is born to it, and does not step out of it intentionally, only doing so if his/her status changes). This certainly does not mean that in case of the validity of generation logic all members of the age group show specific characteristics, but that a generational pattern exists.

Although the concept and classification of a generation is controversial, the present chapter does not analyse and evaluate their theoretical soundness. It presents the orientations of the different age groups, built on generational logic.²

According to Strauss and Howe’s model (1991), generation change in Mannheim’s sense is cyclical, taking place in society roughly in every 15 to 20 years. Prensky (2001) also interpreted in the generational dimension the relationship with the information society. We reflect on and discuss in this chapter the development³ (Székely 2014) of Prensky’s “digital natives-digital immigrants model” and incorporate it into the Strauss–Howe model.⁴

Generation X (digital immigrants, McDonald’s generation)

Forming the main body of today’s labour market, the members of Generation X were born in the second half of the 1960s and in the 1970s encountered the information technology (IT) toolbox at a young age; they were immersed, from the very start of their lives, in the digital world. They witnessed how computer technology developed

2. Defining the boundaries between generations by year of birth is rather arbitrary, since change in society is not so discrete. However, in this study, it is not the quantitative data that are important; they merely confirm the true essence, or the emerging reflection, of a generation.
3. In the original model, young people are called “digital natives” (digital natives, N-Gen, Net Generation), as opposed to the older generation of “digital immigrants”.
4. According to Strauss and Howe, the basis of the cyclical nature of these generations and their social characteristics is social structure and attitude changes, and four generation features can be identified in it.

into IT, then into the information society. During their lives, the internet has been more or less present. In the West, they have grown up under the impact of electronic media. Its central and eastern European members may have grown up under state socialism, but during its final, liberalising phase.

Generation Y (digital natives)

The members of the age group born in the '80s and '90s encountered the internet in their childhood; as digital natives, they are confident in the management of tools and in orientating themselves in network space; the digital universe is their natural medium; their web/internet identity is consciously formed. They are characterised by strong media dependence, and they respond quickly to technological changes. This age group is the generation of the information society, as its members naturally started to use ICTs in their childhood. Their social relations are taking place at the same time in real and virtual life; with the usage of mobile phones and the internet, their place dependence is much less than that of previous generations. Generation Y differs in many ways from previous generations: its members are receptive to cultural content; are attracted to group activities and to community space; are performance-oriented, confident and highly qualified (for most, school and good school performance is important). They receive information quickly; they prefer image and sound rather than text; they prefer random contacts (hypertext); they strive for the immediate and frequent satisfaction of their needs; they prefer games instead of "serious" work; and they consider technology a necessary companion (Prensky 2001). Members of this generation are moving with global trends, and are among the first to master the use of new technical devices, sometimes even changing the educational direction; they feel at ease in the digital world: "The Hungarian Generation Y practically caught up with the delays that were common before. Generation Y grew up from being children to being young people after the change of regime; this generation got acquainted with computers and the internet, if not at home, then surely at school" (Székely 2014).⁵

Generation Z (the Facebook generation)

Members of Generation Z were born at the turn of the millennium and after the year 2000. When they lost their "computer virginity", they discovered Web 2.0⁶ and the entire social networking space; they do not know what life is like without the

5. In Hungary, most identify with their parents' values, too (Nagy and Tibori 2016).

6. The term Web 2.0 refers to such second-generation internet services that are mainly based on the activity of online communities, and more precisely on the content generated and shared by users. The importance of Web 2.0 applications lies mainly in the fact that content becomes important, as opposed to technology. The characteristic of Generation Y services was that their content could be read, listened to and viewed by users online – similar to conventional, one-way media – and had fewer creators (while Generation X content did not exist in digital space). By contrast, the essence of Web 2.0 is that the content is created and shared by the users themselves. A good example is the open-source Wikipedia, editable by anyone, as opposed to Encyclopaedia Britannica online (Generation Y), and even (Generation X) offline versions of classical lexicons, or torrent sites (Rab, Székely and Nagy 2007).

internet (or mobile phones); their primary communication tool is no longer e-mail but the social network. This generation is not only characterised by networking behaviour, the use of the internet as a digital socialisation channel, and information consumption, but also provides information services through platforms like YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and torrent sites. Their device management is a basic skill; they are characterised by multitasking and parallel actions (writing blogs, listening to music and following e-mail and social network turnover); and they make quick decisions. Generation Z not only embraces ICTs and their associated content, it adapts them to its own needs for everyday life; practically speaking, it is not stationary. At the same time, members “consume” via multiple channels (multitasking); their combined consumption exceeds the quantity “physically” available to one person; and most do not have any reflective awareness of the legal and institutional environment of their typical and regular internet use (for example downloads, exchange of files). In addition, changes in the world not only influence the rational part of their psyche but fundamentally influence their emotional lives, too. Many of them “pour out” their emotional tension without having a cathartic experience (see the term “emotional incontinence”, an expectation that “other people should diaper us emotionally”, coined by Tari in 2010). So we experience our own feelings through them (we can think of one part of the blogosphere and thousands of comments, but also of certain identity situations, relationship aspects or the world of work). As regards Hungary, the former difference between generations – between the West and Hungary – has disappeared; and a sense of global youth culture is developing, as innovations typically appear on the Hungarian market with a few months’ delay.

Alpha-generation

This refers to those born in 2010 and thereafter, although we do not know yet if they will be distinct from Generation Z, and can be characterised as an autonomous generation in the Mannheimian sense.

In the remainder of this chapter we study the habits in media and leisure-time consumption of young Hungarian people. More specifically, we assess whether there are indeed generational differences. We rely on data from three waves of the Hungarian youth study, run every four years. Ifjúság 2000 can help us investigate Generation X, while Ifjúság 2004 allows us to investigate Generation Y. The unique situation of Generation Z is reflected by the fact that we could only represent a fraction of young people belonging to it.

Thus, Generation X consists of young people born between 1971 and 1980 (N = 5 726); Generation Y consists of those born between 1981 and 1989 (N = 4 254); and the sub-pattern for Generation Z was provided by those born between 1995 and 1997 (N = 1 368).⁷ As members of Generation X no longer belong to the category

7. The different questions posed in the three surveys raise the problem of limited comparability. We have tried to minimise this risk throughout the analysis. The totally different response options (following different interviewing logics) were therefore not compared; the conclusions’ focus on the orientation of habits and preferences were taken into account, rather than the specific differences. However,