

PERSPECTIVES ON YOUTH 2020 – what do YOU see?



Volume 1

Youth Partnership

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



EUROPEAN UNION

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Perspectives on youth

Volume 1
2020 – what do YOU see?

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Preface from the group of publishers

Given the deep and damaging dysfunction of the economy and the political inconsistency that promotes mobility as an asset, which is only to be countered by a re-drawing of xenophobia, it is a hard task to describe clear perspectives for the future. It is thus an important and responsible task to identify the high impact issues that are affecting and will most likely affect young people – to describe and debate them, and put them to the test cross-culturally. It is purposeful and creative to gather analyses from quality research, mix in some opinion and vision, and sprinkle over it all some healthy cynicism. It is our hope that *Perspectives on youth* will have some resonance and create critical responses across borders and communities. We hope it provides the ingredients for debate and dialogue, not contestation and rhetoric. We are setting our principles high, at a time of a lowering of hope and ambition.

Use *Perspectives on youth* as a resource to channel some positive energy into the currently pretty bleak situation.



Introduction by the editorial team

→ Dear readers,

Welcome to *Perspectives on youth*. We, the group of publishers and the editorial team of this new series are happy to issue this first volume.

Why *Perspectives on youth*?

The *Perspectives on youth* publication is not (merely) an academic series, it is not (merely) a collection of visionary policy statements, nor is it (merely) an echo of reflections on practices in the youth field. It is none of all the above and all of them at the same time. Do not be surprised if on one page you find an academic article with footnotes, bibliographical references and empirical data, and on another, you find an article that you might read on an Internet blog. Do not be surprised if you find journalistic-style interviews of policy makers at the same time that you find a reflection article from a youth worker or from a youth researcher on a specific situation affecting youth in one specific country, that could serve as food for thought in other countries (or even at the European level). Do not be surprised because this is actually the purpose of this publication: to bring an element of

surprise and to encourage a dialogue between policy makers, researchers and practitioners in the youth field.

It is through this triangle of research, practice and policy that the publication aims to bring national youth policies closer together and keep the ongoing (mainly European) dialogue about key problems of national and supranational youth policies on a solid foundation in terms of content, expertise and politics. Thus the series aims at supporting a closer European and international co-operation in the field of youth policy as well as facilitating dialogue between policy makers, researchers and practitioners. This is because the development and promotion of youth policies and of youth work, which are based on knowledge and evidence, and mutual learning between member states of the European Union, and the Council of Europe, are key elements of youth policy in Europe.

The first volume... “2020 – what do YOU see?”

The first volume focuses on “2020 – what do YOU see?”, featuring a futuristic perspective on the lives of young people, across Europe and the wider world, based on research, social trends, policy planning, changing demography, employment prospects, sustainable development, security, and so on.

“Will today’s perspectives still exist in the real world? Can we have a vision for 2020 including a critique of ‘Agenda 2020, Europe 2020’ to make a critical analysis of contemporary European youth policy, its relation to the global youth issues and where it seems to be heading? What is LEFT for young people, what is RIGHT for young people through a futuristic perspective? What would be the reactions to the economic, political and cultural crisis(es)? Even if what we ask invites readers to look into a crystal ball, can we make evidence-based grounded speculations to scan the horizons of youth policy and youth prospects...?” (from the call for papers for this volume).

Looking forward can be done in manifold ways. It mirrors the “Zeitgeist” of a given period in history. In the bestseller *The world in 100 years* published by Arthur Brehmer in 1910¹ – four years before the First World War – contributions are consistently optimistic, heading for new horizons, desire for change, confidence and belief in progress. Roughly 100 years later, in 2012 – for European countries a relatively peaceful period of time – the book *2112 – Die Welt in 100 Jahren*, published by Ernst A. Grandits,² stands for socio-cultural concerns, pessimism, political angst and scepticism regarding technical and environmental developments. It describes in the chapter on “the social world in 22nd century” the time of the dividing Iron Curtain and the Cold War as nearly idyllic compared to what we might expect in a couple of years. In this “vision”, young people are hanging around in a commercialised world, dozing.

Looking into the future has always been a favourite pastime of human beings. But speculating about the future is also rather tricky. For example, US Secretary of State Donald Rumsfeld famously predicted that the war in Iraq would be over within six days! During a Council of Europe youth research symposium on “Youth

1. *Die Welt in 100 Jahren (The world In 100 years)*, published in 1910 in *Verlagsanstalt Buntdruck* by Arthur Brehmer (editor, 1858-1923) and Ernst Lübbert, Berlin.

2. *2112 - Die Welt in 100 Jahren*, (2012) Georg Olms Verlag by Ernst A. Grandits (Author), Hildesheim, Zürich, New York.

in the Information Society” in 1997, it was suggested that no self-respecting young person would want to be without a computer after the following Christmas. As it happened, the most in-demand present in many parts of Europe were not state-of-the-art electronics but “pods”, simple plastic discs that were flicked at other people! A few years earlier, many in the music industry heralded the death of the performer, maintaining that the superstars of the future would be the technicians and producers, as music became more complex and technologically driven; they had not anticipated the imminent popularity of “unplugged”, as rock stars swapped their Fender Strats for acoustic guitars in order to perform to intimate audiences, which was then broadcast around the world. A hundred years earlier, concern was expressed that the rise in popularity of horse-drawn carriages in London would see the city covered in a deep swathe of horse manure by the turn of the century; the invention of the mass-produced Model T Ford had not been anticipated.

So, with some sense of irony, we have to tread carefully! Yet it is also important to try to conceptualise scenarios in the future, if any future planning is to take place. This does not have to entail gazing into a crystal ball, but building on the evidence that we currently possess in a plausible way.

As always, young people present both an opportunity and a threat, in their personal behaviour, civic engagement, economic activity or political commitment. They will both contribute actively or passively to the different scenarios and be the fortunate or unfortunate recipients of them. What is not in doubt is that, whatever happens in nation states and local communities, the European level will continue to be important. Though it may not directly touch the lives of a huge number of young people, both the European Union and the Council of Europe can shape the parameters and pioneer the experiences that affect many more young people throughout Europe. Hence the importance of looking to the future, with some educated guesswork.

What you will find in this first volume?

Chiara Gariazzo, Director for Youth and Sport in the General Directorate for Education and Culture of the European Commission and Ólöf Ólafsdóttir, Director for Democratic Citizenship and Participation of the Council of Europe are interviewed and asked to share with the readers their reflections on the main challenges that young people in Europe face today and the ones they will face in the future. They give answers on what the two institutions do and will do to face these challenges and how research and practice in the youth field can contribute in this direction.

Pessimism is an attitude and not the mirror of reality. So, in his article “The intergenerational contract has been cancelled”, Karl Wagner expresses his belief in an upcoming young generation, born from the 1980s and 1990s onwards, as capable of managing the transition to a safer and more sustainable world. After reading the article, you are challenged to look around and ask the question: Do I spot signs of that upcoming development with young people? Where can this be? How can we help? And what can youth work and policy do to support these generations in their aspirations?

Magda Nico in her article “Generational changes, gaps and conflicts: a view from the South” argues that the economic crisis facing Europe serves as a critical moment for youth researchers to reflect upon, use and adapt the concept of generation in order to analyse and revisit processes of social change and the

political and social consequences of the latter for young people. Focusing on Portugal as one of the countries hardest hit by the crisis, Nico contends that young people are suffering the direct and indirect effects of new forms of social inequality, of social reproduction and of mechanisms that perpetuate poverty. Their future might, thus, be jeopardised in numerous and complex ways – ways yet to be identified within this ongoing process.

In a contemplative article entitled “Youth justice in a changing Europe: crisis conditions and alternative visions”, Barry Goldson shares with us his extensive knowledge and intriguing perspectives on youth justice in Europe. He argues that the future of European youth justice systems should hold the elements of what he calls “humane pragmatism”. He does not only dismiss utopian images of unconditional penal tolerance towards minors, but also totalising narratives that emphasise the rising of a harsh culture of control. His essay concludes with a well-founded consideration of what is needed to construct a progressive youth justice approach in Europe, in terms of values, political discourses, cultural understandings and professional ethos. Politicians and policy makers are encouraged to combine humanity with pragmatism in order to enhance a solid and meaningful future vision for youth justice.

Basing her analysis on current evolutions in higher education in Europe, Lorenza Antonucci in her article “The future of the social dimension in European higher education: university for all, but without student support?” warns about the negative impact of austerity measures on student support on the experiences of higher education for certain sections of the student population. Her contribution provokes thought on how seemingly adequate austerity measures might work to postpone and in the end reinforce economic hardship among young people. The author tells us how she envisages the future of higher education in Europe, stressing the importance of a social dimension.

Valentina Cuzzocrea in the article “Projecting the category of the NEET into the future” examines the history of the concept of “NEET” (not in education, employment or training) and its use within youth policy and scholarly debate in Europe. She notes that the current use of the term is much wider than originally intended; it covers a much broader age range than the 16- and 17-year olds it initially referred to in the UK context and, in addition, a literal interpretation of “NEET” includes not only extremely disadvantaged youth but also some relatively privileged young people in a position to exercise choice. In a case study of Italy she argues that the usefulness and applicability of the NEET concept is highly contingent on the welfare characteristics (and therefore typical youth transition patterns) of different national and even regional contexts.

Ajsa Hadzibegovic’s more journalistic than academic essay, “Young entrepreneurs owning 2020”, is an appeal for a concept of a holistic education. It underlines the necessity of the combination of formal and informal as non-formal education. Hadzibegovic speaks up for supporting young people in creating new job opportunities. With a special focus on youth in the transitional societies in South-Eastern Europe she emphasises that we should not stigmatise this generation as a lost one, but recognise their potential, evident during the times of political and economic changes in that area.

Democracy requires the active participation of citizens. Tomi Kiilakoski and Anu Gretschel underline in their contribution “Challenging structured participation

opportunities” the importance of active engagement and involvement in decision-taking for young people. Their conceptual starting point is to “recognise the pluralism and richness of democratic culture” and young people’s relation to it. The authors refer to “instruments for promoting participation” and conclude with examples which show young people’s involvement in democratic processes. However, it remains for readers to figure out how to transfer these examples into other contexts and fields that are presented and how the links between political discourses and the daily lives of young people could be improved.

The article “Active citizenship 3.0/2020 – youth participation and social capital after post-democracy” by Benedikt Widmaier is a comprehensive reflection of the diverse forms of interpretation of engagement in and for society. The author takes into consideration the different sociological concepts; he works out the different understandings of the different “schools”, measures them against the background of his educational practice and proposes a further developed concept in the field. These democracy-theory discussions are not only highly relevant for the future of democracy (post-democracy?), but also for the development of new concepts of citizenship education.

The last article in this volume, “The think tank on youth policy in Europe” is actually three articles together. Hans-Joachim Schild, Howard Williamson, Hans-Georg Wicke and Koen Lambert, members of the think tank that gathered for the first time in spring 2012 in Berlin and then in spring 2013 in Brussels to debate on the existing state of “youth in Europe” and to consider prospective trajectories for the future, share with the readers their reflections on the discussions and the main concerns raised during the meetings. In the framework of the continuing economic and political crisis that has influenced the lives of young people across Europe, the authors raise questions about what kind of youth policy we want and actually need to create a better future for young people.

The future of this series and readers’ contributions

While producing the first issue of *Perspectives on youth*, the call for papers for the second issue had already been published, inviting submissions that reflect on a particular instance of “connections” and “disconnections” in the lives of young people. The second volume will be published in summer 2014.

The editorial team has already proposed to focus for a third volume on the wider topic “Healthy Europe” and a call for papers will be published, if the results of this process are meaningful, if the feedback we receive from the readership is positive and if the aims of the publication are achieved. This would give us more reasons to continue investing in this adventure.

We will be happy to receive your comments and suggestions for improving this publication. You can address them to us through this email address: perspectivesonyouth@gmail.com. We would also like you to help us disseminate this publication to your network and invite people to actively engage in its content.

The group of publishers:

- Seija Astala, Ministry of Education and Culture, Youth Policy Division, Finland
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- Leena Suurpää, Finnish Youth Research Network, Finland
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- Howard Williamson, Centre for Social Policy – Department of Social Sciences, Faculty of Business and Society, University of Glamorgan, Wales
- Antonia Wulff, Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions (OBESSU), Finland

The story (yet to be written) of this series and its people

The new series aims to function as an information, discussion, reflection and dialogue forum on European developments in the field of youth policy, youth research and youth work. The conceptual strategy is critical and anticipative, reflecting European youth policies and their relevance for and impact on young people, and also exploring trends in the youth field that need innovative and forward-looking answers and strategies. All contributions are to address questions of transnationality and intercultural positions, rather than be restricted to the context of one particular country – although sometimes individual country perspectives from different countries might be accepted. Moreover, future reflections on Europe and its youth should not only be made in transnational terms, but also in a way that links European matters to the global context, beyond border politics, regardless of whether we speak about social, political, cultural, economic, moral or daily issues.

The series is based on an agreement of co-operation for a period of two years (2012-2013) – hence the first two issues published in this period are considered to be pilot examples. Following the publication of the first two (pilot) issues of the series and their critical evaluation (readers are invited to send their feedback) the group of publishers will decide by the end of 2013 on the future of the project.

The series has the aim to reach out to a broader readership at all levels (policy makers, youth workers, practitioners, students and researchers). It complements other existing European tools in the field of youth, for example, the magazine *Coyote* (which reflects practices of youth work, training and non-formal learning) or the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (being a virtual information platform on European and national youth policies).

The series is produced in the three working languages of the European Union (English, French and German).³

A twofold structure was created to publish the new series, consisting of the group of publishers and an editorial team:

- The group of publishers has political and budgetary responsibility and an advisory function; it includes all those providing political and budgetary support to the project, without intervening in the daily conceptual work of the editorial team. It consists of representatives of Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership and the Nordic Council.
- The editorial team is responsible for the content of the series. It consists of 10 members nominated by the group of publishers and is co-ordinated by an additional editorial team member.

Both groups are supported by the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth, in terms of technical, organisational, financial and editorial support. The series is published by Council of Europe publishing (as other European Union-Council of Europe youth partnership publications).

3. An electronic version has been published at the European Union-Council of Europe youth partnership website providing full text translation in English, French and German: <http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/publications/Perspectives/Index.html>.

Interview with Chiara Gariazzo

**Director for Youth and Sport in the
General Directorate for Education and
Culture, European Commission**

→ What are the main challenges facing young people in Europe today?

Young people today are facing the consequences of the economic crisis. Youth unemployment has reached historic heights: the youth unemployment rate in January 2013 is 23.6%, affecting more than half of all job-seeking young people in some countries. As many as 14 million young people in the EU aged 15-29 are not in employment, education or training.

Longer periods of inactivity have regrettable secondary effects, such as risks of poverty, exclusion and belated autonomy, independent housing, or the possibility to start a family. This can lead to health, in particular mental health, problems.

In such a context, it is difficult not to consider employment as the main challenge.

→ And what do you think will be the main challenges for young people in 2020?

The European Union is taking a comprehensive set of measures to move

decisively beyond the crisis and, in particular, to support young people confronted with the effects of the crisis. We all hope that the effects of the crisis will be smoothed by 2020.

Once we reach positive growth figures again, we need to build a growth model that is not only smart, based on technology and innovation, but also inclusive and sustainable. Pursuing an economic model that exhausts our natural resources, pollutes our environment, or creates an excluded class without access to the opportunities and benefits of growth is not an option.

These challenges have no quick fix. In 2020 questions to look at might include how to mitigate the effects of climate change, how to achieve environmentally neutral production methods, how to ensure a fair distribution of income or how to ensure inclusion.

The EU's vision for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth is ambitious and requires new ideas and innovative thinking. Young people are well placed, and should be involved in finding future solutions to the challenges ahead. We encourage them to participate in our decision-making processes, in civil society and through making their voices heard.

→ Do you think that the current policy agenda is relevant to these challenges?

I am convinced that this is the case. The EU is handling short-term and longer-term challenges in parallel. In the short run, its Youth Opportunities Initiative, for example, aims at solving the current pressing employment challenges.

The EU Youth Strategy runs until 2018 and promotes a cross-sectoral approach to all policies of relevance to young people, emphasising the need for young people to develop as autonomous citizens, able to live independently and engage in civil society. Employment, education, good health and so on are often interlinked. This is why we advocate the importance of supporting young people not just exclusively in one aspect of their development. Youth work, for example, can help young people in finding solutions to many different challenges.

Together with the Youth in Action programme the EU Youth Strategy emphasises participation, non-formal and informal learning, such as volunteering, and youth work. The future Erasmus for All programme will continue to support this.

The EU Youth Strategy facilitates the involvement of young people in policy making through the structured dialogue, which allows them to formulate joint recommendations with policy makers. These recommendations feed directly into resolutions or conclusions adopted by the youth ministers. The first cycle of structured dialogue was devoted to youth employment, whereas the present cycle focuses on social inclusion of young people.

→ How will the European Union contribute to a better future for young people in 2020?

While the EU pursues its actions to support youth in these times of crisis, as outlined before, let me also mention the EU Youth Strategy's tools. These tools

are about strengthening our knowledge of youth in Europe, our understanding of successful youth policy formulas or understanding what matters to young people by listening to them directly. These tools help us to anticipate and act in a timely manner on youth challenges ahead of us. For example, through peer-learning member states come together to share their experience, extract best practices and tackle joint challenges. We also collect knowledge and research, notably through our partnership with the Council of Europe.

Furthermore, through financial instruments, such as the Youth in Action programme and its successor, or the Structural Funds, the EU is supporting and will continue to support projects for and with young people.

→ How can research contribute to informing the thinking and direction needed to face these challenges?

We must have a knowledge-based approach to youth policy, and youth research is an essential component of this. When policy makers at all levels, from local to European, develop strategies and policies targeting youth, we need to ensure that they are based on the real situation of young people and provide a sound analysis based on knowledge and data. Research can also show that some measures are more effective than others and provide new documentation that challenges us to think in new ways.

There is, for example, increasing recognition that non-formal learning is an essential supplement to school-based education for gaining skills and competences. While people in the European youth sector have long been aware of the values of non-formal learning and youth work, more data and research has helped spark debate outside these circles and increased recognition in this area, for example by formal education. The European Commission has recently commissioned a study on the value of youth work, with expected results by mid-2013.

→ What quality of practice is required and delivered to face the challenges?

The EU policy approaches agreed upon need to be implemented, swiftly and in the best possible way with a view to making a difference in young people's lives. To this end we need dedicated and experienced practitioners who diligently and skilfully bring policy papers to life together with young people. Key words in this context are quality of youth work, training of trainers and mobility of those who work with young people to understand and be able to promote the concept better. A continued effort is necessary to ensure high quality, which will not only convince young people but also policy makers and those who decided on funding.

→ Out of the themes of the first volume of *Perspectives on youth*, which article were you prompted to read first and why?

All the topics are well chosen and I look forward to reading them. Among them, I would pick democracy–citizenship education, the structured participation opportunities and NEETs, and let me explain why. The reasons for this choice are reflected in the current EU youth policy priorities: in times of crisis and perhaps at the risk of appealing to extremist ideas, it is important to remind ourselves that young people should learn about the values of democracy and how to exert their rights as active citizens. An excellent way to involve young people in policy

making is by giving them the opportunity to participate, such as in the structured dialogue. NEETs need our full attention, especially these days, as more and more young people are endangered by poverty and exclusion, and long-term inactivity can feed sentiments of alienation or disengagement. We need to pay attention to their specific needs, which is why the current EU Presidency Trio has chosen social inclusion as priority for 18 months, up to mid-2014.

→ If you had a wish for young people in 2020, what would that be?

The great European visionary, Stéphane Hessel, who recently passed away, said: "I am convinced that future belongs to non-violence, to the reconciliation of different cultures. This is the way that humanity must cross the next step."

By 2020, I wish that we will be a step closer to the future that Hessel had in mind. A society that offers young people the opportunity to become who they are, to not have to fear their future and to have the freedom and means to meet friends and like-minded spirits in any European country and beyond. I hope they can live in a Europe in which they feel safe and confident, a Europe that inspires them and enables them to fully participate in building its future.

Interview with Ólöf Ólafsdóttir

Former Director for Democratic Citizenship and Participation, Council of Europe

→ What are the main challenges facing young people in Europe today?

We have millions of young people out of employment, education and training, many of whom are well-educated and qualified. The challenge is to ensure that the next generation of young people are not prevented from becoming full members of our societies. So, social inclusion and well-being are certainly among the main goals for young people in Europe today.

To live a decent life, young people need: work, access to learning, opportunities to participate in all areas of their lives, healthy living conditions, access to culture and protection from discrimination and poverty. Happiness is often overlooked, but this, I would say, is also crucial for well-being.

→ And what do you think will be the main challenges for young people in 2020?

I hope that young people's futures will cease to be defined by the type of economic problems facing many countries

today. Demographic changes mean that young people in the labour market might have better opportunities, possibly on condition that they need to be prepared to be even more mobile than today. Consequently, the need to live successfully together in diverse and democratic societies will also be a major challenge. The protection and integration of minority groups of young people, of migrants and others will be another challenge.

→ Do you think that the current policy agenda is relevant to these challenges?

Many policy makers at both the Council of Europe and the European Union and in their member states have realised that greater attention must be paid to the challenges I have just described. As a result, there are plenty of political initiatives to master the economic crisis and foster democratic citizenship. Of course, looking at the scale of the crisis and the high number of excluded groups and disconnected regions, I would say that more needs to be done.

→ How will the Council of Europe contribute to a better future for young people in 2020?

The Council of Europe's mission is to protect and promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law for all Europeans of any age. Decisions on its policies, programmes and priorities for young people are taken with young people themselves, through the Organisation's co-management structure, where youth leaders make decisions side by side with government representatives. The Organisation also has a designated youth department which runs projects specifically aimed at young people.

For example, we are coordinating an online youth campaign to combat hate speech – the No Hate Speech movement – which involves youth activists across Europe and aims to make cyberspace safer for young people. We have an ongoing project to improve social inclusion of young people – ENTER! – and are implementing the Roma Youth Action Plan, which supports probably the most marginalised group of young people in Europe. We have also created a network of Youth Peace Ambassadors throughout Europe.

We run regular workshops, seminars and training programmes for youth leaders – who then pass on what they have learnt to their associations – particularly in our two unique residential training centres, the European Youth Centres in Strasbourg and Budapest. Our European Youth Foundation provides grants to youth NGOs and our Youth Policy Division fosters co-operation between the Council of Europe's 47 member states. We also work in partnership with the European Commission to improve youth policy and youth work.

→ How can research contribute to informing the thinking and direction needed to face these challenges?

It is crucial that both youth policy and practice are informed by research or better knowledge in a broader sense. We look for evidence, or knowledge-based (youth) policy. I prefer the term “knowledge” because it includes not only academic and scientific knowledge, but also the knowledge that comes from experience. We should not develop and implement any political strategy without basing it

on knowledge. The youth policy reviews of the Council of Europe are certainly a good example of how to gather such knowledge. I also appreciate the initiative taken by some of our member states to publish this series, *Perspectives on youth*, and the support for this project provided through our partnership with the European Commission. It will certainly help us to identify the challenges ahead.

→ What quality of practice is required and delivered to face the challenges?

I have already mentioned some of the quality projects the Council of Europe is running in the youth field: the No Hate Speech movement, the ENTER! project, the Roma Youth Action Plan and Youth Peace Ambassadors. These could be referred to as our flagship projects. However, our regular work programme is also closely monitored and evaluated to ensure high quality standards are met.

Of course we cannot tackle every challenge faced by young people. However, as we work mainly with youth leaders, we count on a snowball effect as they pass on their expertise, both in terms of quantity and quality. I think the No Hate Speech movement is a good example. As it will be run through national committees, it will reach out to many young people all over Europe.

→ Out of the themes of the first volume of *Perspectives on youth*, which article were you prompted to read first and why?

All the articles interested me in this first issue. The issue's theme – Youth in 2020 – is important and well chosen. I believe we need to look forward to the challenges ahead and find answers to these challenges. Given my concern about social exclusion, I will probably first look at the article on NEETs. As the Director for Education I would then look at the article on the social dimension of European higher education, followed by the other contributions.

→ If you had a wish for young people in 2020, what would that be?

My wish for 2020 would be for all young people to be able to live together in peace and harmony, respecting and having respected their human rights and democratic values, free from exclusion and discrimination. It is important that we do everything we can to reach these goals. I know this is a dream, but dreams have been realised in the past. Progress starts with a dream; there can be no progress without one.



Karl Wagner

The intergenerational contract has been cancelled

Parents in general love their children. They want them to be happy and to be able to lead a secure and meaningful life.

Parents also tend to want their children to have a better life than they had, especially as human history is also a history of poverty, war, famine, disease, suffering, destruction and catastrophe – maybe more than of fulfilled lives and happy relations and partnerships. Parents also tend to expect their children to take care of them when they get old and when their power and abilities fade.

The family clan has always served as a buffer against individual hardship. You got older and your abilities shrank, but there was always a role for you to fulfil within the larger family. Functions, essential to the group, that you could not fulfil anymore, were taken over by younger members of the family, usually coupled also with an increase in their prestige, standing and power.

In wealthy OECD countries, the security provided through the family clan has been replaced through a system of mostly state-run retirement and social security schemes, where you pay into the system while you are part of the workforce, and then draw from it in

times of need and age. This resembles an intergenerational contract not unlike the family clan system that it has largely replaced.

Over the last 65 years, we have seen increasing wealth accumulation and a rise in opportunities and expectations, coupled with unprecedented social mobility on a global level. We enjoy today the multiple benefits of our advanced technology, which enable us to produce food, energy, goods and services for billions of people, allowing many of us to lead a life largely independent from the harshness of nature, weather and climate, and from regional and local limitations.

Human society has managed to lift hundreds of millions of people out of poverty; it has provided access to mass education and has greatly improved health services. Democracy (in different shapes) has become the rule rather than the exception.

It seems that we are in a position to leave behind a much better, healthier, wealthier, educated world for our children with more security, freedom and opportunity than ever before. But is this really the case?

Let us look at the world as if it were a farm. A farmer would aim to leave his children a farm in better condition than when he took it over from his parents. So if the world was a farm and the generation born in the late 1940s and 1950s were the farmers in the process of passing on their farm to their children, what does this farm look like today?

It is highly indebted for one. The farmer does not own his farm; the banks and their shareholders do. Its ability to produce (eco-services) is greatly reduced, as is the diversity of plant and animal life and indeed the diversity of any other system humans have laid hands on. Not to say anything about eroded soil, depleted groundwater reserves and the accumulation of toxic substances in the farm environment. And not to mention our tinkering with the one system that is most important for a functioning farm: a moderate and largely reliable climate.

To add insult to injury, we are asking the next generation of farmers to fix the mess we have created over a period of only 60 years or so, and in addition we expect them to send us the monthly cheque to our retirement home in the Balearic Islands.

A couple of generations have had an excessive party. We are now in the early morning hours and it is becoming evident that there will be the mother of all hangovers, but we still want to continue partying, because we do not know anything else anymore and there is still somebody selling us booze, telling us, "It is all fine, we've only just started, there is no limit to partying".

Our way of managing the planet and its resources generates increasing inequality and with it instability and insecurity for a growing number of people. We have driven young people into higher and higher education, but our economic system does not offer them appropriate jobs, while the economy's understanding of efficiency and profit has destroyed manufacturing jobs.

The consumer society has led to a fragmentation of society. The single person household is the dream of all marketers and producers, especially if the individual is frightened, isolated, problem-laden, egoistic and narcissistic. People living together and sharing is a nightmare for producers of fridges, cars or any other material goods.

Our consumer society raises the level of material expectation without providing the opportunities to live up to it. The world is becoming more stressful, less healthy and more uncomfortable for more and more people. The line dividing the population into haves and have-nots is moving upwards through the social strata and if this trend continues, then we will return to a feudalistic system, where very few own it all and the rest work to just keep on living. Many who once felt part of a comfortably secure higher middle class now feel like a hamster in a running wheel, having to run faster and faster just to remain in the same place.

If you were successful in the 1960s and 1970s, then it was not that difficult to save money and buy yourself a nice apartment or house and a decent piece of land outside the city. Jobs were secure and plentiful. Companies hired talents before they had even finished university and, as a university graduate, you had the passport to becoming part of the wealthy middle class. This has changed significantly: in southern European countries, a large number of 35-year olds live with their parents, not because this is what they dream of, but because it is so difficult to get a well-paying job with the level of security that enables them to rent a decent apartment or start a family.

So this is the world we intend to pass on to our children and grandchildren, and it is no wonder that people of all age groups feel pessimistic about the prospects of getting out of this mess. Pessimism, however, is an attitude that can serve as justification for inaction and for looking away. It is not a mirror of reality. It is an attitude we simply cannot afford.

If we are serious about the intergenerational contract, then we will have to look beyond the simple deliverables that characterise our post-Second World War worldview. We live now in a truly global world and our impact as a global society has, due to our numbers and our technology, become global in all respects. If we take the intergenerational contract seriously, then we cannot waste natural resources like fossil fuels and high-grade ores, which have been accumulated over millions of years, in a giant 100-year party as if nobody intends to follow us. We cannot risk the future of our grandchildren by leaving them a climate that might turn the planet into largely uninhabitable territory without them having the slightest chance of interfering with non-linear processes which will then be outside human control. If we want to have a future as a species on a finite planet, we will have to become able to live within its physical boundaries; to understand the principle of physical limits; and to adopt a timescale, which looks forward at least hundreds of years and not just until the next gratification, election or quarterly report. And we have to learn how to build our society on respect – for fellow humans, other species, nature and the planet – and responsibility.

If we take the intergenerational contract seriously, then we will develop an economy that provides the kind of jobs needed in the numbers needed. If we take it seriously, then we hand over a world of opportunities for all.

In reality, humanity finds it hard to see beyond the rewards and pleasures of immediate gratification, while finding itself more and more in the position of the sorcerer's apprentice. We claim to care for future generations and while this is probably true for our children on an individual level, it is not true for us as society. As a society we do not care for the long-term future of humanity nor about the well-being of future generations. At least, our actions do not show this.

If our current system does not have an inbuilt ability to adjust itself and change course where needed, those who will increasingly be disenfranchised will do it themselves. Historically, this is how fundamental change tends to take place: in jumps and leaps, not linearly. A system that cannot solve the problems it has created and, quite the opposite, drives the cart deeper and deeper into the mud, cannot survive.

Those that have caused a systemic problem are usually not the ones who can find and implement the necessary systemic solution. They are too much part of the problem with the underlying wrong belief systems and paradigms. They usually also benefit the most from the problems they have generated.

The change needed will have to come from others, and in this case probably from the generations following those born in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. But is there any indication, that whatever we call “today’s young generations” will be able, willing and capable of creating this kind of fundamental turnaround? Are they not caught in the same superficial consumerist world? Is an iPad not more important than the climate when it comes down to it? Is my world today not more important than everybody’s world in 20 or 50 years? Are we at all capable of caring for people we have never met; for generations we have no clue about; for our species?

Superficially, young people might be caught up in the same consumerist world as their parents, but digging deeper, we see a very different young generation emerging, one that is international, educated, interconnected, political, global and, in principle, perfectly capable of taking things into their own hands.

Change originates from individuals and small groups. In the beginning, their message is not heard, they are ignored, ridiculed or even prosecuted. But if the idea is right, then the message will reach more and more people and slowly a critical mass builds. Once this critical mass exists, it needs a spark and the time for change will come. It is possible to understand the inevitability of a critical mass building behind a certain need for change and to anticipate it, but it is not possible to really see the moment of “eruption” coming. We can feel the rumbling of the volcano, but we do not know when it will erupt and when its top will blow off.

We tend to understand change as something linear and gradual, finding it difficult to comprehend exponential developments or change coming in leaps and bounds. We also tend to see the future primarily as a continuation of the present. When the Soviet Union collapsed, the media and most politicians foresaw it being replaced by a Western capitalistic democracy. Very few could foresee new types of political regimes emerging. Today we have any kind of hybrid between Stalinist communism, capitalism and democracy.

We might today be undergoing a similar change, without yet understanding the true nature of what is already happening. Political systems have started to fluctuate a while ago in many if not most countries. One election a “left-wing” party wins with a landslide, the next election it will be a right-wing party getting the mandate to form a government. New parties and movements flare up overnight, become hugely popular and then fade away as fast as they appeared. These fluctuations might already be a sign of an imminent change into some other political order. It is in any case likely that these fluctuations will become larger when the current

governments and political systems cannot cope with the problems global society is facing. One day not very far away, these fluctuations might drive us out of our virtual democratic stability into a new kind of political system, one more capable of dealing with the challenges facing humankind and the young generations. This can happen overnight and it will be the young generations who will decide what this political system will look like and not the retired ones – despite their so-called consumer power. It will also not be the 1%, as the current system is already rigged in their favour and indirectly a main driver behind many of the movements that demand change.

By and large, politics has lost its way and is now an obstacle to change instead of being its driver. There might have been days where politicians had visions for society, but today they look at polls, which tell them what the people think and feel. They view change as a direction wise to take to win the next election. The political class understands its job as mediating between interest groups and special interests. It functions as the prime tool and agent for maintaining business as usual, allowing corrections on the fringe, as long as they do not question the system as such. Will this be enough? No.

Humanity has essentially two options: to remain in a hole, without realising it, digging itself deeper into the hole. This is a path which will likely lead to higher inequality, social unrest, rising prices of natural resources, resource constraints and uncontrollable climate change. The other option means daring to face the situation we are in and being clear about the kind of changes needed. If we choose the second path, we will be able to understand humanity in the context of global, 21st century technology and limitations and we will be able to face the magnitude of change needed.

Pessimism is an attitude and not the mirror of reality, so the glass is either half full or half empty. Humanity can and will rise to the occasion, and we will find the clarity of mind and the guts to face the challenges. Change will come from those born from the 1980s and 1990s onwards. They will prove to the older generations that it is indeed possible for the human species to fundamentally change its ways.



Magda Nico

Generational changes, gaps and conflicts: a view from the South

→ Young people and collective economic hardship

Earlier longitudinal and well-known studies on the long-term effects of experiencing economic deprivation during childhood – such as those caused by the Great Depression of 1929 – have shown that feelings of insecurity, fear of unemployment and hunger, and an overall sense of powerlessness towards a collective and individual future prevail for many years after the actual economic historical episode, if not the rest of the lives of the individuals (Elder 1974; ILO 2012) and their descendants. These consequences are manifested not only as concrete negative effects produced in the access to the structure of opportunities in life available, but also as life styles, educational strategies, parental approaches, and overall social values and identities of whole generational units. This longitudinal and timely approach might help us to reflect on the current situation of young people and young adults, always bearing in mind its eventual future consequences – namely in the European countries experiencing the hardest economic scenarios.

The collective hopelessness that is being experienced nowadays in countries most affected by what is coming to

be known as the Global or the Great Recession could, moreover, be considered a cancer in the achievement of the EU and member states' goals of becoming a "smart, sustainable and inclusive economy", accomplishing "high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion" (Europe 2020 – Europe's Growth Strategy), for which youth involvement and active contribution is absolutely fundamental. European strategies being applied and expected in these countries are potentially paradoxical. It also has obvious negative effects in the attainment of well-being of hundreds of thousands of young people and their families, evidently and particularly affected by these economic difficulties and circumstances. Young people are a part of a "domestic equation", and the fact that they constitute one of the social layers that is most affected by this economic and social circumstance actually is a "family affair" (Derosas 2004), where all lives are linked and "each generation is bound to fateful decisions and events in the other's life course" (Elder 1994: 6). This household context also has to be taken into account. Young people thus suffer direct and indirect effects of the new forms, more invisible but more holistic, of social inequality, of social reproduction and mechanisms of perpetuation of poverty – consequences of interrupted trajectories of social mobility and of the decrease in the quality of social conditions of existence. Thus, their future might be jeopardised in numerous and complex sorts of ways, yet to be identified in this ongoing process.

Experiences of transversal and historical episodes of economic and social (and perhaps generational) crisis are capable of shaping and re-directing the life courses of entire generations. This framework may help us to reflect on the future of the young and young adult generations in countries most affected by the European economic crisis – Portugal, Spain, Greece and Ireland. It may not prevent us from having serious concerns and a pessimistic outlook on this future, keeping in mind current unemployment rates, emigration flows (out of Portugal, for instance), increasing social inequality, cuts in education and science and in overall social rights (that some might fallaciously call "benefits"), decrease in fertility rates, increased danger of unsustainability of the social security system, and so on.

→ Sociology of youth, social change and the Portuguese case



Figure 1: 12 March 2012 demonstration propaganda

Sociology of youth in particular and youth studies in general have always struggled to reconcile the classist and generational approaches in the analysis of young adults' trajectories, living conditions and social background, and have sometimes discarded one or the other for the sake of certain scientific, argumentative or statistical purposes, or due to national specificities or youth itself. For the classist approaches, generational differences are less important in comparison with the more relevant and politically important differences between social classes and positions, even within the same cohort or generational unit. For the generational approaches, social heterogeneity within the same cohort or generational unit, when considered, must not be detached from generational comparisons as proxy of a time metric capable of grasping social change.

But if, on the one hand, it seems rather unscientific to aggregate highly distinctive individuals – either socially, ideologically and professionally – solely on the basis of the homogeneity of birth cohort (Nunes, 1998), thus undermining issues of social inequality and heterogeneity within these very cohorts; it may also seem imprudent to circumscribe the analysis of youth to here-and-now interpretations of data, with no time-relativism and no real intentions of grasping social change through the concrete measurement of the fluctuations, variations and evolution across time of key indicators of the “demographically dense” period transition to adulthood (Rindfuss 1991). Generations, in a wider sense perhaps, should be used as a time metric unit. Its conceptual and theoretical complexity (Mannheim 1952) must not prevent us, youth researchers, from using it in analysing social change, especially in times like these, where the past can teach us about the future consequences of a specific economic and political scenario.

Moreover, the current economic moment that Portugal, among other countries, is experiencing may be “interpreted within the framework of a national crisis, an emergency of such proportion that it threatens the common way of life” and revitalises the collective experience itself (Elder 1974), making analytical dismissals of the classist or the generational approach counter-productive. Let us take as examples the two most important demonstrations in Portugal, organised by the people, and not linked to political parties or to unions, held as consequences both of the economic crisis and of the political response to it (one in 2011 and the other in 2012).

The term *geração à rasca* (generation in distress) emerged as a political response to the term *geração rasca* which, although similar in words, is very different in content. *Geração rasca* means paltry, vulgar, coarse or gross generation. In 1994 a politician and journalist nicknamed this generation with the term *geração à rasca*, in response to some polemic events of a students’ demonstration (on reforms in the education system responded to). This was rapidly s with the term “*geração à rasca*” by a politician from the other political spectrum. This label was constituted, on the contrary, with the idea of a generation where opportunities for social mobility based on a more meritocratic and egalitarian system were being threatened. The resemblance with the social circumstances of the young adult generation in 2011 is, indeed, remarkable (Figure 1).

So on 12 March 2011 – a time by which the previously mentioned cohort would be roughly 20 or early 30 years old – one of the most important and biggest of the recent demonstrations in Portugal was held under a generational call. This was done before the Portuguese rescue package of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Troika was implemented, through Facebook and other social networks, and finally through traditional media itself. Rallying under the term “*geração à rasca*” (generation in distress), the demonstration was held in Lisbon and Oporto, and gathered more than 200 000 individuals from all cohorts: the elderly, adults, young people and children. Although originally meant to relate to a specific cohort and generation in Portugal (*geração à rasca*), this demonstration revealed how in fact lives are linked, and how intergenerational differences are set aside when it comes to defending the survival and future of the youngest generations. This was a pacific, spontaneous, popular and mass example of generational solidarity that justifies its relevance in the recent history of Portugal in its own right.

The second example of a popular, mass and recent demonstration in Portugal, which was held in 33 of its cities (as well as in other countries across Europe), constitutes another example of how the collective experience of a period of economic



Figure 2: 12 September 2013 demonstration propaganda

hardship forces us to include social categories that, in more predictable times, we may disregard for scientific or argumentative purposes (Figure 2). This demonstration underlined the importance of the classist approach to the study of youth and social change. Attended by more than 500 000 individuals (which represents roughly 5% of the whole population of Portugal, including children and minors), this demonstration was diverse both socially, as well as generationally. Different social stratum attended and, again, different generations, outraged with the recent policies forged by the government to allegedly respond to the Troika and IMF's targets and demands, were present to speak not only on their behalf but also, maybe especially, on behalf of each other. Individuals from all parties, from left to right, are in agreement as to the structural social changes being forced on Portugal. A conscious increase of social inequalities, both by the impoverishment of the population as a whole and by a lack of concern on protecting the groups of the population less immune to social exclusion – including youth – is consensually a motive for contestation. This is true partly because it affects generations differently and, by consequence, affects almost every single family for one reason (generation) or the other – the youngest, the less qualified, the poorest, the elderly, the most socially excluded or vulnerable in a more general manner. Both generational and classist views are necessary to understand the current and future state of youth affairs in cases that, like Portugal, are putting the permanence of the youngest generations in the country at risk.

→ From generational gap to generational conflict or generational discontinuity?

The use of the concept “generation” might not always be used correctly, for it may entail many different things. The term “generation gap” was very popular in the 1960s up until the 1980s. It encapsulated the idea that due to extremely rapid social change, parents’ values and attitudes were far from their children’s. This would usually contribute to the misunderstanding of some youth cultures and subcultures, music, social values, aesthetics and daily attitudes. The term has decreased in popularity, as has the gap itself. When it comes to social values, the most problematic gap in terms of mutual intergenerational understanding, those of today’s young people are not as distinctive as in the past (Smith 2005). Nonetheless, this gap seems to be greater in countries where these processes of social change were more profound and rapid, such as in Portugal (Torres and Lapa 2010). But even in these circumstances, a popular term today, “generational conflict”, is used improperly, as the demonstration of 12 March 2011 and the discourses collected at the occasion illustrate. A generational conflict would mean that instead of a gap – which leads to misunderstanding which in its turn may or may not lead to generational conflict – the values of young generations and of their parents would not be defined merely by being non-coincident, but by being in confrontation or in disagreement. Even in countries such as Portugal, and despite the fact that the term is regularly used both explicitly by academia and implicitly in political discourses and commentaries by high positions in the government, this does not seem to be the case.

There is a conflict for survival of the different social trajectories and mobility paradigms experienced by both generations or, put in a different way, a struggle to maintain the previous type of transition to adulthood, occurring in a scenario of economic growth, where the mechanisms of social mobility may not have been accessible to all, but were clear (when it comes to the transitions to adulthood that occurred after the revolution that ended the dictatorship). So both parents and their children were convinced, and engaged, in a meritocratic society based on work ethic and hard work applied directly in the labour market or, for those who had that chance, firstly in a long investment in a trajectory of attaining education, training and qualifications, where social inequalities although impossible to eliminate were seen as possible to overcome. In spite of these rapid changes, generations are not in conflict, but their path towards a more meritocratic society is threatened.

This sense of a discontinued path towards a meritocratic society is in part due to the fact that social changes in Portugal in the last five or six decades have been massive. In 1960, almost 40% of the Portuguese population was illiterate, while in 2010, according to data from the Survey on Employment (National Statistics, Portugal), the percentage of individuals with a higher education degree was already higher than the percentage of individuals with no degree (11.8% and 10.3%). For the 1931-1950 cohorts, the level of religiousness is 6.5; while for the 1971-1992 cohort the level is 5 (on a scale of 1 to 10, according to data from the European Social Survey 2006). Laws legalising abortion and gay marriage were also approved in the past decade, which reveals, together with other indicators, how the social and cultural development of the countries has been less influenced by the Catholic Church. Between 1981 and 2011, the share of apartments for rent – more adequate for less formal conjugal situations and for the geographical mobility typical of the period of the transition to adulthood – decreased by more than half (from 44% to 20%) (National Statistics, Portugal). The democratic and demographic transitions, as well as the “educational revolution”, a massive democratisation of higher education, globalisation and the growth of the services sector, have all contributed to making the current generation of young people and young adults the most qualified in the history of the country.

In this context, how can this country make the best of the most qualified generation it helped, together with the emotional and financial investment of entire families, to create? Recent policies and tendencies seem to indicate that this potential is not going to be tapped on behalf of the country itself. Among these are the typical and now extraordinary disadvantages of young people in the labour market (which include the less protective regime of youth in southern European countries), and the politics of youth and its relation to the unemployment rate and to emigration flows (developed in the next section of this article). Young people are, thus, specifically and increasingly vulnerable to precarious labour, unemployment and unprotected parallel economy activities, according to the Labour Force Survey, among other sources of data (International Labour Organization, 2012). From the individual time point of view it is easily understood that the starting point in one’s career, that is, the moment (or moments) of entry into the labour market, tends to be one of the most difficult in one’s career. For that reason, young people are at one of the most difficult points in their professional lives. Thus, from the individual time point of view, young people are more exposed to precarious labour. From another point of view, when we consider historical time and the beginning of the recession, some birth cohorts combine the disadvantage, if one may say so, of their being new to the labour market, with this historical moment

of the economic recession. Moreover, not only are the structural conditions for young people across Europe not the same as other age groups (and never were), but the economic recession does not affect all countries equally. In the case of southern European countries, they combine long-term disadvantages regarding social protection for people in transition to adulthood with a historical event like the recession.

When it comes to transition regimes in Europe, Portugal and others were already considered as the most disadvantaged cluster, so-called “sub-protective” (Walther 2006). Italy, Spain and Portugal are clustered in a sub-protective regime⁴ with non-selective schools, training characterised by low standards and coverage, social security mainly based on the family, and a closed and informal employment regime, as opposed to Denmark and Sweden (with a universalistic transition regime),⁵ Germany, France and the Netherlands (with an employment-centred transition regime),⁶ or the United Kingdom and Ireland (with a liberal transition regime).⁷ This was true even before the crisis which, in its turn, has not changed the scenario completely, only worsened it.

Young people from these countries are therefore combining historical disadvantages of time and place, and for that reason deserve much more attention in the political, national or European-wide arena.

→ The politics of youth

Political views and actions directed at youth issues reflect and intensify, in some cases, the disregard for these generational dynamics and historical contexts. In 2012, for instance, the Portuguese Secretary for Youth and Sports argued that emigration was a promising solution for the increasing youth unemployment in the country. He based this remark on his own preconceptions on Portuguese youth, further stating that young people need to leave their “comfort zones” (their parent’s home) and relocate to where jobs might be available. Unemployment as a personal experience was, in his opinion, caused by youth apathy, and could be effortlessly solved through individual agency. Many other statements on the part of politicians in high positions in the government have also corroborated this idea, encouraging young people to abandon their plans of staying in their country and to emigrate to other countries where jobs might be less scarce. This, together with the current scenario in this country, will have, according to specialists, tremendous consequences in the distant future as well as enormous differences to previous emigration flows (namely the one that occurred during the 1960s and 1970s).

4. Characterised by non-selective school systems, low training standards and coverage, social security based on the family, closed employment regime with high risks and informal work (Walther 2006: 126).

5. Characterised by non-selective school systems, training with flexible standards, social security based on the state, open employment regime with low risks, and a concept of youth based on personal development and citizenship (Walther 2006: 126).

6. Characterised by selective school systems, a standardised training system, social security based on the state and family, closed employment regime with risks for the population at the margins, and a concept of youth based on the idea of adaptation to social positions (Walther 2006: 126).

7. Characterised by non-selective school systems, training with flexible and low standards, social security based on the state and family, open employment regime with high risks, and a concept of youth based on early economic independence (Walther 2006: 126).

This simplistic assumption about the relationship between youth and unemployment made by some Portuguese politicians is not only a bold statement (and fallacy) about the relation between structure and agency, but also a stereotyped understanding of the (cultural) context of southern European countries. Portuguese youth is, like others, an “easy target” for these misguided generational and national comparisons, many times provided by academia itself. Incorporated politically, the justifications for the timings, “delays” or synchronisations of transitions to adulthood are frequently based on a supposed “generational personality”. These are serious obstacles to youth policies, and to mere recognition of their important role.

These obstacles are visible, for example, in the latest International Labour Organization report from 2012. While many of the European and South American countries responded to the high unemployment rates with policies to combat the obstacles to economic growth, or directed at the occupational dissonance between supply and demand in the labour market, or by expanding social protection, Portugal tended to limit its actions to some support to “young entrepreneurs” (ILO 2012). Obviously, these measures are not equally accessible to the different stratum of the young population, nor is the labour market, especially in these times, capable or prepared to embrace new businesses on such a scale – since 50 new insolvencies are registered daily in Portugal (in October 2012).

There is a complete void of policies to take full advantage of the indisputable potential of the younger and highly qualified generations in Portugal, young people who could, in their turn, help the country overcome the difficult situation it is experiencing, for instance by: using their skills acquired through school and education; increasing the fertility rate ensuring the future sustainability of the social security system; and by being more productive in the labour market, not from fear of being fired but based on the conviction that this is individually and collectively positive. Instead, emigration is one of the phenomena that characterises 2012 and beyond. The most qualified generation in the history of Portugal is contributing, and everything leads us to believe it will continue to contribute, to other countries’ developments. Different from the emigration flows of the 1960s, this emigration flow is much more qualified and does not imply as many transfers to the country of origin. The great majority are 25 to 34 years old. In 2012, 65 000 young individuals left the country. The loss of these qualified young people is even concerning the International Monetary Fund, which has declared that it is important for the Portuguese Government to consider the irreversible and negative effects of these migration flows for the recovery of the country, that is, of this “generational discontinuity”. While current Portuguese young people seem to be destined to be citizens of the world, Portugal, if the government continues to ignore this problem, might be destined to see their young people, young parents and their children, the most qualified and, paradoxically, entrepreneurial individuals, leave with no date to return. The beginning of the 21st century in Portugal, and countries alike in what concerns the economic context, may be characterised by a certain degree of generational discontinuity and enforced diaspora trajectories.

→ Final remarks

An approach beyond the here and now to the understanding of young people’s conditions of existence, inspired by the concepts and methods of generational analysis, may bring to light the urgent need to promote long-term youth policies and structural, coherent and integrated European approaches. For one, it may remind us that the achievement of the Europe 2020 Growth Strategy will hardly

be accomplished without the participation of young people, more specifically the goals of “high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion” that it includes. Secondly, the increased and inter-related geographic mobility and unemployment of young people, especially in countries experiencing the economic crisis in a harsher manner, must receive concrete and urgent attention in European policies concerning mobility, migration and demographic trends of young people. And thirdly, research on the processes of social change set in motion by these new patterns of mobility and generational discontinuity must be promoted and funded. Young people are protagonists of social change, and their trajectories and subjective accounts are important both to understand and to foresee current societies and to produce the scientific evidence fundamental for policy-making designs and decisions.

The importance of the study of social change can be oriented towards the study of young people and towards the design and promotion of long-term and integrated youth policy, firstly, through the promotion of youth research, preferably characterised by longitudinal designs. Evidence-based youth policy is, ultimately, dependent on the collection, aggregation and eventually interpretation of data (be it qualitative or quantitative) on the social conditions of existence and trajectories of youth, and the measurement of the impact of important economic events such as the one Europe is experiencing necessarily has to deal with this sort of data. Secondly, it must recognise new patterns of mobility and migration among young people and promote programmes and policies that prevent these new patterns from becoming new forms of social exclusion and social inequality. Across Europe the mobility-friendly mechanisms should be enhanced and the positive aspects of participation of young people in the labour market should be made clear both for receiving and for sending countries. Thirdly, national policy reviews, and the subsequent evaluation of policies, should also take into account the politics of youth and the informal messages about young people and their participation both in civil society and the labour market, passed on both by government individuals and by the media more generally.

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Youth justice in a changing Europe: crisis conditions and alternative visions

Barry Goldson

→ Introduction

Framed within a context of economic crisis, Europe is currently facing extraordinary challenges and undergoing profound changes. This article maps the impact of the crisis on children and young people and considers its implications for youth justice.⁸ The limitations of both “utopian” and “dystopian” visions are examined and it is argued that more nuanced forms of analysis are necessary in order to comprehend shifts in youth justice policy formation in Europe and elsewhere. The article concludes speculatively by contemplating the prospects for European youth justice in 2020.

→ Crisis conditions

For many countries in Europe, the period between 2000 and 2009 was characterised by patterns of sustained economic growth and corresponding increases in social investment and

8. “Youth justice” is taken to mean the formal corpus of law, policy and practice that is directed towards children and young people (normally below the age of 18 years) in conflict with the law. Many jurisdictions continue to prefer the term “juvenile justice” and, for the purposes of this essay, the two terms are used interchangeably.

protection. Since 2009, however, Europe has endured a far more hostile economic climate and the consolidation of crisis conditions has produced, among other issues: drastic cuts in social investment and public services; substantially reduced employment, education and training opportunities; rising food, fuel and transport costs and reduced health and welfare services for those in greatest need. In particular, millions of young Europeans have been, and will continue to be, especially disadvantaged by the economic crisis. Between 2009 and 2010, for example, the proportion of children and young people who were at risk of poverty or social exclusion increased substantially and, by 2012, 27.1% of children and 29.1% of young people were facing the prospect of poverty and/or social exclusion within the European Union's 27 member states (European Commission 2012: 48-49).

Growing rates of youth unemployment represent a particularly conspicuous aspect of the crisis conditions. The United Nations (2012: 15) has observed: "Young people are disproportionately affected by unemployment, underemployment, vulnerable employment and working poverty ... the financial and economic crisis has further hit young people particularly hard". At the global level, the rate of youth unemployment – which has far exceeded that of other age groups – saw the "largest annual increase over the 20 years of available global estimates" in 2009 (United Nations 2012: 16. See also International Labour Organization 2011a). At the European level, the rate of youth unemployment at the end of 2012 ranged from 8.1% (in Germany) to 57.6% (in Greece), with the average rate across European Union member states standing at 25.8% (see Table 1) – more than 10% higher than the rate in 2008 (15%) (Goldson 2013).

Table 1: Youth (under 25 years) unemployment rates in European Union member states: November 2012

Country	Youth Unemployment Rate
Germany	8.1
Austria	9.0
Netherlands	9.7
Denmark	14.2
Malta	16.4
Estonia	17.5 ⁹
Luxembourg	18.6
Finland	19.0
Belgium	19.7
United Kingdom	20.2 ¹⁰
Czech Republic	21.3
Romania	23.0 ¹¹
Slovenia	23.5 ¹²

9. Data pertains to October 2012.

10. Data pertains to September 2012.

11. Data pertains to September 2012.

12. Data pertains to September 2012.

Country	Youth Unemployment Rate
Lithuania	24.2
Sweden	24.8
Cyprus	27.0 ¹³
France	27.0
Bulgaria	27.4
Poland	28.4
Hungary	29.3 ¹⁴
Ireland	29.7
Latvia	31.9 ¹⁵
Slovakia	35.8
Italy	37.1
Portugal	38.7
Spain	56.5
Greece	57.6 ¹⁶

Source: Table compiled using Eurostat data (European Commission, 2013)

High rates of youth unemployment in Europe are accompanied by equally high numbers of children and young people who are excluded from education and training programmes. Indeed, the number of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) “has increased sharply since 2008”, reaching record levels (European Commission 2012: 6). In 2011, 7.5 million young people aged 15-24 were excluded from the labour market and education in Europe. This corresponds to a significant increase in the NEETs rate: in 2008, the figure stood at 11% of 15-24-year olds and by 2011 it had increased to 13% (Mascherini et al. 2012: 1). In some European countries, the NEETs rate is significantly higher, exceeding 17% in Bulgaria, Ireland, Italy and Spain, for example (Mascherini et al. 2012: 1).

As countries in Europe and elsewhere grapple with the effects of the economic crisis – many overburdened by massive debts – their governments are implementing wide-ranging “austerity measures” and imposing deep cuts in public expenditure. The effects of such actions are catastrophic for those in greatest need and, “in many cases [they amount to] shrinking or even eliminating programmes that provide educational, health related, job placement and other support and assistance to the public, particularly low-income and marginalised persons” (United Nations 2012: 43). The social and economic impacts of such phenomena on (disadvantaged) children and young people are particularly concerning. The International Labour Organization (2011b: 6) observes: “increasingly, young people are moving to cities or migrating to countries with greater job opportunities, separating from their families and social support networks”. Being distanced from family and home in this way, invokes “a risk of exploitation and trafficking, particularly among vulnerable youth” (International Labour Organization 2011b: 2). Furthermore, whether young people

13. Data pertains to September 2012.

14. Data pertains to October 2012.

15. Data pertains to September 2012.

16. Data pertains to October 2012.

migrate or remain static, the crisis conditions “significantly increase the risk of ... health problems [that] ... can often last for life” (European Commission 2012: 7).

The combined effects of the crisis conditions also raise serious implications concerning the democratic engagement and civic participation of young people which may lead some to “opt out of participation in civil society” (Mascherini et al. 2012: 82). Alternatively, others might “engage” in ways that are deemed to be problematic. The United Nations (2012: 11), for example, has noted that youth unemployment can lead to civil unrest: “There is no doubt that one of the contributing factors to the recent Arab Spring uprisings is the disturbingly high levels of youth unemployment in the Middle East and North Africa region”. Similar “uprisings” have recently occurred in Europe and Chang (2012) suggests that they may carry serious and long-lasting implications:

austerity, privatisation and deregulation ... The threat to livelihoods has reached such a dimension that renewed bouts of rioting are now rocking Greece, Spain and even the usually quieter Portugal ... The danger is not only that these austerity measures are killing the European economies but also that they threaten the very legitimacy of European democracies – not just directly by threatening the livelihoods of so many people and pushing the economy into a downward spiral, but also indirectly by undermining the legitimacy of the political system through this backdoor rewriting of the social contract. Especially if they are going to have to go through long tunnels of economic difficulties in coming years, and in the context of global shifts in economic power balance and of severe environmental challenges, European countries can ill afford to have the legitimacy of their political systems damaged in this way.

Chronic social exclusion, impoverishment, unemployment, NEET status, deep-cutting and wide-ranging “austerity measures”, patterns of forced migration, the prospect of exploitation and trafficking, multiple health problems, potential alienation and civil disengagement or, conversely, direct action and urban uprisings, these are the crisis conditions that currently confront millions of young Europeans. The same conditions pose formidable challenges to political systems throughout Europe. They also create social and economic environments that are known to give rise to youth crime and the disproportionate criminalisation of identifiable groups of young people. Indeed, youth justice systems around the world characteristically process (and punish) the most impoverished children and young people. This is not to suggest that all poor children and young people commit crime, or that only poor children and young people offend, but the corollaries between economic ruptures, social exclusion, poverty, youth crime and criminalisation are undeniable. To put it another way, contemporary crisis conditions raise big questions about the paternalistic welfare and protectionist principles that have historically defined youth justice systems in Europe. Bailleau et al. (2010: 13) observe the following:

These principles, or at least some of them, are currently being challenged to various extents in a majority of countries in Europe. This weakening of the founding principles of juvenile justice is going hand in hand with a deterioration of the conditions of access to jobs for the least schooled youths, changes in the social ties and relations between generations, and a change in our relationship with social norms.

Thus, it is timely to think about the manner in which youth justice systems might respond in the future. This is far from certain, however, and such thinking invokes alternative visions.

→ Alternative visions

Both historically and contemporaneously, youth justice systems have been, and are, beset by ambiguity, paradox and contradiction. The question as to whether children and young people should be conceptualised as “vulnerable *becomings* in need of protection, help, guidance and support, or as undisciplined and dangerous *beings* necessitating correction, regulation, control and punishment, is central to such uncertainty and flux” (Goldson and Muncie 2009: vii). If it can be said that a paternalistic welfare model characterised youth justice in most European countries in the 20th century (Bailleau and Cartuyvels 2002; 2010), youth justice has become more complex in the opening decades of the 21st century as “discourses of child protection, restoration, punishment, public protection, responsibility, justice, rehabilitation, welfare, retribution, diversion, human rights, and so on, intersect and circulate in a perpetually uneasy and contradictory motion” (Goldson and Muncie 2009: vii). At what point, and in what circumstances, the vulnerable youth is transformed into a fully culpable offender is a recurring source of tension and dispute. In other words, the fundamental question remains: when, if at all, is it more appropriate to make people responsible and punish rather than to protect and support?

Many commentators continue to envision “child-friendly justice” as the standard European approach to children and young people in conflict with the law. Others argue that various conditions of late modernity including, but not limited to, the crisis conditions considered above, wrenching social and economic transformations, heightened insecurities and neoliberal politics have combined to give way to a “new punitiveness” characterised by tough “penal populism”. Such alternative and starkly contrasting perspectives might respectively be termed as utopian and dystopian visions.

A utopian vision

What we may call the utopian vision conceptualises youth justice as progressing steadily and incrementally towards a state of penal tolerance, where the “best interests” of children and young people prevail and where recourse to correctional intervention – particularly custodial detention – is only ever mobilised as a “last resort”. This vision is underpinned by both global and European human rights standards.

At the global level, three human rights instruments are particularly significant. First are the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (the “Beijing Rules”), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1985. The rules provide guidance for the protection of children’s and young people’s human rights in the development of separate and specialist youth justice systems “conceived as an integral part of the national development process of each country, within a comprehensive framework of social justice for all juveniles” (United Nations General Assembly 1985: Rule 4.1). Second is the United Nations Guidelines on the Prevention of Delinquency (the “Riyadh Guidelines”), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1990. The guidelines are underpinned by diversionary and non-punitive imperatives: “the successful prevention of juvenile delinquency requires efforts on the part of the entire society to ensure the harmonious development of adolescents” (paragraph 2); “formal agencies of social control should only be utilized as a means of last resort” (paragraph 5) and “no child or young person should be subjected to harsh or degrading correction or punishment measures at home, in schools

or in any other institutions" (paragraph 54) (United Nations General Assembly, 1990a). Third is the United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty (the "Havana Rules"), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1990. The rules centre around a number of core principles including: deprivation of liberty should be a disposition of "last resort" and used only "for the minimum necessary period" and, in cases where children are deprived of their liberty, the principles, procedures and safeguards provided by international human rights standards must be seen to apply as minimum and non-negotiable benchmarks (United Nations General Assembly 1990b).

At the European level the notion of "child-friendly justice" is pivotal. By extending the human rights principles that inform the European rules for juvenile offenders subject to sanctions or measures (Council of Europe 2009), the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers has more recently formally adopted specific guidelines for child-friendly justice (Council of Europe 2010). The guidelines state that any young person under the age of 18 years is to be regarded as "a child" (section IIa) and they apply "to all ways in which children are likely to be, for whatever reason and in whatever capacity, brought into contact with ... bodies and services involved in implementing criminal, civil or administrative law" (section I, paragraph 2). The Council of Europe has also emphasised the unifying human rights objective of the guidelines by explaining that they are intended to:

achieve a greater unity between the member states ... by promoting the adoption of common rules in legal matters ... [and] ensuring the effective implementation of ... binding universal and European standards protecting and promoting children's rights (Council of Europe 2010, Preamble).

The guidelines are also meant to:

guarantee the respect and the effective implementation of all children's rights at the highest attainable level ... giving due consideration to the child's level of maturity and understanding and the circumstances of the case... [Child friendly] justice is accessible, age appropriate, speedy, diligent, adapted to and focused on the needs and rights of the child, respecting the rights of the child (Council of Europe 2010, section IIc).

Collectively, the United Nations and the Council of Europe human rights standards can be taken to indicate a "unifying framework" for modelling youth justice statutes, formulating policy and developing practice in all nation states to which they apply (Goldson and Hughes 2010). As such, it might appear that the same instruments provide the basis for "globalised" human rights-compliant and "child-friendly" youth justice (Goldson and Muncie 2012).

A dystopian vision

In stark contrast to the notion of youth justice characterised by penal tolerance, "best interest" principles, "last resort" imperatives and human rights foundations, the dystopian vision emphasises the emergence, consolidation and development of a harsh "culture of control" (Garland 2001) within which the special protected status of children and young people is diminishing; welfare paternalism is retreating; children and young people are increasingly "responsibilised" and "adultified"; human rights standards are routinely breached; children's and young people's human rights claims are systematically violated; penal tolerance

is displaced by what Muncie (1999) has termed “institutionalised intolerance”; the population of young prisoners continues to grow; youth justice is increasingly politicised; and punishment becomes the state’s preferred strategy for managing “urban outcasts” within conditions of “advanced marginality” (Wacquant 2008).

Both quantitative and qualitative dimensions of a “new punitiveness” are discernible (Garland 2001; Goldson 2002; 2009; Muncie 2008; Pratt et al. 2005; Pratt and Eriksson 2012; Wacquant 2008; 2009). Increasing rates of youth detention (in penal custody) – more custodial sentences and/or longer custodial sentences – represent the key quantitative dimension, whereas the corresponding qualitative dimension is evidenced by “a decline in rehabilitative ideals, harsher prison conditions, more emotional and expressive forms of punishment emphasising shaming and degradation ... or increased attention to victim’s rights as opposed to the rights of offenders” (Snacken and Dumortier 2012, pp. 2-3). Bailleau et al. (2010: 7) claim that a “neo-conservative paradigm [has] become dominant within the European Union” and, as a consequence, “youth justice has undergone major changes in recent years in Europe” (ibid: p. 8):

Social intolerance in various States is rising against a backdrop of a drift to hard-line law-and-order policies and practices. The deviant youth is perceived first and foremost as a social problem ... to the detriment of a vision that saw the ‘child in danger’ as someone whom society also had to protect ... a greater tendency to hold the youth’s ‘entourage’ accountable for his/her actions by shifting responsibility to his or her family and the local community (either the geographic community or cultural or ethnic community) ... There has also been a shift in the State’s orientations and strategies in the public management of youth deviance ... The main consequence of this new orientation is the increased surveillance of young people and families by a host of entities and the extension of criminalisation to include certain types of behaviour that used to be considered to be mere deviations from the norm and/or petty delinquency (Bailleau et al. 2010: 8-9).

Perhaps the most prominent analyst of the dystopian vision is Loïc Wacquant (2009: 1) who maps the dissemination of what he terms a “new punitive common sense”, incubated in the US through a network of “Reagan-era conservative think tanks” – none more influential/culpable than the Manhattan Institute – before being “exported to Western Europe and the rest of the world”. Fundamentally, Wacquant argues that the West is witnessing the transmutation from “social state” to “penal state”; the “downsizing of the welfare sector” and the “upsizing of the penal sector” characterised, ultimately, by the “iron fist” of a diversifying, expanding and increasingly intrusive penal apparatus. This, “generalized technique for managing rampant social insecurity” (p. 167) means that the spaces created by processes of economic deregulation and welfare retrenchment are filled by an architecture of neoliberal penalty and the aggressive advance of punitiveness. According to Wacquant, five overlapping processes are at play: “vertical expansion” (swelling prison populations); “horizontal expansion” (the proliferation and diversification of technologies of regulation, control and surveillance); simultaneous yet contradictory modes of system expansion and contraction (penal and welfare, respectively); the burgeoning privatisation of the justice industry; and, finally, a policy of “carceral affirmative action” (the manifest racialisation of punishment and penal confinement).

Beyond binary visions

At face value, both the utopian and dystopian visions provide seductive conceptual typologies or “totalising narratives” (Goldson and Muncie 2012) for

comprehending pan-European (even global) trends in youth justice. Paradoxically – given their analytical incongruity – both are plausible but, ultimately, each is singularly inadequate. Despite the conceivability of the alternative contrasting visions, therefore, neither provides a defensible comprehensive account of the complexity, contradictory nature and profound incoherence of transnational youth justice in Europe and/or beyond. On one hand, despite the near universal adoption of the human rights standards considered above – together with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations 1989) amongst the most widely adopted human rights instrument in the world – the “potentialities” for such standards to drive and sustain progressive youth justice reform are compromised by a repeated series of operational and implementational “limitations” (Goldson and Kilkelly 2013. See also Goldson and Muncie 2012). On the other hand, although there are “many worrying developments” concerning “punitiveness in Europe” (Snacken and Dumortier 2012), there is also evidence to imply that the “new punitive common sense” (Wacquant 2009: 1) is being resisted. As Wacquant (2009: 173) concedes, while processes of diffusion and policy transfer are evident globally, “neoliberalism is from its inception a multi-sited, polycentric, and geographically uneven formation”. In other words, there are sites of resistance where “neoliberalism has been thwarted ... and the push towards penalization has been blunted or diverted” (ibid: 172-3. See also Goldson and Muncie 2006; Lappi-Seppälä 2012; Muncie and Goldson 2006; Pratt 2008a; 2008b; Pratt and Eriksson 2012). In sum, there is reason to question the utopian vision just as “there are real grounds for optimism that dystopian analyses have been overplayed” (Downes 2012: 32). To put it another way, the utopian-dystopian binary is intrinsically flawed, necessitating more nuanced analyses in order to fully grasp contemporary trends in youth justice in Europe and gauge its future direction.

The extent to which national jurisdictions err towards the utopian vision, the dystopian vision or, more likely, broker hybridised models of youth justice, is contingent upon their specific historical, political, socio-economic, cultural, judicial and organisational traditions. International comparative analyses thus reveal patterns of both convergence and divergence between different nation states. Just as important, however, are intra-national analyses. Indeed, in many important respects, the national is an inadequate unit of comparative analysis in that it can conceal, or at least obfuscate, local and/or regional differences within otherwise discrete territorial jurisdictions and/or nation-states. Indeed, in many countries in Europe and beyond, it is difficult to prioritise national developments above widely divergent regional differences, most evident in sentencing disparities (“justice by geography”). In short, once it is recognised that variations within nation-state borders may be as great, or even greater, than some differences between them, then taking the national (let alone the European or the global) as the basic unit for understanding youth justice policy shifts becomes highly problematic (Goldson and Hughes 2010; Goldson and Muncie 2006; Muncie 2005; Muncie and Goldson 2006).

The significance of professional values, principles and discretion and youth justice practitioner culture is crucially important in this context. Even highly centralised state agencies and national bodies are – at least in part – “power-dependent” on regional and local bodies for the operationalisation of policy. Practitioners may comply and implement national policy or resist and subvert it. It follows that this relational, power-dependent process, can generate both the advancement of specific youth justice strategies (for example, punitivism) and

the dilution – even negation – of others (for example, human rights-compliant practice), or the reverse, whereby punitivism is resisted and human rights approaches are promulgated.

In sum, whatever the seduction of binary visions and totalising narratives, youth justice systems assume multitudinous and widely varying forms and it is simply not possible to identify a globally unifying thrust or European norm. Rather, comparative analyses, theorisation and empirical investigation must engage at international, national and sub-national levels in order to comprehend the means by which youth justice laws, policies and practices are formed, applied, fragmented and differentially inflected through a complex of historical, political, socio-economic, cultural, judicial, organisational and individual filters (Goldson and Hughes 2010; Goldson and Muncie 2012).

→ Conclusion: humane pragmatism – youth justice in 2020?

The crisis conditions that characterise the contemporary socio-economic landscape in Europe pose, and will continue to pose, formidable challenges. A crucial juncture has been reached and Snacken and Dumortier (2012: 17) reflect: “‘Europe’ as an institutional structure and the separate European countries are currently facing fundamental choices as to the kind of society they want to build for the future”. What this will mean for youth justice in 2020 is far from certain. Fundamentally different scenarios are imaginable. Europe has a strong affinity to human rights that may well serve to temper any inclination towards anxiety-induced penal populism. Alternatively, a consolidating sense of heightened insecurity may just as readily spill over and produce the crude politicisation of youth justice and a march to harsh punitiveness. Furthermore, Europe is not a monolithic or homogeneous entity and the challenges currently confronting its constituent nation states are unevenly experienced and distributed. It may well be, for example, that some countries (in the south and east) will endure more intense and prolonged adverse conditions than others (in the north and west), giving rise to a spectrum of differentiated responses. But there are also grounds for believing that – despite crisis conditions – what we might call “humane pragmatism” will ultimately prevail. Three points – each underpinned by empirical research – are particularly noteworthy by way of conclusion.

The first point returns us to the question of political legitimacy – as touched upon earlier – and this is closely related to notions of social cohesion and trust. Based upon detailed and complex comparative analyses of 25 countries, Tapio Lappi-Seppälä (2012: 53) contends:

Trust is relevant also for social cohesion and (informal) social control. Generalised trust and trust in people is an indicator of social bonds and social solidarity ... There is a link from trust solidarity and social cohesion to effective informal social control. Finally, trust in institutions and legitimacy is also conducive to norm compliance and behaviour ... And the crucial condition for this to happen is that people perceive the system is fair and legitimate. A system which seeks to uphold norm compliance through trust and legitimacy, rather than fear and deterrence, should be able to manage with less severe sanctions, as the results also indicate ... Associated with norm compliance based on legitimacy, this decreases the need to resort to formal social control and to the penal system.

Lappi-Seppälä's observations might be combined with the conclusions reached by David Downes (2012: 33) following the completion of four major comparative studies:

A substantial welfare state is increasingly a principal, if not the main, protection against the resort to mass imprisonment ... the case for retaining and strengthening the bases of social democratic political economy should be all too evident.

In other words, a "substantial welfare state" and the "bases of social democratic political economy" comprise core ingredients for sustaining "social cohesion", "trust", "legitimacy" and "informal social control". This not only carries profound intrinsic value in accordance with the "penal moderation based on human rights and social inclusion ... cherished by many Europeans" (Snacken 2012: 257), but it also offers crucial pragmatic returns for politicians seeking to retain integrity, trust and legitimacy at a time of economic crisis. The maintenance of the welfare state may well pose fiscal challenges during an era of "austerity" but the alternative – a reliance on harsh penal systems to retain social order(ing), "governing through crime" (Simon 2007) – not only imposes equally (if not more) substantial fiscal costs, it also threatens to undermine political legitimacy.

The second point connects both with the fiscal and human costs induced by the over-zealous mobilisation of youth justice interventions. Informed by their detailed longitudinal research on pathways into and out of offending for a cohort of 4 300 children and young people in Edinburgh, Scotland – and drawing more broadly on a growing body of international studies – Lesley McAra and Susan McVie (2007: 337, 340) contend that:

Doing less rather than more in individual cases may mitigate the potential for damage that system contact brings ... targeted early intervention strategies ... are likely to widen the net ... Greater numbers of children will be identified as at risk and early involvement will result in constant recycling into the system ... As we have shown, forms of diversion ... without recourse to formal intervention ... are associated with desistance from serious offending. Such findings are supportive of a maximum diversion approach ... Accepting that, in some cases, doing less is better than doing more requires both courage and vision on the part of policy makers ... To the extent that systems appear to damage young people and inhibit their capacity to change, then they do not, and never will, deliver justice.

Such research communicates a powerful counter-intuitive message: early intervention via youth justice systems is counter-productive when measured in terms of crime prevention and community safety. It also exposes children and young people to the prospect of unnecessary "damage". Ultimately, an over-reliance on youth justice interventions is counter-productive, costly and damaging. The humane and pragmatic approach, therefore, requires policy makers to seek non-criminalising solutions in their responses to youthful transgressions.

The third point concerns the "dangerous", "unnecessary", "wasteful" and "inadequate" nature of youth imprisonment. Mendel (2011: *passim* 5-25) summarises an enormous body of research evidence in noting that the practices of youth imprisonment are:

Dangerous: Juvenile corrections institutions subject confined youth to intolerable levels of violence, abuse, and other forms of maltreatment.

Ineffective: The outcomes of correctional confinement are poor. Recidivism rates are uniformly high, and incarceration in juvenile facilities depresses youths' future success in education and employment.

Unnecessary: A substantial percentage of youth confined in youth corrections facilities pose minimal risk to public safety.

Wasteful: Most states are spending vast sums of taxpayer money and devoting the bulk of their juvenile justice budgets to correctional institutions and other facility placements when non-residential programming options deliver equal or better results for a fraction of the cost.

Inadequate: Despite their exorbitant daily costs, most juvenile correctional facilities are ill-prepared to address the needs of many confined youth. Often, they fail to provide even the minimum services appropriate for the care and rehabilitation of youth in confinement.

So, what will be the shape and nature of youth justice in Europe in 2020? If politicians and policy makers heed the messages from research, they will combine humanity with pragmatism in constructing an approach underpinned by a substantial welfare state that commands trust and enjoys legitimacy, that limits intervention and maximises diversion and, ultimately, that avoids the calamitous practices of youth imprisonment.

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The future of the social dimension in European higher education: university for all, but without student support?

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→ Introduction

One of the most relevant changes experienced by European societies over the past 40 years concerns the mass expansion of higher education and the related development of the systems of student support. The expansion of higher education in Europe has been justified by the double scope of ensuring equal opportunities (by promoting the social dimension of higher education) and by the need for creating a competitive knowledge-based economy to compete in the global market. However, the social dimension of higher education remains a rather abstract concept in European higher education, while the systems of student support are still largely managed at the national level.

This paper argues that in 2020, as in 2013, the experience of university, and the quality of this experience, will be of a pivotal importance in the lives of young people in Europe. The mass expansion of higher education represents a long-term change in European societies that is not likely to be easily reversed. However, many changes are currently taking place: the systems of student support, designed to limit the inequalities of the student experience, are now affected by austerity trends and

the consequences of welfare cuts are likely to affect the experiences of young people in university in 2020. In particular, young people risk being more financially dependent on family and labour-market sources, and this creates “differentiated” experiences of higher education. The paper also argues that, in order to reverse the forthcoming trends, we need to complete the current processes of European integration, designing systems of student support that concretely sustain the social dimension of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). This paper does not have the scope to expand on the cross-national differences across Europe regarding the division between vocational and academic higher education, and focuses specifically on general higher education delivered by universities. This choice also reflects the fact that, as will be explained below, the specific idea of expansion of participation in higher education promoted in Europe is essentially that of general higher education and does not focus specifically on vocational further education.

After describing the major trends in the expansion of higher education in Europe, the paper will discuss the main differences across the models of student support. The third section will describe the most recent changes affecting these systems, in particular focusing on the case studies of Sweden, Italy and England. This part will point out a convergence towards increasingly residual systems of student support that target the poorest part of the student population. Finally, the last chapter will depict a vision of young people in 2020, discussing the impact of recent policy reforms and offering an overview of the possible scenarios that could reverse this trend.

→ 1. The expansion of higher education in Europe

Despite the remarkable differences in the timing of the expansion within Europe, mass access in higher education after the Second World War is considered a truly European trend (EQUNET 2010) accompanied by changes in the political discourses: while higher education used to be an intrinsic elitist part of European education, it began to be influenced by the development of egalitarian values (Trow 2005). Higher education in Europe can now be defined as “massed higher education”: even if students that embark on higher education do not necessarily always complete their degrees, a large portion of young people experience this path of transition. The expansion of higher education reflects not only a shift in education policies, but it is also an expression of the changing aspirations and ambitions in European societies. A central goal of higher education was, in fact, improving the chances of working-class children and promoting widening participation, an idea particularly developed in the UK (Spohrer 2011). Following the terminology employed by higher education scholars, this paper uses “higher education” to refer to “academic higher education”, as opposed to vocational further education (see Powell and Solga 2010). The specific use of this terminology also reflects the fact that, as will be underlined below, processes of Europeanisation of higher education involve networks across universities, as providers of (academic) higher education.

The first European wave of access started from the late 1980s: in the period from 1987-88 to 1996-97 there was an increase in participation of at least 50% of young people aged 20-29 in the countries considered (Eurydice 1998: 139). However, the mass expansion of higher education, consisting in reaching more than 50% participation of young cohorts, is more recent and has occurred in the 2000s. On average the participation rate in many countries in the EU has

reached the 50% mark in the 20-29 generation (EQUNET 2010): from the peaks of about 65-70% reached in eastern European countries and in the Baltic countries (Latvia, Poland and Slovakia), to 60% in the Nordic countries (Finland and Sweden) and the lowest rates reached in continental countries (Austria, Belgium and Germany), showing a participation of about 40%.

The role of European policy making in promoting wider participation in higher education has been fundamental. Since the late 1990s/early 2000s European institutions have increasingly referred to the double goals-approach of widening access into higher education to improve “equity” (as a proxy of equal access to higher education) and establishing a knowledge-based economy, as in the aims of the Lisbon Agenda. The Bologna Process (2007a), designed to create uniform systems of higher education in Europe, made clear that, “The need to increase competitiveness must be balanced with the objective of improving the social characteristics of the European Higher Education Area, aiming at strengthening social cohesion and reducing social and gender inequalities both at national and at European level.” This principle has been confirmed by the London Communiqué (Bologna Process 2007b): “The student body entering, participating in and completing Higher Education at all levels should reflect the diversity of populations”. The Education and Training 2020 (ET 2020) strategy, a framework for European co-operation in education and training approved by the European Council in May 2009, identified as emerging goals: “promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship”. The Education, Youth and Culture Council meeting regarding higher education in May 2010 also underscored the need for “promoting widened access” by supporting students financially (see EQUNET 2010).

In the meantime, processes of integrating higher education policies have been in place, culminating in the creation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in 2010. It needs to be underlined that the EHEA is specifically oriented towards promoting university higher education – if we consider the differences within “further” education systems mentioned previously. The EHEA is, in fact, originated from the Bologna Process, which is a network of collaboration involving universities. As argued by Powell and Solga (2010), this model has privileged general higher education systems, challenging systems oriented on vocational further education.

Also the EHEA social dimension has a three-sided rationale which mixes the two goals: enhancing equal opportunity has the potential of allowing all individuals to “have equal opportunities to take advantage of higher education leading to personal development” as “the strong social dimension is a necessary prerequisite for all students to successfully enter, carry out and complete their studies” (Bologna Process 2007a: 12). Secondly, it has the scope of reinforcing “the social, cultural and economic development of our societies” under the assumption that “inequities in education and training systems increase the risk of unemployment, social exclusion and, in the end, result in large costs to society” (p. 12). This last point emphasises, therefore, the social costs of a lack of diffusion of higher education. There is also a specific reference to competitiveness: the third rationale is that “a strong social dimension enhances the quality and attractiveness of European higher education” from other countries and continents (p. 12).

On the one hand, this double-faced argument has worked: as emphasised by the Eurostudent project (2008) the student population in Europe has become more heterogeneous in its social make-up. More students from lower socio-economic

backgrounds participate in university since its mass expansion, even though they are proportionally less represented (Furlong and Cartmel 2009). However, higher education does not necessarily lead anymore to graduate jobs and, according to recent studies, the expectations of entering into higher education to reach a graduate job are increasingly misguided. For example, the study by Bell and Blanchflower (2010) indicates the incidence of graduate youth unemployment in Europe. Also the paper by Green and Zhu (2008) presents evidence of over-qualification, job dissatisfaction and declining returns to graduate education.

The social dimension in our European universities entails not only the issue of entrance into university systems (which has been the main focus of European policy making), but also the quality of the experience of university. There is evidence in the literature indicating how the experience of higher education itself is increasingly challenging for young people. Studies in Sweden (Christensson et al. 2010) have explored the issue of well-being of young people in higher education arguing that “there are indications of a high prevalence of psychological distress among students in higher education” (p. 1), as transitional effects characterising the period of higher education. Also, a study by El Ansari et al. (2011) in seven UK institutions concluded that the level of health complaints and psychological problems is relatively high and calls for awareness of university administrations as integral to promoting the well-being of students. Student well-being is not simply caused by individual characteristics and constitutes an inherent part of the social dimension of higher education, as demonstrated by the increasing use of counseling services offered by European universities. As underlined by critical social policy theorists, student well-being is influenced by the politics and policies of higher education, by the types of student support and by the attempt of constructing individualised experiences (see Baker et al. 2006). In sum, national and European institutions cannot limit their function to “putting more young people into higher education”. Beyond enrolment rates, the quality of the experience of higher education could be affected by the presence of diffuse problems of mental well-being, which constitutes another area of interest in higher education policies.

The double-sided argument of investing in higher education to increase competitiveness and ensure social inclusion and equality has neglected the social dimension of higher education and, in particular, the role of the systems of student support in both limiting the inequalities in the university experience, but also facilitating a positive experience of university.

→ 2. Comparing the different systems of student support in Europe

The systems of student support are the natural companions of students in higher education: they have direct implications for the quality and inequalities of this experience. The experience of young people in university is and will be intrinsically affected by the possibility of financing their studies, meeting their living costs and by the types of sources used for those purposes.

Several studies, in particular in the UK, have shown that financing the experience of higher education through labour-market participation makes the experience of higher education very unequal (Metcalf 2003): those who work while studying have less time and energy to join academic and extra-curricular activities. Moreover, those students who participate more in the labour market are also more likely to

come from lower socio-economic backgrounds (Metcalf 2003; Purcell et al. 2009) and this reinforces the existing inequality present before starting university. This also means that young people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds will have a more difficult experience of higher education. Paradoxically universities aim to include more of these young people through widening participation programmes.

The first source of inequality in the experience is linked to the resources that young people receive from their family which are, by definition, highly affected by their backgrounds. Continuing studies into university means a protraction of the status of dependency of young people on the family. Catan, referring to the extended transition involving higher education, asks provokingly who is supposed to “shoulder the continuing need of young adults for material, financial and institutional support during this extended period of dependence?” (2004: 3). According to the Eurostudent data (2008), often the family meets these increasing costs of participation in higher education, creating a paradoxical effect of postponing independence and adulthood and reinforcing inequalities. Moreover, often the family cannot meet these costs and, therefore, this inability to provide additional sources of income limits the experience of higher education, as well as the possibility of entering into higher education.

The systems of student support managed at the state level have been introduced with the precise aim of permitting equal access to all students. The European Higher Education Area refers to the social dimension; however, due to the existing diversity of the 45 countries that have joined the EHEA, the working groups of the EHEA have refrained from reaching a specific consensus on how to define the social dimension. While processes of Europeanisation are in place in the higher education area, the “social dimension” of higher education remains managed at the level of the nation state. As underlined in one of the official documents of the EHEA:

In many countries, state support is provided to students and their families in order to alleviate financial barriers to higher education. Public support schemes which provide direct monetary support to students vary across the Bologna countries... Within the Bologna Area, the proportion of public expenditure on tertiary education dedicated to both forms of support (grants and loans) ranged from less than 5% to more than 20% in 2005 (Eurostat 2009: 13).

In particular, we can identify several regimes of student support which group several countries showing the same characteristics. Those “regimes” represent ideal types of models of student support and follow the tradition of social policy research. For example, Esping-Andersen (1990) has notoriously identified different welfare regimes: social-democratic, continental and liberal, which show different characteristics and are based on different social policies. Following the same tradition, Walther (2006) has identified different models of youth policies in Europe, including social inclusion, labour market and education policies.

Similarly, those models have been tested recently in higher education policies by Willemse and Beer (2012): by exploring decommodification and stratification in university policies, they have found discrepancies with the traditional division found in Esping-Andersen (1990). Despite those differences, identifying models can serve as an analytical basis for reflecting on the comparative difference of student support in Europe: processes of harmonisation and Europeanisation of higher education are not having an impact on the distinctive models of student

support which reflect the different “cultures” of student support in higher education in Europe. These models emphasise that young people in higher education in Europe have a different experience and that systems of student support do contribute in shaping their lives in higher education.

The models can be confronted by looking at several aspects of the social dimension in higher education:

- The level of fees: this dimension varies greatly across Europe. In some countries, fees represent the main expenditure for young people wanting to embark on higher education (liberal countries). However, this is not an issue in Nordic countries, for example, where domestic students do not have to pay tuition fees.
- The instruments (or tools) of policies: higher education costs (fees) and living costs (accommodation, books, and so on) are often met with the tools of student support, in particular with loans or grants. Grants are the first instrument used in constructing systems of students support. Some countries have introduced loans since the early development of their systems (for example, Sweden), while others have introduced them later on (for example, in the UK they were introduced in 2004). The use of grants and loans has a different impact on the experience of young people: while grants represent forms of support which do not need to be repaid, loans have a long-term impact and influence the income of young people after higher education, as those forms of support need to be repaid. Loans represent essentially a “bet” on young people’s futures, in the specific sense that systems of loans are based on calculations on the future income of graduates. While their capacity of being repaid in a time of high graduate unemployment is currently challenged, loans have been increasingly used to support students in Europe. In some ways, loans have been a way to avoid strict targets in selecting the recipients of student support: even the most generous welfare states of the Nordic countries have not been able to afford universal systems of support based solely on non-repayable grants. On the contrary, systems of loans have been offered to the entire student population to enlarge the scope of systems of student support, offering convenient interest rates. The impact of loans is a double-edged sword as they ensure the universality of the systems of student support, but they can represent a risky bet in a time in which graduate unemployment is particularly high. Moreover, the reliance on loans may discourage students from lower socio-economic backgrounds and, therefore, could represent a barrier to university entry.
- The degrees of universalism and means-testing: although this might seem a very technical aspect, it has direct implications in the everyday lives of young people. This is a dimension of comparison that tells us if the systems of student support are giving a contribution in the form of grants or loans to all young people as students (universal forms), or to young people on the basis of their family background (means-tested) or of their income from their participation in the labour market, in the case of independent and mature students. There is no unique view on this in Europe: some systems treat young people as completely independent individuals, detached from their family (typically Nordic countries), while other models size the contribution on the basis of the family income, under the assumption that the family still contributes to sustain young people during higher education (Eurydice 1998: 115).
- The levels of student support (settings): this dimension looks at how generous those systems of student support have been in supporting young people in higher education. While some systems of support cover all educational and living costs, other contribute with “residual” forms of support. Who is going to cover those increasing costs? Two main forms are used by young people in higher education: family sources, both in the form of cash, but also by avoiding paying accommodation costs (for example, opting for living with parents during higher education), and the sources coming from participation in the labour market. An increasing number of students enter into the

labour market during university to meet their living costs and are often employed in non-graduate jobs. Contributions from the labour market, family and the state vary a lot across European countries. The Eurostudent (2008) study shows the comparative variation in the role of the labour market and the family in student income: in eastern European countries such as Slovakia and Czech Republic, labour-market sources are fundamental (respectively 92% and 72% of student income); countries in which the contribution of family sources is more important are southern European countries (Portugal and Greece show an incidence of 72% and 69% of family sources over total student income) and continental countries such as Germany (58%) and Belgium (56%).

All these dimensions allow us to identify four different systems of support that partially overlap with the welfare regime division found by Esping-Andersen (1990):

- Nordic countries (Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Norway): in these countries the state is particularly generous in supporting young people in university and offers a combination of grants and loans which cover almost all students. As underlined by Schwarz and Rehburg, most students in these countries have independent housing and “they are considered to be mature people who go their own way, with financial assistance from the public” and also as “self-responsible investors” (2004: 531).
- Continental countries (France, Belgium, Germany and Austria): the state in these countries has an important function of providing systems of student support but with a specific logic: “the parents are responsible for the education of their children and the State will only intervene if parents are not or not sufficiently able to pay” (Schwarz and Rehburg, 2004: 531). In this system, young students are regarded as young learners. The role of parents is particularly important in providing accommodation or covering accommodation costs, while the level of fees in these countries remains quite low.
- Southern European countries (Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece): the state provides forms of support in a residual way only to the students that need it the most. The main role in student support is guaranteed by students’ families. For this reason, young people in university here are still considered “children sheltered by their families” (Schwarz and Rehburg 2004: 531). The level of fees remains low or non-existent.
- Liberal countries (the UK): in these countries, the level of fees is particularly high, and students are considered “investors’ of their future careers” (Schwarz and Rehbug 2004: 531). Many students receive public support that is means-tested and dependent on family income. Moreover, students often actively participate in the labour market during higher education (Table 1).

Table 1: The characteristics of the different models of student support in European countries

	Nordic	Southern European	Continental	Liberal
Fees	No fees	Medium	Medium	High
Grants	Universal	Very residual	Medium	Only students below a certain threshold
Loans	Universal	Not diffused	Not diffused	Means-tested
Participation in the labour market	From medium (Sweden) to high (Finland)	Low-medium	Low	Medium/high
Family contributions	Low	High	High	Medium

Table 1 sums up some of the qualitative differences of the systems of student support; these systems are embedded in the history of the welfare state and in the cultures of student support across Europe. Therefore, understanding how young people will live in the future implies understanding how these long-term systems are evolving. Will the current crisis harmonise these systems? How do processes of Europeanisation taking place in higher education impact on these systems?

→ 3. Looking at the future: the impact of recent policy changes

Several commentators have recently discussed the impact of current trends of welfare state retrenchment and the turn to austerity affecting European welfare states (Taylor-Gooby 2012). Some of those scholars have also foreseen the existence of a “neoliberal revolution” (Hall 2011) taking in place in Europe. While the analyses of the impact of public cuts might differ, there seems to be an agreement in the scholarly debate regarding the presence of a European trend of public cuts after the economic crisis affecting European welfare states and, in particular, southern European (Spain, Italy and Greece) and Anglo-Saxon welfare state models (the UK) (King et al. 2012).

Higher education policies and the systems of student support are an integral part of the welfare state (Willemse and Beer, 2012). The trend of austerity might lead to an increasing convergence towards a European model characterised by a higher role of the market – therefore towards a liberal model. Outside these general trends, higher education shows specific features. The case of student support seems to fall into what Hacker (2004) called a case of privatising risk without privatising the welfare state, in particular due to the fact that European social policies have offered “incomplete risk protection in an era of dramatic social change”, in this case of dramatic expansion of the participation of young people in university. Hacker’s (2004) contribution has emphasised how processes of welfare state retrenchment have to be assessed by looking at the exogenous pressures on the welfare system. In this case, the exogenous pressure is represented by the sustainability of the system in the context of mass-expanded higher education. Several changes have affected the systems of student support; in particular the fact that higher education systems have not changed dramatically nor adapted to mass access into higher education in the 2000s has already made those systems incapable of answering to the increasing needs of young people in higher education. This problem has affected, in particular, the models of student support that, as we have seen before, are not universal, but target the poorest part of the student population: in these cases, the conditions for eligibility have become increasingly hard to meet and the system of support itself has become even more residual.

Outside these medium-term changes, the systems of student support have been challenged by the last reforms that occurred after the economic crisis. For the scope of this paper, I will briefly summarise a few policy changes affecting three countries which belong to three different models of student support in order to show how these changes have affected various systems: Sweden, England and Italy.

Sweden has not introduced major reforms regarding the systems of student support for Swedish nationals. However, the overall system without fees (both for Swedish nationals and EU, but also international students) has been challenged by the government bill “Competing on the basis of quality – tuition fees for foreign students”. According to this bill, which was passed in 2009, higher education

remains free of charge for Swedish citizens and citizens of an EU/EEA state or Switzerland, but third-country students pay tuition fees as of the autumn term 2011. Although this reform does not affect systems of student support that, by definition, are dedicated to Swedish nationals, it signals a change in the funding principles of higher education. The specific change in the direction of quality is that the introduction of fees for third-country students would be a part of the new funding system of higher education: the Higher Education Minister Tobian Krantz proposed and approved the new quality system for which the introduction of third-country fees would release SEK 500-600 (€55-66 million) available for top-performing universities. This reform signals a shift regarding the attention towards competitiveness. This decision was followed by protests in the higher education systems, culminating with the decision of the university chancellor Anders Flodstrom to resign from the National Agency with an open letter. The conflict is motivated by the measure of the quality of higher education (on student independent work, without taking into account “the content and examination of the training”) and a shift towards performance indicators. The shift towards liberal principles of competition and performance is certainly a sign of changes in the social-democratic Swedish system, even if the level of grants and loans has remained stable and the Swedish system is, comparatively, still one of the most generous for young people in Europe.

Most direct changes in the system of student support have occurred in England and in Italy. In England, the system of loans was introduced in the 1990s and, since 2004, graduates are able to take loans, not only for covering their living costs, but also to cover their tuition fees. Therefore, students in England often take both maintenance loans (if they are not entitled to a grant) and tuition loans. The most recent changes introduced after the crisis concerned changes in the level of “generosity” of the system and of student support. The system of grants, guaranteed to everybody in Sweden, is residual in England: a grant of up to £2 800 for incomes below £25 000. The original goal of the last reforms was to make the system more “progressive”, but the final result is that the system has become more residual: for students with parents earning up to £25 000 there is a slight rise in the maintenance grant of £27 per month (BIS 2010). Families with income up to £42 000 are now entitled to a partial grant – the threshold has therefore decreased (it used to be £50 020 per year) and the system is becoming increasingly residual. However, the most radical change introduced in England by the coalition government revolves around the dramatic rise in the maximum levels of fees (from £3 290 to £9 000). This change risks increasing the level of debt taken by young students in a system which is already reliant on diffused forms of loans to sustain both tuition fees and living costs of young people in higher education.

In Italy, the system of student support has been reformed after the economic crisis on two different occasions. The first reform took place during Berlusconi's government in 2010 with the “Gelmini Reform” (Law 240/2010) which created a “Fund for Merit” (Article 4) to “award the most deserving students” with a national test. This “Fund for Merit” has been funded by private funders, but also by state resources previously used for the most disadvantaged students (from the “right to study” funding, in Italian: *diritto allo studio*). As underlined by several scholars, the existing form of student support for the most disadvantaged students has become increasingly residual after the mass expansion of Italian higher education (Prato 2006). Not only is entering into this system particularly difficult, but many students who are eligible do not get grants and bursaries due to the lack of resources available at the regional level, creating the peculiar phenomenon

of “entitled students who cannot benefit for lack of sources” (in Italian: *studenti ideonei non beneficiari*). The reform introduced by the Gelmini Reform represented, therefore, a change in the scope and goals of student support, transferring the scarce resources available to the most disadvantaged students to students who have achieved high levels of performance (Antonucci 2011).

Most recent reforms have affected the system of student support indirectly; in particular the main changes have been introduced in the spending review of Monti’s government in 2012, with the scope of limiting public spending in higher education as well. These changes have affected the levels of fees for a specific category of students who do not complete their degree in the years originally established (*fuori corso*). Those students, who are often working students (in Italy part-time degrees are offered by a minority of institutions), will face an increase of their fees which will be used to finance the general system of student support (Laudisia 2012). While the system of student support is becoming more conditional, regions are facing a scarcity of funds from the state, which is reflected in an increase in the level of taxes paid by all students to finance the system of student support (Eurydice 2011).

The changes described above seem to contradict the recent statements of the EHEA on the social dimension that should be promoted in the following way: by making higher education accessible to all, but also by supporting living costs faced in higher education. The last working groups of EHEA state in fact that “[s]tudents should have appropriate studying and living conditions, so that they can complete their studies within an appropriate period of time without obstacles related to their social and economic background” (Bologna Process 2007a: 13). Moreover, more resources should be put into higher education to create systems of counseling and allow widening access. Finally, “[g]overnments should take measures to help students, especially from socially disadvantaged groups, in financial and economic aspects with a view to widening access” (Bologna Process 2007a: 13). All these aspects seem currently overlooked as per the last report from the Eurydice network (2011) on modernising higher education, which presents evidence of ongoing cuts in the public resources devoted to student support in higher education.

The most striking contradiction between declarations and European policies comes from the “social dimension of student mobility” which is directly managed at the European level. In the declarations of the EHEA it is argued that “mobility should be promoted by overcoming obstacles to the effective exercise of free movement” with particular attention to students (from the Bologna Declaration). Due to the lack of available funding, the Commission on Education and Training has proposed a new “Erasmus of All” programme (2014-2020), which proposes the introduction of an “Erasmus Loan Guarantee” for Masters students in Erasmus (European Commission 2011). Shifting the instruments, in a time of economic crisis, from grants to loans risks increasing the high level of debt already taken by young people in higher education. In fact, young people face increasing problems in paying back these loans due to the high level of youth unemployment and lower incomes of graduates. This proposal has been in fact opposed by the European Students Union which argues that loans will not cover the costs of some of the most attractive destinations for students in Erasmus and will affect students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, discouraging their mobility (ESU 2012).

→ 4. Lives of young people in higher education in 2020 and what we can do about it

The condition of young people in higher education in 2020 will be highly dependent on the impact of the last reforms described in the previous pages. In a climate characterised by increasingly residual forms of student support, decreased public spending, higher competition and funding for a few excellent students, the experience of higher education risks becoming increasingly differentiated. Entering into higher education will not only be more difficult, but will also have different implications for young people, depending on their socio-economic backgrounds and their capacity to afford higher education and face the living costs associated with this experience. In other words, the varieties of the student experience (Ainley 2008) will be multiplied.

In those countries affected by an increase of student fees, as in England, one possible consequence feared by analysts was an immediate drop in the enrolment rates. The data show that while higher education enrolment has dropped (between 1% to 8% in different countries) this drop has not been dramatic and, counter-intuitively, it has mainly attracted students from middle classes and lower-middle classes (UCAS 2012). These students, as in the description of the liberal system above, are likely to get fewer grants from the system which is increasingly targeting the poorest and are therefore going to suffer more than others the impact of the recent changes which push them to take on higher levels of loans (Guardian 2012a).

The important element to underline is that the mass dropout from higher education has not taken place in the countries affected by the shift towards higher personal costs of higher education and this is unlikely to happen in 2020: as affirmed by Welby (Guardian, 2012b) it is not the fear of debt that stops poorer students from going into university; some of these students are already excluded a priori from access to higher education. Moreover, participation in higher education represents a major cultural change in Europe. Higher education is now seen as a fundamental step to reach a certain level of "employability". Allen and Ainley (2010) in *Lost generation?* describe entering into higher education a race not to climb down the ladder: the labour market is increasingly competitive and access into higher education represents the essential step to compete in European labour markets. This does not mean that graduates will be able to achieve graduate jobs as they face the risk of underemployment; certainly, this competitive race increases the discrepancies between university graduates and young people who have dropped education studies. Most importantly, these policy changes will not be without consequences for the experience of higher education itself. Young people are going to have more debts, more loans and increasingly rely on family sources to face the costs of higher education. Debt influences the post-university lives of young people and potentially future labour-market choices. Young people are also likely to participate more in the labour market during their studies in order to face the increasing costs; with the scarcity of jobs available to graduates, young people in higher education will risk getting stuck in low-skilled jobs.

The future of university is likely to be affected by the conditions of the labour market: in times of crisis and high youth unemployment participation in higher education remains high. We do not know if in 2020 Europe will still face a period of economic crisis, but if this is the case, policy makers will still encourage participation in higher education. From a policy point of view, having young people

in higher education, and particularly in university, may represent a cheaper solution than spending on unemployment policies. Moreover, a high rate of young people in higher education translates into better youth unemployment figures, as is currently the case.

At this point, the reader will think that the image of young people in higher education in 2020 I am depicting here looks hopelessly gloomy. While the assessment of the current policy changes does not lead to an encouraging view, one can still explore alternative scenarios. First of all, the policies set up in many countries can be reversed in the next few years by counter-reforms that increase the level of spending in higher education and develop systems of student support.

Furthermore, an essential room for manoeuvre is represented by the increasing scope of European policies in this area. The discussion on systems of student support is likely to be increasingly European, as demonstrated by the institutionalisation of the EHEA. This is not necessarily positive: as recently underlined by Garben (2012), many reforms in the field of higher education and in the direction of public cuts have been implemented via soft law in an environment of democratic deficit, while social aspects have been largely neglected in European policy making. The basis for more participatory reforms in higher education, as argued by Garben, has to be found in EU law. In 2020 I foresee, perhaps optimistically, a higher political participation in European policy making in the field of young people and higher education and the creation of European tools to defend the social dimension of higher education. As put by Garben (2012: 26):

Although “the weight of Europe” is deployed to push reforms into an economic direction, it is not Europe or Europeanization *per se* that forces a neo-liberal view on educational affairs. It is very well possible to aspire to a strong and unified Europe, without borders for educational mobility and with an active role in educational policy, also for non-economic reasons.

Higher education is becoming an essential part of the political debate and this is likely to be even more the case in 2020. Many young university students have joined European protests against austerity, in particular in southern Europe (Guardian, 2012c). This means that university settings and student unions are also transforming politics, as they are providing new spaces of political exchange and they are becoming important actors in shaping the political socialisation of young people. To a certain extent, they are also replacing traditional actors in political socialisation, such as trade unions. Student protests focus on specific politics and policies adopted at the European level and they do not oppose Europe and EU institutions *per se*; on the contrary they tend to show patterns of Europeanisation and forms of transnational collaboration while their discourses reveal a European vision of higher education. In 2020, this process of integration will further develop leading to an increasing development of common European discourses in student politics and in higher education policy making. Policy makers are challenged to include these new actors in the policy arena, rather than seeing these political manifestations as outsider elements.

Finally, we are now in a situation in which the specific role of university has changed: from a place for the elite, universities have become mass systems for young people looking for better job prospects. At the same time, European policy making has almost entirely neglected the systems of vocational training which establish a closer link between education and the labour market. At

the same time, universities have been transformed from providers of academic knowledge to enhancers of employability, as if they were massed systems for vocational training. As I have analysed with other colleagues in a forthcoming paper in *Queries* for the Foundation of European Progressive Studies (Antonucci et al. 2013), there is no automatic link between putting more people into higher education and increasing the level of employment. This depends, in fact, also on the creation of graduate jobs via labour-market policies and on the presence of supply-side policies. While it is not possible to foresee what will happen in 2020, the hope is to develop universities as places detached from the primary function of leading to better labour-market outcomes and which focus on their social role of guaranteeing to everybody a chance to learn. This includes the possibility for young people to study what they like, not what is likely to get them a job or pay back their loans, and for enjoying their experiences in university without facing the burden of not being able to meet their study and living costs. While this might be a risky argument to support in times of high levels of youth unemployment, it is driven by the positive (and maybe naive) hope that the experiences of young people in higher education in 2020 will be better than those of young people in 2013.

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Valentina Cuzzocrea

Projecting the category of NEET into the future

→ 1. Introduction

The concept of NEET, indicating those youth “not in employment, education or training” has been a popular reference in the media. NEETs “lack skills needed for first jobs”, said BBC News on 23 May 2012; “record number of young people not in education, work or training”, claimed the education correspondent for the Guardian on 24 February 2011; “NEETs: the forgotten underclass”, wrote the Telegraph on 15 November 2012, adding, “the future looks bleak for today’s young people not in education, employment or training”. The website reporting data gathered by the Bank of Italy reported that in 2010, Italy had 2.2 million NEETs, that is, 23.4% of the population aged between 15 and 29, and therefore they ought to be called the “NEET generation”. News about the rising numbers of NEETs across Europe, the conditions they face and their unpredictable future, is being used to illustrate the seriousness of the situation of youth across the EU. In this sense, one could say that the focus on NEETs aligns the recent global recession with the worsening of conditions for youth.

Clearly, this demonstrates the pervasive use of the term at the international level, with many international organisations

and NGOs taking it a key indicator. Among others, the European Commission, through the Europe 2020 initiative *Youth on the Move*, has recently invited EU countries to develop the concept further (European Commission 2010). The truth is that “the cost of the NEETs is about €100 billion each year and represented, in 2010, nearly 13% of the young generation (aged 15 to 24 years) – or 7.5 million young people – in the European Union (Eurofound 2011: 9). As the Eurofound report notes: “NEET has been introduced as a key statistical indicator for youth unemployment and social situation of young people in the framework of the Europe 2020 growth strategy, alongside the youth unemployment rate and the unemployment ratio” (2012: 21).

Signs of the category’s dominance are apparent in youth research too. Scholars such as Jones (2002) and Roberts (2010) have talked about a polarisation between the so-called “choice biographies” (slow transitions characterised by long periods spent in education), and NEETs’ transitions (fast-track transitions), claiming that little attention has been paid to those young people who do not identify themselves in either of these extreme positions, and therefore urging for more research to be done among “ordinary” youth (Shildrick and MacDonald 2006; Roberts 2010). This argument has fuelled a vigorous debate in youth studies, one which has touched upon the theoretical foundations of what it means for today’s youth to lack linear transitions, as well as Ulrich Beck’s seminal work *Risk Society* (1992, ed. or 1986), in which he first inspired new interpretations of destandardised biographies (Woodman 2009; Roberts 2011, 2012).

However, only partial contributions have so far been made in terms of discussing conceptual problems and inconsistencies arising from the use of the term NEET, with some exceptions in the case of the UK (notably Furlong 2006, 2007; MacDonald 2011; Yates and Payne 2006) that I will use as a starting point in this paper. Entrenched as it is in the so-called “triangle” between policy, research and practice, we can expect that the category will continue to fuel the debate in the years to come. In considering such current diffusion and projection into the future, the variety of its possible uses and meanings, and the possibility that the concept is refined, this paper is firstly intended to review the category of the NEET, to trace its origins and assess it as an instrument for future analyses of transitions and full inclusion of youth in society. My arguments will be then developed by noting the importance of the characteristics of the welfare regimes in which the young people live, in particular with reference to Italy, to illustrate the heterogeneity underlying the concept that has to be addressed. I will finally consider the weaknesses of the category that must be tackled should the concept continue to be used in the European debate.

→ 2. Defining NEETs

In the last few decades, we have become accustomed to a situation where it is not only difficult to enter the labour market for the first time, but it is also usual to experience discontinuous employment for some years after this first entrance, and this has been exacerbated by the recent economic crisis. In this scenario, the importance of enhancing one’s employability is high. However, the term NEET has only existed since 1996. Previously, issues related to youth exclusion and vulnerability were conceived of and measured by the concept of youth unemployment. It was a “simple dichotomy” between employment and unemployment, with no grey area in between (Furlong 2007: 101). In relation to unemployment, Furlong – who speaks of the concept of NEET as “having now replaced that of

youth unemployment” (2006: 553) – advocates not dismissing its use: “we can speak authoritatively about aspects of its prevalence, causes and consequences and about ways of reducing its incidence. It is important not to abandon this substantial knowledge base or to lose sight of the ways in which youth unemployment, particularly long-term unemployment, can lead to marginalization or exclusion” (2006: 555). Given this view, why has the NEET become such a powerful indicator? What additional explanatory power does it have that previous categories do not have? Was it even conceived of with this intention? What context has allowed it to flourish? Will any future changing scenario support its existence? These are some of the questions I will try to answer in this paper, beginning with a definition of the term.

The term NEET is used to refer to those who are “neither in employment nor in any education nor training”. A report from Eurofound (2012), which looks at the characteristics, costs and policy responses across Europe of this NEET group, states that this definition “is in principle straightforward”. However, different definitions are used in different countries and different international organisations have, as result, set their own definitions or subgroups to encompass this variety.

The first difference is related to age: most European countries today refer to youths as between 15 and 24 years old, and as a result are able to use national data from the Labour Force Survey. This is the version used by the European Commission in 2011, by the International Labour Organization (ILO), and has been implemented by Eurostat; and in fact the indicator is used as a reference in the Europe 2020 strategy (as noted by Eurofound 2012: 21-22). In other cases, the limit is lower (for instance, in Scotland, the range 16 to 19 years has been indicated, Scottish Executive 2005). In some other cases it is higher: up to 34 years, as in Korea and Japan. Intuitively, such an international disagreement makes comparisons difficult. Clearly, the NEET population is a very heterogeneous one:

Following the ILO definition, the unemployment rate is a measure of those who are out of work, but have looked for work in the past month and are able to start in the next two weeks. It records the share of the economically active population who are not able to find a job. ... In contrast, the definition of NEET ... records the share of the population of *all* young people currently disengaged from the labour market and education (Eurofound 2012: 22, emphasis added).

The Eurofound report identifies five main subgroups: the conventionally unemployed; the unavailable (that is, young carers, the sick and disabled); the disengaged (including discouraged workers as well as other young people who are pursuing dangerous or asocial lifestyles); the opportunity-seekers; and the voluntary NEETs: “those young people who are travelling and those constructively engaged in other activities such as art, music and self-directed learning” (Eurofound 2012: 24). The Scottish Executive adds those with limiting long-term illness (LLTI), family disadvantage and poverty, substance abuse, young offenders, those with additional support needs and educational disaffection (2005: 1). Also, there are those in voluntary work or working part time.

However, there is another, more substantial level which complicates these ambiguities. In fact, the definition may be intended to capture different aspects of the same social phenomenon. Notably, in some countries the number of NEETs becomes “a measure of disengagement from the labour market and perhaps from society in general” (Eurofound 2012: 1), a threat to integration, a “risk”.

More precisely, being a NEET is primarily associated with such conditions as “deprivation; financial exclusion; low attainment; weak family and other support networks (such as peers); stigma and attitudes of others and debt-aversity” (Scottish Executive 2005: 1); or being in a general condition of vulnerability with low human capital (with likely effects on employment outcomes and earnings), low educational attainment and poor family background (Furlong 2006), being unemployed regularly or having a poor level of participation in the labour market (Furlong 2007), and showing scarce engagement in politics (Volontè 2012: 11). Such factors will have negative effects on future employment outcomes and earnings as well as on physical and mental health (difficult relationships, drug and substance abuse, involvement in criminal activities). The dominant interpretation is that these conditions define a scenario of social exclusion (Eurofound 2012: 25), disadvantage and disaffection, putting NEETs at the margin of society and not just in need of financial support. Although some have defined this interpretation as distorted (Yates and Payne 2006), it is apparent that the category is an important one not only to assess youth without employment, but also to capture what the stigma around being perceived as a NEET is, current attitudes towards this social group, and the willingness to limit the rise of potential problems.

According to MacDonald, while there is little doubt that “young people who are NEET can face a range of disadvantages”, it is also true that the category may include “emerging adults” (in the sense that Arnett (2000) gives to this group), who are simply better off and “experimenting with life-style choices, postponing firm occupational commitments, perhaps enjoying gap years”; and the fact that they are counted as NEET is a distortion. It should be much clearer that “different resources and opportunities are available for different groups” (MacDonald 2011: 431). In summary, the problem of the heterogeneity of the group means that the category is a “flawed concept”, merging some “extremely disadvantaged” with others who are in fact “able to exercise choices” (Furlong 2006: 553) and ultimately, such a heterogeneity is overlooked (again, Furlong 2006). MacDonald concludes that the usefulness of the NEET category is therefore “compromised” and may fail to identify those who are genuinely “particularly vulnerable to marginalization or exclusion”. We’ll come back to the policy implications of these later on. To properly understand the category, I now turn back to its origins.

→ 3. Where does the concept of NEETs come from?

As Furlong reports (2007), the concept of NEET first came about in the UK as a response to a specific political climate and a change in the benefit regimes for youth. The term was first used in place of “Status Zer0”, which indicated the lack of any status whatsoever. Status Zer0 was used to refer to 16- and 17-year olds who were ineligible for unemployment benefits because they were underage, but who had remained cut off from youth training programmes. This term, used by Istance et al. in a study published in 1994 for the first time, was then changed to Status A, but remained a technical term related to careers services records. Some of the tensions and policy issues were identified early on (Williamson 1997).

Furlong (2007) argues that early definitions held a negative connotation and suggested the construction of a discourse of vulnerability in the UK among young people who were not engaged in “positive” activities. For Williamson (2005: 13), the label became “a crude proxy by which wider forms of ‘social exclusion’ may be defined”.

With the publication of the UK Government's *Bridging the Gap* report in 1999 (Social Exclusion Unit 1999), researchers started to use the term NEET, a term which "clarify[ed] the concept by drawing immediate attention to the heterogeneous nature of the category, and ... avoid[ed] the negative connotations of lacking status" (Eurofound 2012: 19-20). The origin of the term explains why most studies to date have been conducted in the UK (Eurofound 2012: 53), and indeed this continues to be an important policy area in this country (MacDonald 2011), even though, as we have seen, the concept is now very common internationally. However, it is important to reflect on the early development of the concept especially because with the term Status Zer0, concern for those who seemed to "count for nothing and were going nowhere" had been well expressed (Williamson 1997, quoted in Eurofound 2012: 20).

It is regarding this aspect that I want to make some reflections. This last sentence is in fact very important as it suggests an overlooked component of the NEET logic: that of putting young people into boxes. As noted in the Eurofound report, in the case of New Labour, whose emergence dominated the changing political scenario, the priority was to show a strong commitment, when they took power in 1997, to improving employability in the context of the Welfare to Work scheme. This included the 16-18 age group, who were at that time seen as being in danger of social exclusion. Approximately 9% of this group, the report continues, were considered NEET and consequently encouraged to be pro-active, and to take responsibility for leaving this undesirable situation behind. Unless they located themselves in one of the boxes (employment, education, training) they were considered to be responsible for some sort of "deviance" and subject to sanctions according to the New Deal rules (Eurofound 2012). The priority was "to engage the disengaged", and "getting a job was seen as a way of avoiding exclusion" (France 2007: 64), and all this was seen in the context of a "blame culture" (France 2007: 65). The aim was to achieve this "by creat[ing] a new workforce with the vocational skills and abilities to manage social changes" – so far so good – yet it was also through "encouraging the poor and excluded to take their 'place' within the lower end of the labour market" (France 2007: 64) that this outcome was intended to be achieved. Not only was this a very specific, socially, economically and historically bounded process that has to be framed in a specific political scenario: it also underpinned a specific ideology, one where everyone has his/her own place and ought to be located accordingly.

→ 4. Weaknesses and ambivalences

In this section I will examine some of the criticisms that have been made of the NEET category and how these lead to the specific discussion I want to add to this debate.

A reminder of the history of the concept, where it originated and in response to what climate, has been included to suggest that the current use of the term is much wider than initial intentions. Overall, "the original UK concept of NEET was never intended to be applied to those aged 18-24 years and especially not to those aged 25-29 years. Neither was NEET ever seen as having potential for internationally comparative work" (Eurofound 2012: 26). In imagining a potential further diffusion of the term, this first level of criticism should be taken into consideration.

On a second level, it has to be recognised that the lack of an agreed definition makes comparative research complicated. Furlong says: "the replacement of

unemployment with NEET ... as a focus of policy has resulted in a situation where aggregation of discrete categories of experience (unemployment, caring, travelling, sick, resting, learning) into one all-embracing category (NEET) has led to a situation where we have to *disaggregate* to understand or to effectively target policies" (Furlong 2006: 554). However, despite its heterogeneity, NEET can actually be seen as a very narrow concept as well, in the sense that given the increasing prevalence of insecure work, those who work under such conditions are not necessarily being "recognized as vulnerable" (Furlong 2006: 566). In other words, "a broadly focused set of policies would encompass all of those in precarious positions or lacking advanced skills, irrespective of whether they were currently NEET or in employment or training" (p. 567). Therefore, it is envisaged that further explorations of the discourse of vulnerability can be made, if NEETs are to be taken as a measure of vulnerability.

Together with the necessity to redefine what kind of vulnerable young people NEETs are, the category of NEET also poses the *vexata quaestio* of how much responsibility lies with young people. Perhaps as a result of the ideological climate in which the term was created, NEET "is an ill considered concept that places an undue and often misleading emphasis on voluntarism" (Furlong 2006: 553), because "youth policy tends to construe being NEET as a problem *with* young people" (my emphasis) (MacDonald 2011: 431). They could point to structural problems in the labour market and aim to reduce them, rather than the number of NEETs (as in most cases, such as Chen 2011, Mascherini et al. 2010).

This represents a significant impasse, that is, that conceptually the use of the category reinforces some misunderstanding in the reading and interpretation of youth transitions today. There is not enough space here to reconstruct the debate on increasing insecurity and fragmentation of career paths of young people across Western countries today. However, even a minimal reference to this body of literature, which focuses on the lack of linearity, will make clear that young people often transit from one job to another, from education to work, from work to education again, and will then pause and come back to acquire new training in a dynamic way, whereas "NEET" is a "static policy category", as MacDonald has argued (2011: 431-432). Isn't there, then, at the heart of such an approach, a superficial reading of this increasing complexity? And isn't there a misconception that those who experience slow-track transition are unproblematic (because they remain in education for a long time and then immediately afterwards find employment), as already put forward by MacDonald (2011), possibly in contrast with initial intentions? Are we not just witnessing an attempt to put people in boxes without really interrogating what those boxes contain and why one would ever want to occupy one? The remainder of this paper will therefore be devoted to broadening this discussion in time and space: specifically, I will move from a UK-based debate to another context, that of a country characterised by a welfare system which makes the category irrelevant (albeit still used). I will then offer some general thoughts about how the mechanism can work further in the years to come.

→ 5. Changing context: the case of the NEETs in Italy

The remainder of this paper acknowledges and builds on the criticism in the previous section, and adds a further important dimension. I maintain that the usefulness of the category of NEET is linked to certain welfare characteristics of the country the youth live in. Generally speaking, the conditions of youth are very different when comparing youth living in countries where citizens are entitled to state support

regardless of their employment status v. countries where this status is irrelevant; countries where the training system ensures a smooth transition into employment v. countries where this is inefficient; or countries where markers to adulthood have very different cultural meanings. Disregarding such differences, and taking the notion of NEET too literally, might result in a rushed operation of “putting people in boxes” which risks drawing comparative pictures not representative of the real needs of youth, and consequently leading to the design of inefficient measures.

To illustrate this discussion, I will now discuss the category of NEET in relation to Italy. Italy is here taken as an example within the EU and not as an exception. In fact, the context in which the focus on the NEET has flourished in Italy is the same context that supported a “flexicurity” agenda across Europe.¹⁷ This was launched by the EU and was thought to enable full employment. The so-called OMC (open method of co-ordination) “aims to strike a balance between European integration and national diversity by encouraging convergence of objectives, performance and broad policy approaches, but not of specific programmes” (Keune 2008: 51). Along these lines, it would be unfair to state that there have not been efforts to tackle youth problems in Italy; in fact, a number of measures have been taken: amongst others, *Diritto al futuro* (Right to the future, November 2011), a package of measures adopted to counteract youth’s precarious conditions; Italy 2020, an action plan for youth employability through learning and employment integration; *Salva Italia* (Save Italy), *Cresci Italia* (Grow up Italy), *Semplifica Italia* (Simplify Italy), and *Partecipiamo!* (Let’s participate!), all measures to encourage the participation of children and adolescents. In general, a cross-sectoral approach has been taken.

Even though youth is recognised as a group that deserves protection, their problems are approached in a fragmented way. The following is an excerpt from the most recent National Report to the European Commission, which sets the basis of this fragmentation:

Italy doesn’t have a national youth law, but youth is constitutionally protected (Art. 31 of the Italian constitution) and according to that, over the years, a commitment of the State to safeguard young people has constantly characterized the political and legislative choices that accompanied interventions by the administration in office at the time The first initiatives implemented on behalf of younger generations were developed at local, municipal and regional levels, and began at the end of the 1970s, becoming in the years increasingly well constructed and multi-thematic so much that they adopted a transversal approach to tackle the problems and needs of the younger generations. Since the Constitutional Law n. 3/2001. Regions had got legislative and executive powers in all subject matters that are not expressly covered by State legislation, such as youth policies. For this reason there are many regional laws regarding youth topics and many agreements between the Government and the local authorities (Regions, Provinces and Municipalities) for the interventions to be carried out on the territory (National Report, Italy 2012: 1).

In line with this, several regions have actually pursued their own youth policies, often in ways that are incompatible with each other. Some of these regions, like Lombardia, have permanent working groups,¹⁸ and others, such as the Region of Puglia with

17. This is intended to be an attempt to conciliate flexibility and security in the labour market.

18. See http://www.politichegiovani.regione.lombardia.it/cs/Satellite?Page=child&pagename=DG_Giovanini%2FMILayout&cid=1213462586442&p=1213462586442&pagename=DG_GSTSWrapper, accessed 13 February 2013, in Italian.

its programme *Bollenti Spiriti*,¹⁹ have ongoing innovative and imaginative projects. Elsewhere, programmes with innovative potential, despite generosity in allocating funds, actually hide internal fractures and inconsistencies, showing a poor understanding of the real issues youth have to deal with, as in the Region of Sardinia's Master and Back and *Giovani Ricercatori* programmes.²⁰ The resulting scenario is one in which youth initiatives, in general, might differ significantly from each other, the most innovative being very likely promoted by highly motivated officials (and therefore individuals) rather than the result of institutions' efforts and co-ordination. Moreover, they all happen next to more traditional measures aimed at increasing the employment rate amongst young people, through helping create some space in the labour market for them, or helping them to find an existent place, so to speak, as in the case of the GRAL project (where this stands for *Gruppi di Ricerca Attiva di Lavoro*), spread out across several regions. So in a way we can say that most of these programmes use the logic of putting people into boxes and to confirm this, I quote the highly controversial recommendation that the Minister of Labour under Monti's "technical government", Elsa Fornero, gave to Italian youth on 23rd October 2012, when she declared in a public speech that they "should not be choosy" when first entering the labour market.

I will now discuss why I think that the category of NEET is not adequate to paint a picture of Italy's youth, by proposing a few issues which we should question, providing a sketch of how they are expressed in the case of Italy and by briefly commenting on possible scenarios in 2020.

Entitlement to social rights

Italy follows the southern European welfare system model, a development of the work of Esping-Andersen (1990, 1999), where it is characterised by a low level of welfare provision and a strong emphasis on the family (not the individual) as a recipient of benefits (Ferrera 1996). More precisely, Italy is characterised by a welfare system relying on opposing principles: a corporatist principle concerning retirement and unemployment based on belonging to professional categories; and universalistic criteria concerning the educational and health systems, based on citizenship rights (Colombo and Regini 2009). Therefore, young people do not expect to be "included in the game", nor to have responsibility for locating themselves in a certain position until they have taken a certain professional direction, especially if they engage in higher education.

Projection into 2020: clearly, such an unbalanced welfare system has a disorienting and inegalitarian effect. Hopefully by 2020, social rights will be extended in all EU countries.

Homogeneity/heterogeneity within the labour market

In Italy there is a strong divide in the labour market between those who are in typical employment, and those who have atypical employment arrangements, which defines a complex situation (Borghi 2000; Paci 2005). Moreover, the Italian system attaches benefits such as maternity leave to employment status, therefore only those with typical jobs are entitled to full rights, such as unemployment benefits, with the result of exacerbating social conflict. This means that having a temporary job is an excluding condition on many levels.

19. Available at <http://bollentispiriti.regione.puglia.it>, accessed 13 February 2013, in Italian.

20. For a comment, see Cuzzocrea and Tavani (under review).

Projection into 2020: the NEET approach does not consider fully, although it somehow departs from, the reality that employment is itself eroding in quality, especially for newcomers, and as such it risks eroding one's dignity. Looking at the scenario in 2020 requires us to pay attention to what kind of work opportunities institutions and government are creating for young people.

Transitions regime

Italy is characterised by a particularly delayed transition to adulthood, even within the established model of southern European countries (for an overview on the approach, see Walther 2006). Young adults are torn between a willingness to take their place in the public sphere, and awareness of not being able to meet society's demands (Donati and Scabini 1988; Diamanti 1999).

Projection into 2020: in Italy, common parlance easily attaches the word "youth" to adults in their late thirties or early forties. Demographers expect Italy to be a very old country in the years to come, as a cumulative result of the increase in life expectancy and a low rate of fertility. Statistical categories should agree on a concept of youth coherent with national patterns rather than simply raising the age range.

Structure of career paths

Italy lacks structured career paths, and suffers from a general weakness of institutions, such as professional bodies, in providing guidance for, and foreseeable development in, one's career (Cuzzocrea 2011). There is a general understanding that advancements in one's career are achieved through length of experience, rather than by meeting goals.

Projection into 2020: in countries like Italy, public services should be reinforced to support young people's job searches as well as orientation in one field or another. In the same vein, companies should be encouraged to offer good quality induction to newcomers and better structured guidance in the first years of a career to inform career passages and, more generally, career decisions.

Educational systems

In Italy, being a university student is a condition with very loose deadlines. A length of time to pass exams is suggested and encouraged (increasingly so), but not compulsory to a large extent. This makes it possible for a high percentage of university students to be enrolled at university for a very long time, even up to a decade. Intuitively, while a 21-year-old who studies at university is not a problem, a 28-year old who has been at university for ten years and has not graduated yet might well be a problem, but in the NEET terminology he/she will not be counted as such: as long as you are a student, you are not a problem.

Projection into 2020: while the pressure of the Bologna Process will possibly reduce the age gap of fresh graduates across the EU, this actual distortion does not allow us to size the problem of the NEETs in Italy, where the phenomenon of the *fuori corso* (university students taking several additional years to complete their degrees and entering the labour market at an older age than their European counterparts) has an impact. The German and Austrian university systems might also be subject to a similar issue. In 2020, either this group will be reduced or underestimated numbers and figures are likely to be released for this country.

Intergenerational relations

In Italy the family is “used” as a substitute for the state in providing support for economically unstable youth. Unemployment benefits are only granted to those who have been in employment for a certain length of time. Therefore it is impossible to support young school leavers. Culturally, the family takes the burden. According to Da Roit and Sabatinelli (2005), the familistic model in Italy can be described simply as a limited offer of public service, accompanied by the attribution of responsibility to the family. It could be argued that the state bases its policies on a model of the traditional family in which youth are only a part of the whole. In fact, they receive very little specific attention, at least until they form a nuclear family of their own. A precarious equilibrium is made possible by a system of mutual protection allowing young adults to live on their low earnings because they can count on domestic support and eventually on the retirement/disability pensions of their elders (Congi 2001).

Projection into 2020: a truly holistic approach today needs to put emphasis on the possibility that one is able to be fully independent in 2020. Although informal networks (such as family) will always have importance in some contexts, policies should put individuals in such situations that they can count on themselves in order to meet acceptable standards of living.

Respective status of education, employment and training

Employment, education and training have different social statuses, and in Italy in particular training attracts a very low social esteem. The vocational system is poorly institutionalised and mainly embraced by those who have failed another route. The Italian popular version of the acronym NEET often forgets the last letter: it is often heard that NEETs are “those not in employment or education”. This also happens in Spain, where the term *ni-ni* is used (meaning, again, not in employment or education).

Projection into 2020: while vocational training is well organised and respected in countries such as Germany, education, employment and training are three different activities, and have different outputs in the medium and long term. Considering them as if they were the same, and put on the same level in all countries, maybe gives an idea of how many people are “outside of the boxes” today, but does not say much about how many of them have started on a career path that is going to be fulfilling and rewarding, and will keep them “out of risk” in 2020, or conversely, how many just take the first low-skilled job available to meet incumbent ends but will be deeply dissatisfied with it. According to the rhetoric of the NEETs approach, no attention is given to how good and appropriate to one’s aspirations and inclinations is either employment, education or training, and therefore how successful they are as stepping stones in one’s career.

New frontiers of employment and work

Like other European countries, Italy does not grant recognition to a vast amount of work that young people are doing in forms not associated with employment itself – I mean by this work which is not commissioned, nor paid for, but promises to give access to jobs which would not otherwise be granted. These efforts, which we can call side-employment activities, currently hold high transformative potential and are very important not only to enable young people a position in the labour market, but also for society in general to ensure itself the highest level of innovation.

Projection into 2020: young people need to attempt their own routes, and to try themselves out where they think they can achieve the best results. On the contrary, currently, “young people are pushed into training and education that they feel they are not ready for; and young people at high risk but who are already in education, employment or training are neglected by the service” (Yates and Payne 2006: 331), whereas part of the Europe 2020 strategy is “to ‘unleash the potential’ of young people through quality education and training, successful labour market integration and increased mobility” (MacDonald 2011: 439). Citizenship support might actually be functional here not to waste young people’s potential and talent. Again, giving this sort of opportunity to young people is not contemplated in the definition of NEETs, unless it takes the shape of formally recognised education or training, which of course is not always the case. Hopefully, by 2020 there will be wider support available to young people’s efforts to realise their own aspirations, either through financial support or otherwise.

→ 6. Conclusions

The concept of NEET was intended to form the basis of a holistic approach to the problems of youth, one that could be broader than employment alone, which at that time dominated the debate on youth. I have, however, reconstructed the reason why this category might be considered too narrow, as well as misleading. Even broader categories have been suggested, such as that of “social generation” (Furlong et al. 2011), in order to investigate “the ways in which the meaning and experience of age is shaped by social conditions” on the basis of a “systematic analysis of the economic, political and social conditions impacting on young people” (p. 361).

Alongside an assessment of the category of the NEET, its uses and history, I have proposed some criticisms and attempted to de-locate it from where and when it was intended to be used to another context, that of contemporary Italy. This operation is neither speculative nor futuristic, as the use of the NEETs category is already extensive in Italy. However it brings with it some speculative factors as it is meant to encourage general reflection on how the category is being used today across Europe, what inconsistencies are being overlooked in this application, and what are the caveats that should be taken into consideration in its possible future use. These limitations are mainly related to diversity in entitlement to citizens’ rights and educational and professional assets, as well as specific balances in intergenerational relations. More importantly, new frontiers are seemingly being opened for youth employment, which will hopefully be more attentive to youth’s aspirations and inclinations, in contrast to the operation of “putting people into boxes”. This process is too abrupt and does not respect the needs of youth, as well as being in contrast with EU recommendations in the field, pushing not only for more jobs, but also for better and more fulfilling ones. In summary, we should acknowledge that the concept of NEET is country-specific, permeated by a certain ideology of little use in comparative research and most significantly (as used in most policy contexts) a static concept, making it scarcely appropriate for supporting young people to find their place in a fast-changing, dynamic labour market and denying them the right to make meaningful choices for themselves. Young people do construct their lives drawing on the institutional resources they see available in their own context of reference, and, as in the invented story of Tommy Butler (Williamson 2001), their entire lives are then intertwined with whatever policy measures policy makers are able to offer to address their needs as full citizens. It is therefore advisable that these measures reflect their very social, economic and historical conditions.

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Ajsa Hadzibegovic

Young entrepreneurs owning 2020

→ Introduction

Instead of introducing the ideas presented and discussed in this paper, I would like to offer my “definition” of what it means to be an entrepreneur. I find the existing phrases, definitions and descriptions just not sufficient. In the changing world that we live in, what it means to be an entrepreneur is changing even faster. However, there are certain attributes that describe an entrepreneur in my mind, so I would like to share those and ask you to think about these kinds of entrepreneurs “owning 2020” and leading our societies. Entrepreneurs are:

restless inquisitors: in order to bring in innovation, one needs to be able to question every aspect of “traditional ways”;

confident optimists: when taking an idea from concept to reality, one needs to be ready for all sorts of challenges and face them with a firm belief in success;

co-operative competitors: in order to realise an idea, one needs to scrutinise its downsides and improve it through co-operation with others, while remaining passionate about realising it in one’s own way.

I have met such entrepreneurs and I believe we need more of them, and not

only in the business and economics sector, but also in the political and social sectors. This is how I imagine 2020 and on the next few pages, you can read about possibilities and obstacles to such a future.

→ Changing the education paradigm

“Our students have changed radically. Today’s students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach.” (Prensky 2001).

Lately I often hear how our schools are failing in their role to educate, but also in bringing up responsible citizens. Even more so – they are failing to produce successful entrepreneurs. Many countries are undergoing education reforms of some sort in an effort to improve and modernise their education systems. However, the understanding of “improvement” varies, leaving huge space for avoidance of the essence. So, we discuss performance of teachers and how much they are equipped to teach in the IT era. We look into ways to improve standardised tests so that we can more easily identify flaws in the curricula. We are trying to work out how to educate youth today for the jobs needed tomorrow. And I cannot avoid wondering: is this the role of our education system?

Phillips (2009) raises the question of whether “education is essentially conservative, or whether it can be an (or the) agent of social change”. I would argue that education can be “the” agent of social change. However, the understanding of what education is would need to change drastically and focus on what individual learning needs for development and reaching one’s potential are needed. It would need to change and involve new technologies and social media as one of the key learning resources and tools. Education, as the agent of social change, or rather “holistic education” – would look different from what we are used to. Major changes would involve greater presence of “learning by doing” in a collaborative manner and “experiential learning” through co-operation in a learning process fully decided upon by the individual learner. This would imply that the form of education currently known as non-formal education would have a more central role in the overall educational system. Because the value of non-formal education in the context of youth work in the transitional societies of today and tomorrow is in its multiple roles: in developing self-confidence, critical thinking and communication skills, enabling emotional competence development, ensuring taking on responsibility for self and others, increasing employability, developing an autonomous personality, fostering European citizenship, fostering a culture of reflection, encouraging intercultural dialogue, enabling social integration, increasing participation ... is there an end to this kind of list? The future will blur the division lines in the field of education between formal and non-formal, and we will talk about “holistic education” happening in diverse settings on an equal footing. The name of holistic education finally reflects the underlying values and principles of learner-oriented education that engages minds (knowledge), hands (skills), hearts (values) and souls (the essence of whom the individual is).

Sir Ken Robinson (2008) sees the challenge in “not to reform education but to transform it into something else”. He argues that a different set of assumptions must be taken into consideration. Instead of figuring out what a country needs, he proposes that we look into what makes people motivated, excited about learning and developing, what drives them forward, which talents they nourish, what they are passionate about. This is a great challenge to pose to ourselves when looking ahead to 2020. Could the premises for the new education system be grounded in

discovering and cultivating each individual talent in each child and young person as they grow up? Could we create an education system without instilled economic principles that would consequently not necessarily make science a preferable subject to art? Could we imagine 2020 or beyond where having a degree would imply that you have undergone a demanding journey of self-discovery on which you have learnt how to learn and on which you developed yourself as a person? I can. Still, for that to actually happen, we need to rediscover education all over again, taking into account these new circumstances. The decision makers within the central educational institutions need to redefine the purpose and philosophy of education. The teachers need to rediscover teaching and learning interdependence, constantly advancing their own learning in order to be able to offer relevant teaching guidance and support to learners. The parents need to demand persistently and engage actively in an education system that is more responsive to an individual learner. The youth workers need to improve the recognition of learning happening in youth activities, as well as in various non-formal education settings.

Robinson believes that with formal education as it is now, we are systematically (though not deliberately) destroying the capacity to imagine in our children and in ourselves. He says, “we do it routinely, unthinkingly, and that is the worst of it because we take for granted certain ideas about education, about children, about what it is to be educated; about social need and about social utility, about economic purpose. We take these ideas for granted and they turn out not to be true” (Robinson 2008). Furthermore, Robinson claims that our education systems are not significantly improving because decision makers do not understand the main problem is not how to manage the system more efficiently, but rather how to improve the quality of learning. In particular, as he claims, it is crucial to improve the experience of individual learners and treat each school individually and not as a mass. Such an approach he calls, “a shift from the industrial metaphor of education to an agricultural metaphor” and explains, “What happens if you get through to people, make demands of them, give them an opportunity to demonstrate what they can do and connect to their talent? Then you get transformation, that’s the paradigm” (Robinson 2008). For an “agricultural” approach to actually work it would require the joint efforts of all involved in the education and upbringing of young people. The parents’ role is crucial and their understanding and implementation of this approach would provide it major leverage. Finally, the youth workers, as those who are already being the farmers in this agricultural metaphor, have to play a vital role in providing evidence that it works. The successful process of recognising competences acquired in non-formal education settings would enable such confirmation.

Now, let’s add to the equation the technology development and the role it has had and might have on education. Professor Helen Haste talks about five competences that need to be taught to learners in order to help them adapt to the world of change (Haste 2009):

- **Managing ambiguity:** this is about teaching young learners to multitask and about equipping them not to be anxious when they are in an ambiguous situation. Thus the role of educator and education system is to counter “the single linear solution” as a predominant way of thinking and behaving.
How I understand this “competence” it would also be very much about encouraging the divergent thinking that Robinson is talking about.
- **Agency and responsibility:** this is about being an “active agent” interacting with the world and being able to approach one’s environment with the confidence of having the competence to do so. It is also about taking responsibility for what is going on as a consequence of such interaction or absence of it.

Thus, I would say that the educators' role would be to create such learning situations and to be the one "instilling" confidence in the young learners.

- Finding and sustaining community: this is about managing the various communities that we live in, including those online. It's about multitasking in creating connections and managing interactions (including using technologies to do so), but also about maintaining those connections.

I believe the greatest challenge for the educators would be to teach the balance between creating and maintaining connections. Influenced by greater presence of new technologies in our lives, the latter one is fairly neglected.

- Managing emotion: this is about getting away from the idea that reason and emotion are separated, and teaching young people how to manage them both without allowing lapses in domination of either.

I understand this "competence" as the pursuit of self-development that should be firmly grounded in "holistic education".

- Managing technological change: this is about managing the consequences of technological development.

This in my understanding means high adaptability to and understanding of changes that technology is bringing in all spheres of our lives.

Clearly, social change is not linear, and we still do not know where the changes that we are experiencing today may take us to in the future. However, as Professor Haste states, young people are becoming agents of their own enculturation and learning. Therefore, one needs to look at education from the position of where the young people are in their relation with the world and from what they already do. So, as she puts it, "we should think of education as bottom-up, collaborative and interactive".²¹ Therefore, holistic education needs to be grounded in young people's – and at the same time new technology users' perspective – and be co-operative rather than competitive, collaborative rather than isolated, and highly tuned into technology.

Let's put aside the doubts and imagine this change of paradigm. Even if you are from the Balkans, it would not be extremely hard to picture a plausible future filled with determined individuals in touch with self and compassionate to others. The future, that the science fiction TV series *Star Trek* introduced as a conceivable option, could be one in which values are not framed within the economic playground. This might seem too far in the future. However, the first step which we can expect in 2020 is tangible. One of the starting guidelines is to be found in the "Study on the impact of non-formal education in youth organisations on young people's employability" which recognises and recommends that "education needs to go beyond purely instrumental considerations to provide people with the skills they need for active participation in society and personal development" (Bath University/GHK Consulting 2012). Even today, young people are constantly advancing and innovating when finding their own ways to the relevant information, knowledge and skills that they need. They are confidently using the new technologies to do so and co-operating with each other in order to reach individual aims. It seems that the primary factor slowing them down is the fact that they are obliged to spend significant amounts of hours sitting in traditional classrooms and listening to lectures. If this pre-determined path could be more flexible and less determined, could we imagine "holistic education" happening for young people? The results would most probably be highly unpredictable, particularly at the beginning. An unprecedented mind-shift needs to happen for the young adults going through self-oriented learning processes today. The challenges of maintaining the focus

21. From video featured on article "Technology and youth: a remix that is changing the education landscape", By Maria Fusaro, 23 June 2009, available at <http://www.gse.harvard.edu/news-impact/2009/06/technology-and-youth-a-remix-that-is-changing-the-education-landscape>, accessed on 10 January 2013.

and taking on full responsibility for all possible failures seem overwhelming. That is why, in my opinion, such an approach would work best if introduced at a very early stage of a person's development. Again, parents are central for such a shift to occur.

→ Young people in Europe today

“Our societies are far from creating positive social and working conditions in which they can do so [seek ‘life-wide’ quality of life] – [so] young people expect to rely on either their families or their own ingenuity and resources”
(Chisholm and Kovatcheva 2002).

There are good chances that the most valuable learning will come from dealing with crises. Therefore, instead of despairing over daily news on how Europe is in crisis and is experiencing unprecedented levels of unemployment, I choose to think about what we can learn from this situation. How did we get there and how can we change it? Therefore, I have decided to look at the situation of young people in Europe today as it is depicted by different EU strategies, instruments and actions. Focusing on young people seems to be the way forward according to the creators of the Europe 2020 strategy.

The strategy sets a headline target of reducing early school leaving and increasing tertiary attainment. As much as I agree with reducing early school leaving, I believe that we have already overdone it with tertiary attainment. Enrolling in a Master's and Ph.D. is becoming a substitute to employment and perpetuates the lack of possibility for starting an independent life. Particularly in the Balkans, it seems that the lower bar for literacy has been moved to the Master's level. Unfortunately, this development also has a side effect in elevating the expectations of these young degree holders that they will obtain jobs at high level positions and then live happily ever after. Therefore, the crucial question for holistic education of the future would be how to focus individuals on their personal development while bringing about an understanding of the importance of each job regardless of the level of technical expertise or theoretical knowledge needed to execute it. The “new” jobs will be created and young people can create them. The end of 2012 was marked by news of Serbia exporting €200 million worth of software, for the first time more than raspberries (€140 million), which have traditionally been Serbia's number one export commodity. Keeping in mind that young people are predominantly those employed in the IT industry, especially the software development branch, it is clear that young people are now leading the entrepreneurial wave.

Let's go through several initiatives springing from the Europe 2020 strategy in an effort to understand how the young people of today are seen by policy makers. The flagship initiative “Youth on the Move” provides a hint that young people should be crossing all sorts of borders – literally, physical borders with passports and those more difficult (inter)cultural ones. Perhaps, also, that young people should be challenging themselves on different fronts and in new environments. The “Youth in Action” and “Lifelong Learning” programmes are providing the guidelines for greater learning mobility, enhanced participation of young people and more and more for boosting their employability. Starting in 2014 there will be a new EU programme and this is an ideal opportunity to make drastic changes and to prepare the way for a new system allowing young people to opt for “holistic education”. The “Youth Opportunities Initiative” is fairly straightforward in revealing that youth employability and employment are of concern for decision makers. So, there is quite a lot about youth taking responsibility and leading, quite a lot about supporting their ideas being realised, quite a lot about

increasing their capacity – so, the remaining avenues to explore would be the reach and accessibility of those tools; the possibility of young people to influence their further development; and how those programmes relate to other European, national and local instruments – how well they are networked. Findings from such research might open new perspectives on what and how it should be done.

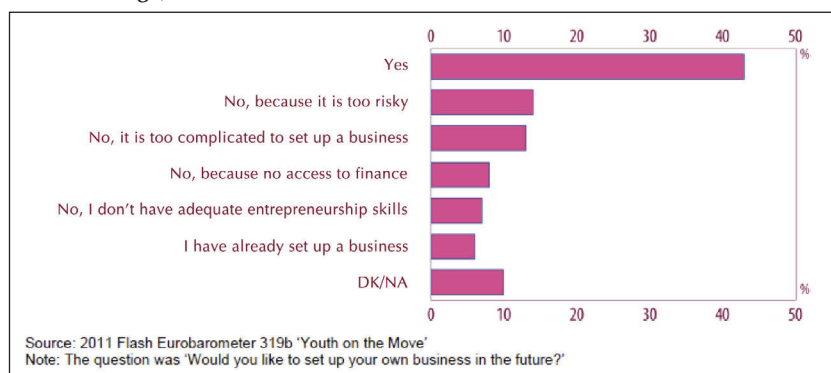
Some research has been done for the EU Youth Report (2010-2012), which was adopted on 10 September 2012. The report calls for youth employment, social inclusion, health and the well-being of young people to be top priorities in Europe's youth policy. The report underlines that "the EU and Member States must do more to support young people, who have borne the brunt of the economic crisis" (European Commission 2012b). Let's look at how the report pictures young people under the headings "education and employment" and "position in society"²² and what we could "do more".

→ Education and employment

The share of students is going up while that of young employees is going down. Even with the trend of avoiding the crises by "going back to education" there is still the issue of a significant number of young people that are just "out" – not in employment, education or training. The unemployment rate of young people (aged 15 to 24) is rising, while, according to the report the youth self-employment rates are increasing.

However, a closer look at graphs reveals that the EU-27 average of self-employed is strikingly low even for the most active group of 25-29 (between 8-9%) and with some decline detected when comparing data for 2000 and 2010. It is a pity that there are no further analyses of this trend that would help us understand what 2020 will bring. However, since more than 40% of young people desire to start up their own business (see Figure 1), I believe it is timely to push for decision makers to create enabling conditions and allow for the natural increase of numbers in this area. I will not even start to tackle the question of why so many young people are motivated to start up their own business: is it their response to the crises – taking responsibility for their own employment? Or is it the result of a materialistic and consumerist world – needing to earn more and to maintain the status of business owner, the boss?

Figure 1: EU youth indicator: Young people's desire to set up their own business, EU-27 average, 2011



22. The following items are summarised and adapted from the EU Youth Report with the author's commentary regarding possible future measures.

Nevertheless, involvement in voluntary programmes, special traineeships and internships can help to broaden young people's experience and allow for a smoother school-to-work transition. Furthermore, European, national and local strategies targeting youth should envisage measures for nourishing an entrepreneurial spirit in young people and concrete mechanisms for supporting their start-up ideas. Additionally, possible solutions could be sought in the youth-friendly recognition and validation of learning outcomes accomplished elsewhere, which would reintegrate the young people back into education or employment. However, this would also require the stronger belief of young people and the youth sector in the value of this recognition and validation and consequently their co-ordinated action in this direction. In an effort to gain recognition for youth competences, it might be worthwhile cross-referencing competences acquired through volunteering with those gained while working.

Looking at the global instabilities of job markets and how they might develop in the future, I believe that the experience of young people with temporary contracts and unusual schedules will become an advantage. However, the challenge remains for education systems to foster young people's adaptability to changing circumstances.

→ Position in society

Young people have become increasingly mobile, engaged in non-formal education and are increasingly participating in democratic life. However, young people's overall well-being is under pressure as they are most at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

Even though new technologies are contributing to erasing borders, the fact that physical mobility is also increasing is contributing to the snapshot of 2020 from the previous section. The growing mistrust in the political establishment is forcing young people to find alternative avenues for pursuing causes and policy issues they feel passionate about. This energy and willingness of youth to participate should be nourished by the education system, as well as through concrete instruments implemented under the youth policy framework. As the report conclusions imply: structured volunteering opportunities, involvement in non-formal education and recognition of acquired competences are generating greater participation of young people.

However, while the trend is that, as Peter Lauritzen (2008) noted, "youth work increasingly deals with unemployment, educational failure, marginalisation and social exclusion", it is fundamental to expand on the reach. In the EU youth report, youth work is described as having a crucial role "in supporting young people in their personal education and fulfilment and in consolidating their identity among their peers and within society, as they are encouraged to take an active part in any field of interest to them" (European Commission 2012b). How can we allow such crucial support to be accessible for only 9% of youth? Non-formal education (NFE) and youth work (YW) are attended on a voluntary basis. But if we are not questioning the impact, why do we not question how much they are recognised, promoted, accessible? Would it be utterly blasphemous to also think about allowing access of youth work inside schools as part of the (optional) curriculum? The Annual Growth Survey 2012 (European Commission 2012a) calls for reforms in employment legislation and in education and training. There might be an opportunity here to start re-defining and better positioning the education and youth work fields against the hardliner "economy".

Finally, with all the risks that young people are exposed to and yet with all the opportunities they are managing to build and take advantage of – it is clear that the future is at the very least undecided and changeable. This is exactly where the challenge lies for young people: not to give up and wait for others. And where the chance is hidden, as well: to find opportunities that may not be so apparent, and to continue to create opportunities and advantages in all these seemingly unhelpful circumstances.

So, where does all this leave young people from non-EU Europe? The political leadership of ex-Yugoslav states rapidly strive towards the EU in the hope that as members of this community we will have fewer problems and will reach higher living standards (which they tirelessly promise to their constituencies). When the young people in the EU face such challenges today and prospects for the future are at least uncertain – what can young people from the Balkans hope for? Twenty years after the fall of communism, or Yugoslav socialism, young people are in a less favourable situation and are still mainly ignored by the new elites. However, young people from the Balkans have a profound experience of living in uncertainty and finding their way around in transitional processes. This could become their advantage for discovering what it means and how to live in a united Europe. The young people living in the EU countries, and those not yet in the EU but in member countries of the Council of Europe, are still struggling to take their position in European society – beyond national borders. So, with all the elements described above, there is still the question of European citizenship and responsibility for shaping the future of Europe that lies on young people's shoulders.

→ Non-formal education and employability

“Employability is understood here as the relative chance of finding and maintaining different kinds of employment” (Brown et al. 2002).

I believe that the term “employability” is often misunderstood and mixed with actual employment, particularly among young people. Perhaps because the prevailing question for a young person thinking about the future is, “If the end result is not a job then who cares how high on the employability scale I am?” Perhaps we should check if the scale is good? However, we are facing problems with recognition of young people's competences when acquired outside of formal education. Why are we failing to grant young people the freedom and flexibility to pursue their own path of development? Even if we have good recognition instruments and if individuals decide their own learning paths, we should not divert our focus from the education of the young person. Young people will still need support in their learning and we need to discover new ways of providing it.

Non-formal education today is an essential part of the lifelong learning concept promoted by the European institutions. In the context of rapidly progressing and changing societies, Andreas Karsten (2006) gives three primary points explaining the role of non-formal education:

- to ensure the employment mobility of individuals, and to make unemployable “drop-outs” of the past employable;
- to keep already well-trained people abreast of new knowledge and technologies essential to their continued high productivity in their respective fields;
- to improve the quality and satisfaction of individual lives through culturally enriching their expanding leisure time.

Furthermore, apart from the clear pedagogical role, today we look at non-formal education (in the context of youth work) with the emerging political role it is expected to have, while lately the focus is shifting towards employability. In my mind, the only thing such a shift should be about is raising awareness among young people about the competences they are acquiring and developing, about their own learning and ways they can present it and transfer it to different settings. Anything beyond that might lead us to the danger of neglecting the self in learners and concentrating on the job market's demands. While the challenge for all, and not only young people, will be to get into Peter Drucker's *habit of continuous learning* (Drucker P., 1994) that would also allow for more flexible employment arrangements. With that in mind, I need to emphasise the importance of employment not only related to economic security but also as a tool for social inclusion – a mechanism that is to prevent potential social crises by providing a basis for shaping relational issues, social participation and social integration.

Youth unemployment in the EU among 15-24-year olds has increased by 50% since the onset of the crisis, from an average of 15% in February 2008 to 22.5% in July 2012, with rates as high as 53.8% in Greece and 52.9% in Spain. Nevertheless, the European Commission is hopeful for the future and through the youth report it noted that “the EU Youth Strategy has reinforced existing priorities at national level in nearly all Member States, which are to create more and better opportunities for young people and to promote active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity. Since the previous report in 2009, Member States have strengthened education, employment and entrepreneurship initiatives aimed at young people. Levels of youth participation in associations and social movements have remained high” (European Commission 2012b). There is the evident need to challenge such an assessment, and to start asking difficult questions – if the situation is not improving then who cares about reinforced priorities and strengthened initiatives? Isn't it time to see if we can and should do things differently?

At the same time, youth organisations, largely concerned with the increase in youth unemployment, turned to assessing how their programmes and activities are contributing to youth employability. The study on the impact of non-formal education in youth organisations on young people's employability provides relevant data and possible guidelines for organisations wishing to focus more on employability (Bath University/GHK Consulting 2012). However, the study remained inside the frame of what we already do and how we already do it, and it only suggests possible improvements within that frame. Unfortunately so, because the data they provided are evidence of many of the possible paradigm changes discussed in this paper. For instance, looking at the table with ranking of skills most frequently demanded by employers (Bath University/GHK Consulting 2012: 42), you will notice communication and organisational skills at the top, while entrepreneurship, adaptability and networking are at the very bottom. I am struggling to understand why the latter three are not higher on the scale. Could it be that these are important for self-employment while as an employee you should only be able to understand tasks (communication) and execute them in a timely manner (organisational skills)? Or is this the short-sightedness of employers coloured by the fact that businesses are on the hunt for “the smartest ones” with the stereotype of the young employees' role which is not to do the thinking, questioning, re-shaping, searching for opportunities, and so on. However, later on, the table on individual levels of skills development in youth organisations has among the top five places “self-confidence” and “adaptability/flexibility” (Bath University/GHK Consulting 2012: 45). Such a finding both proves how well placed youth work is, as well as non-formal education in youth

organisations, but also how “Young people sometimes see the future more clearly than adults. And often they know what they’ll need to get there” as Professor Morino puts it (1997). The reality today and, even more, the reality of 2020 will show how important these are. Professor Haste argues, “Competence is not only about skill but about adaptation – means you can adapt and respond to the changes and to the continuity in the world around” (Fusaro 2009). So, we might even ask the question: are employers, in these economic crises, the ones who have the least insight into what is needed to overcome it? Are they the ones without an answer as to what kind of employees they need in order to turn the tables around? Could the motivation of young people to start their own enterprise be grounded in such a detachment between employees and employer? And ironically so, as an International Youth Foundation report noted, because “the real mandate for business should be to invest substantially in broadening the pool of ‘really smart’ people through improving education and access to education at every level” (IYF 2001).

Nevertheless, there is a great level of match between the employers’ demands and the skills that young people have recognised they gained through the youth organisations. Even more so for the young people in those youth organisations (almost half of those surveyed in the study) who have an organised educational and assessment plan for skills development which includes: learners’ needs analysis; setting of objectives and expected learning outcomes; a planning and implementation process; and an evaluation. This provides clear guidelines to the organisations that wish to expand on the employability element of their activities. Furthermore, the study finds that the young people and the youth organisations generally use certificates and recording instruments to a low extent and “less than 5% of the sample of individuals had used the European Portfolio for Youth Workers and Youth Leaders in job/internship or apprenticeships applications (it should be kept in mind that around 50% of the sample had been involved with youth organisations as youth leaders/educators) and 16% had used Youthpass” (Bath University/GHK Consulting 2012). Another important guideline might be drawn from the fact that 50% of young people surveyed had used the Europass CV and that youth organisations tend to record the skills and competences through tools developed by the organisation or through peer reviews. This sets even greater importance on the challenge of making European tools relevant at the local/national level and even more so if the tools are from the youth field and are not binding in any way. Instead of grieving over how great tools are not used for the benefit of all, we might look into how to adapt them to be more accessible and to apply better to the reality and different contexts in which young people learn. At the same time, we need to look at how to ensure that these tools bring the authority and guarantee of a set of competences at the same level as formal degrees. In order to be able to even start envisaging such developments, the youth field would need to undergo “stage zero” which “should include targeted efforts to convince the sceptics among us [youth workers] and reinforce our motivation to actively take on board the recognition issue” (Hadzibegovic 2012).

Finally, I would like to come back to social capital as one of the key elements that enhance employability. Young people have recognised networking as an important skill they gain through their involvement with the youth organisations. Networking is becoming even more significant as it helps in obtaining information about employment opportunities as well as in securing actual employment. And the study finds that it also stimulates young people to undertake more intensive job searches and to consider a broader range of occupations and occupational mobility. I presume

that a significant proportion of networking is already based in online communities and it is reasonable to assume it will only grow. The potential for co-operative and collaborative learning in these communities is immense. However, we as educators are only starting to tap into it. Mark Prensky explains why it is so: “Digital immigrant instructors, who speak an outdated language (that of the pre-digital age), are struggling to teach a population that speaks an entirely new language” (Prensky 2001). Today, young people are “digital natives” used to receiving information really fast, to parallel processing and multitasking: “They function best when networked” (Prensky 2001). Flexibility and adaptability of non-formal education already enabled youth workers and trainers to develop educational programmes based on online communication and online media. Such adaptability to learning is a quality which will greatly shape the nature of “holistic education” of tomorrow. However, while the new technologies have expanded on young people’s possibilities to access and receive information, the question of absorption and actual learning still remains, as well as the question as to whether parallel processing and multitasking allows the sort of focus needed for “real” learning to happen.

→ Youth and new technologies

“The real power of interactive communications is people as the ultimate source of knowledge” (Morino 1997).

Morino recognises that computers, mobile phones and the Internet are important and valuable resources. They have contributed to the changes in how (young) people think and how they interact with each other. This consequently demands the development of new competences to do that. However, what makes the new technologies important is the way that people use it. “It is people and their knowledge, relationships, insights, and spirit freely passed from one to another that engender the ‘magic’ of this interconnected world that the Internet is making possible” (Morino 1997).

Back in 1997, Morino claimed, “access to the Internet needs to be a reality for all our citizens, that the free and unrestricted flow of information and the ready availability of computers for everyone are not simply matters of ‘technology’” (Morino 1997). Today, we are speaking of even more convenient access to the Internet, via mobile phones. However, we are still far from the situation where all young people have access to the Internet. Thus, according to Morino, many young people are denied the opportunity to have the experience and the rewards of self-discovery, a higher quality of life, and a renewed sense of community that derives from an interactive sharing of information and knowledge that is highly simplified and multiplied through the Internet.

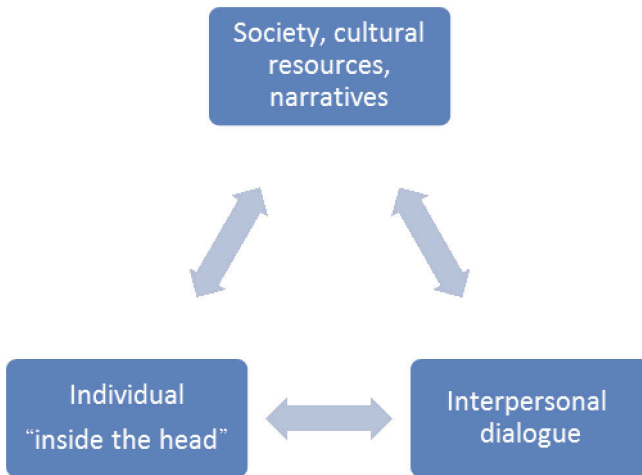
Morino also notes, “technology can only mirror the society it serves. While computers and the Internet can facilitate great strides in learning, they can’t reinvent education” (Morino 1997). This is a crucial point – with all the advanced technology, we would still be at the starting point if we do not use it to enhance the chances and opportunities of young people to learn and develop. The mere fact that access to information and knowledge is simplified does not necessarily mean that actual knowledge is acquired. The technology can only provide faster, accessible and user-friendly solutions, but cannot in itself be the educator. Therefore the question remains: what are we doing or rather what should we do so that young people today gain from being “digital natives” in terms of their development into responsible, self-aware and self-sustaining citizens?

Professor Helen Haste recognises how expansion in new technological tools is fundamentally altering the ways students can interact with the world (Fusaro 2009). She talks about models of how people function, particularly in relation to education, and she makes a distinction between:

- *The human being as problem solver*: a person who by himself addresses the problem, struggles with it, uses logic and other methods, and comes to a conclusion;
- *The human being as tool user*: a person who goes beyond and uses tools to access and interact with the problem and resolves it often with the help and involvement of other people.

Are we going in the direction of being tool users? I believe this approach to problem solving will become standard by 2020 bringing, or rather demanding, changes in how we teach young people. Professor Haste introduces the “idea of dialogue” operating socially as a crucial element of understanding the potential that the tool user has. She also talks about a dynamic triangle that allows continuous interactions in different directions. The triangle is giving to the individual an active role that was not presumed in previous theories on participation which exclusively considered societal and peer influence on the individual and their capacities. Such an interactive and proactive individual has greater chances of becoming what she describes as a “competent citizen” which is defined by four dimensions of participation:

- conventional participation (voting, supporting a candidate, etc.);
- making one’s voice heard (collecting petitions, attending protests, etc.);
- helping in the community (volunteering with underprivileged groups, etc.) – also defined as a prerequisite to getting involved in more conventional participation;
- active monitors (talking about current affairs, etc.) – the type defined by youth that were asked about what citizenship is for them and how they participate as a “good citizen”.



The final dimension relates mostly to the use of new technologies and faster exchange of information and opinions.

“Competent citizens” – young people today, and most probably even more in 2020, consider themselves to be engaged and participating if they share news through social networks and thus impact their online community. I believe there is the risk that this form of participation may become predominant and that young people might become detached from communities other than those online. However,

with recent developments where online communities active on social networks have sparked gatherings and demonstrations on the streets, this might seem as a superficial fear. Nevertheless, there is the role of educators in the “holistic education” process to offer balance and to increase the understanding of young people about the need for balance in this but in other spheres as well. Professor Morino put it elegantly: “Rather than legislate, we must educate, teaching our young people to evaluate information and to discriminate among offers made in cyberspace, just as they do in real life” (Morino 1997).

→ Champions of transition

“It may not be too fanciful to anticipate that the acquisition and distribution of formal knowledge will come to occupy the place in the politics of the knowledge society that the acquisition of property and income have occupied in the two or three centuries that we have come to call the Age of Capitalism” (Cox 2012).

Coming from ex-Yugoslavia and with experience of the transition from communism (or rather socialism) to capitalism, I cannot resist starting this section with reference to Karl Marx. He was, of course, talking about the opposite transition – from capitalism to communism. Marx recognised that there is a period in between that allows a sort of revolutionary transformation of the one into the other, and “corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat” (Karl Marx, 1875) Now, the transition that I have lived through (some claim we still live in it) was also marked by dictatorship, but not of the proletariat. The 1990s were marked by conflicts, the early 21st century by political transition, and for ex-communist and ex-socialist countries very much also economic transition and the appearance of new elites. Only now are there some, but not strong enough or prioritised enough, efforts to look back and see where the children and the young people of that time are, children and youth who were growing up through the conflicts and instability and those that “may still find their lives constrained by the stultifying rigidity of central planning and political conformity without the security and stability of full employment and reliable compensation; and they are exposed to the risks of the new open market and political democracy without yet the rewards” (UNICEF 2002). This quote is from a study named “A brave new generation” published by UNICEF in 2002 focusing on youth living in changing societies and primarily in what was at that time the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) – Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo. An optimistic name was used at that time: “brave generation”; the term that is prevailing now is “lost generation”. And it is despite this pejorative term and despite this distrust in the capacities of young people and their power for change, their power for revolution. Now 18 years later, when babies of 2002 are becoming adults in these ever-changing societies, the youth are braver than ever. It has started already, and it is my firm belief that by 2020, young people will be demonstrating courage, enthusiasm and belief in self, will deliberately engage with and benefit from “holistic education” and will largely take on the task of making their ideas reality in the social, economic and political arena. Because the alternative is what young people in the Balkans were largely doing or allowing the system to do to them over the past 20 years. And that is no alternative at all.

I would like to draw a parallel between youth in Yugoslavia some 20 years ago and youth today in (united?) Europe in order to provide some evidence for the “brave”

vision shared above. The opening assessment of youth's position in society in the UNICEF study compares FRY and the rest of the UN: "While leading nations on the UN human development index have experienced an explosion in 'youth power' in the past decade, young people in FRY have remained isolated on the margins of society even while their country has remained isolated on the fringes of Europe" (UNICEF 2002). The authors of the study continue by claiming that it is the right time to invest in young people and to enable them to contribute at the present time and that the state(s) has the opportunity to learn from advanced democracies on this matter. The study presented the dilemma of treating young people as children or as almost-adults while looking into five key areas: participation in society; education; employment; health and well-being; and young people in special need of protection. If we take employment and look deeper into the analyses of the situation in FRY of 2002 and compare it with the youth report discussed previously, quite a few similarities can be found. Here are several of those issues that are challenges for Europe today, but the list is not finite:

- How do we re-define the term "secure and formal employment" to respond to the present distrust of young people in the pension system? How does the understanding of the term correspond to the trend of fast development of new highly diverse jobs and short-term employment possibilities? How is it resonating in the arena of self-employability and freelancing, which seem to be more and more popular among young people? How can all the administration around it become lighter and easier to understand and deal with?
- How do we enable "labour mobility" among youth and empower them to benefit from it the most? How do we change the understanding that the nature of such mobility would be less of a "brain drain" and more a foundation for some new (though functional) system? How do we ensure that "labour mobility" would be accessible to different groups and that it would not discriminate against young women in particular?
- How can we address the issue of child and adolescent labour in a world where adolescence is starting earlier due to greater exposure to information and faster learning and growth of children today? How do we establish a bottom line below which there is no entrepreneurial thinking, learning, acting?

Finally, looking at the actions the study is suggesting should be undertaken in order to boost youth employment, it is very clear – ten years later we do not have any innovative ideas on how to deal with youth unemployment. Paradoxically enough, entrepreneurship is all about innovation and we seem to lack it in addressing the problem of how to awaken it in youth and how to support it in a more systematic way, and all this while young people are largely (more than 40%) ready and wanting to start their own business. There are great examples of young people from the Balkans who already champion innovation and entrepreneurship in striking contradiction to how much they were/are systematically (un)supported (remember the example of software developers from Serbia). Perhaps part of the equation for success for a young person entails the persistence and the stubbornness to make it despite all the odds?

The transitional society from my experience of living in Montenegro was marked by a lot of strategies being put forward and then utterly failing because they were not grounded in "our" reality. Are we in a similar situation today when considering Europe and the transition from national to European? Are we leaving young people on the margins (or letting them remain there) even though they are often mentioned in strategies and in important political events? How much are the EU strategies reflecting young people's reality and how much are young people actually using all the available tools and instruments? If we would dare to try something else instead I would propose to equip and motivate young people to

develop ways to shape future steps to solving unemployment. Let them be the “dictators” of transition from national to European and from capitalism to the new stage(?). Let them collaborate, share, invent, test ... and if they fail – well, it would be no different from what we are doing now. In any case, the challenges of a transitional society of a post-united Europe of 2020 would be easier to deal with.

There are several factors preventing young people in taking the leading role in shaping their future. At the same time, these are the arguments why they should be systematically supported to do so. Young people recognise that political elites are without fresh ideas, yet they are reluctant to offer their own. They recognise that neither big companies nor public administration can be relied upon for secure jobs. Young people have ideas how to advance the way of living in the social, economic and political arena. How to fill the gaps with innovative services, how to be a leader of development, how to begin new endeavours, how to engage the community, how to use new technologies ... However, they lack belief in the clear-cut chances in the current system for presenting and implementing those ideas. Therefore, young people do what they can. And that is seeking shortcuts, building networks utilising the human power at their disposal and re-defining the system. The “change of paradigm revolution” will happen. By 2020 young people will have the courage, enthusiasm and belief in self and largely take on the task of making their ideas reality. The only question is, will we adapt our learning environments and equip young people to deliver it or do they need to build capacities in parallel with our increasingly irrelevant education systems?

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Challenging structured participation opportunities

→ Introduction

Municipal elections were held in Finland in October 2012. The voting percentage was 58.2%, the second lowest turnout ever in municipal elections in Finland (Statistics Finland 2012). The biggest newspaper in the country, *Helsingin Sanomat* (2012), commented on the non-voters in its editorial by publishing a caricature with a hand holding a remote control. The hand is directed towards a television screen showing a logo displaying the caption "Idiots". The normative pressure of voting manifests itself in this image and in the editorial. Non-voters are thought of as media-driven individualists. The editorial is an example of the dualist attitude towards democracy: you are either a voter or an idiot. A positive way of rephrasing this attitude would be to say that there is a dualism between people believing in an old, representational democracy and people believing in life politics, in making a statement in social media and through consumer decisions.

The low interest in representative democracy is not restricted to Finland. There is a growing concern regarding youth disengagement from politics. Similarly, the need to revitalise democracy is widely recognised in Europe. Challenges presented by globalisation,

environmental crises or the growing importance of identity politics affect the political life of democratic states (Dryzek and Dunleavy 2009). A special emphasis on young people as a future social resource has been translated into policy planning by creating participatory mechanisms. However, there is reason to argue that such mechanisms are partly based on an inadequate understanding of democracy.

Based on the synthesis of international youth studies on participation, case studies in Finland by a collective of 24 scientists (Gretschel and Kiilakoski 2012), and a comparative study between Finland and Germany (Feldmann-Wojtachnia et al. 2010), this article claims that young people interact more widely with societies where formal structures for engagement are too narrow. To be able to respond to such limitations, it is important to resist simple dualism (collectivist/individualist citizen, representative/participatory democracy, representative/direct, institutional/non-institutional participation, party politics/life politics, conventional/social-movement-related citizenship behaviour, modern adults/post-modern young, and so on) and recognise the pluralism and richness of democratic culture. Analysing the state of participation requires recognising different manifestations of democracy and democratic engagement in the daily life of young people.

Many of our examples are from the municipal level. This emphasises the importance of locality and the relationship between local government and citizens. For young people in particular, immediate surroundings are important. If democracy is to be revitalised by decisions made on the street, in parks or communities, democracy itself should be seen, in general, as a result of a democratic process, not as a technocratic solution to social and spatial problems. According to sociologist Ulrich Beck, the new political culture requires “a repoliticisation of municipal policy, indeed a rediscovery and redefinition of it by mobilizing programs, people and ideas” (Beck 1998: 16). Following this attitude we focus on the local level, although the arguments of the article could also be applied at the national and international level, too. We claim that one way of promoting repoliticisation is to recognise the wider scope of democracy (Schulz et al. 2008).

Our article is divided into three parts. In the first part we will deal with democracy theories, combining theoretical observations with empirical youth studies. We claim that the creation of democratic culture requires identification of the full spectrum of democracy. In the second part we will analyse different instruments for promoting participation. We will examine EU processes, the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) study and the participation of skateboarders in municipal planning. By studying these different levels, we aim to claim (in the third part) that the full scope of democracy is not recognised in the instruments that are used to promote participation.

→ The many faces of democracy

Democracy is a political ideal, a life form, a guiding principle of education and a topic of continual debate and reconceptualisation. Consensus on what democracy actually means does not exist. According to Israeli philosopher Avishai Margalit, democracy is a systematically ambiguous term, “a technique for changing the government without violence, but also... a full-fledged way of life” (Margalit 2002: 12). The nature of democracy is open to debate. In the course of history, concepts of democracy have evolved. The dominant understanding of democracy, the idea of representative democracy, was conceived in the 19th century when the combination of democracy and representation was seen both as possible and desirable (Palonen 2008: 195-197).

The question of who is capable of taking part in democratic activity has been reformulated and discussed since the birth of democracy. According to the classic theorist of democracy, John Locke, subjects who make a social contract are “free, equal and independent” (Locke 1993: 309). Incidentally, this was understood to mean free men for a significant period of time. Although the range of people capable of taking part in democratic processes has widened, some citizens are still denied the possibility of taking part in representative democracy. An obvious example includes those less than 18 years of age in countries where 16-year olds do not have the right to vote.

Traditional political thinking has excluded children and young people from the role of political subject. Earlier, it was thought that people remain apolitical for a significant part of their life span. Their interests and experiences are advocated with the accrual of experience, independence and freedom (see Nussbaum 2007: 33). This view of children has, however, changed and nowadays children are considered as political and economic actors in their own right (Alanen 2009) – and that their action is not only a rehearsal for the future but also an integral part of decision making. Nevertheless, this conception requires either the recognition of the inherent limitations of representationalism and responding to this by introducing a complementary mechanism for young people (such as youth councils) or the cultivation of different forms of democracy to enrich the way citizens are able to respond to society. We are advocates for the latter attitude and wish to highlight how different theories of democracy reveal what it is to be a young citizen. Metaphorically, birds of democracies sing not only in different voices, but they sing in different forests and for different reasons.

In order to document the wide array of participation, it is important to analyse the full scope of democratic life: representative democracy and its ideal conception of citizens electing delegations is contrasted with the ideals of direct, participatory, deliberative and counter-democracy and, respectively, the ideals of direct decision making, participation, democratic discussion and surveillance – for example in the social media. Different conceptions of democracy have different ideals of what constitutes a democratic culture, how citizens engage democratically and what constitutes democratic instruments. (see Table 1). They should not, however, be seen as mutually exclusive. In fact, multiple types can be found in operation in any one location at the same time.

Table 1: Ideals of democracy and democratic instruments at European local level

Theories of democracy	Ideal picture of democracy	Operations in local authority	Possible actions for the youth
Representative democracy	<p>Citizen as elector: gathers information and acts by voting. Depending on country a citizen at the age of 16, 17 or 18 can vote and stand as a candidate and change their role.</p> <p>Political culture, where the chosen candidates make decisions and lead processes.</p>	<p>Electing local authority councils and acting in them.</p> <p>In some communities election of mayor.</p>	<p>Depending on country, those over the age of 16, 17 or 18 can vote and stand as a candidate in local elections and be elected to the council; in addition party political organisations can choose young members to act on committees and the board of the local authority.</p>

Theories of democracy	Ideal picture of democracy	Operations in local authority	Possible actions for the youth
Direct democracy	<p>Citizen as policy maker.</p> <p>Political culture where citizens make the decision themselves.</p>	<p>Referendums</p> <p>Right of initiative at municipality level (when the power is given to residents).</p>	<p>The right of people over 16, 17 or 18 years of age to vote in referendums.</p> <p>Right of making a popular initiative.</p>
Participatory democracy	<p>Citizen as participant: gives feedback, takes part in discussion/action.</p> <p>Political culture that supports participation and the opportunity for influencing common issues.</p>	<p>Right to set up local initiatives, user or residential inquiries, hearings, meetings, panels and forums, distribution of funds for carrying out different residential projects.</p> <p>Action in NGOs.</p>	<p>Right to set up a local initiative and other similar methods to those described in the neighbouring column for all children and young people.</p> <p>Representative forms of participatory democracy: youth councils, representatives of youth councils in committees or the council of a local authority.</p> <p>Action in NGOs.</p>
Deliberative democracy	<p>Citizen as a deliberative actor: takes part in public debate, offers arguments, and takes part in forming considered and elaborated view on society.</p> <p>Political culture where issues are discussed with citizen and where the decisions, laws and actions are justified so that people can understand. Politics is about individuals and common discussion.</p>	<p>For example citizens' juries, consensus conferences, deliberative discussion days.</p>	<p>Citizens' jury for young people, deliberative discussion days for young people.</p>
Counter-democracy	<p>Citizen as an activist, who monitors, controls, repels questions and tries to reform the content and the actions of decision makers through action (not only by discussion).</p> <p>Political culture where the actions of the decision makers have caused lack of confidence amongst citizens and stimulated political action instead of apolitical passiveness.</p>	<p>Demonstrations, Internet writings and other social media operations, meetings, organisational activities, legal and illegal activism.</p>	<p>Demonstrations and similar methods to those described in the neighbouring column. Also youth and pupil's councils use the methods of counter-democracy (for example walkouts and demonstrations).</p>

This table has been refined and developed from the version originally compiled by Eskelinen et al. 2012.

Representative democracy

Representative democracy has been a model for living democratically in Western societies. It focuses on political parties, voting, parliaments and representation. The argument for representational democracy states that problems faced in modern societies require politicians who are elected by the public. According to Parkinson, when decisions binding the rest of society are made by persons who are publicly responsible and whose office is dependent on the satisfaction of the constituents, the decision makers can be held accountable. If decision makers were randomly chosen or self-appointed, they would tend not to respond to the needs of the public (Parkinson 2012: 44.) A critical perspective of this type of democracy claims that the citizen's role is passive with the duty to simply react to the few alternatives presented on election day or that politicians tend to pay too much attention to different stakeholders instead of the needs of all members of society (Morrow 2005: 380).

The disillusionment of young people has been the lamentation of political analysts. According to Coleman, the blame for the disconnection between youth and politics can be shared equally between both. Either the young are distracted politically or politicians are unable to motivate the Internet generation and are unable to find ways to politicise affairs current in the life of young people (Coleman 2007). Whatever the reason, young people tend to be less interested in participating in elections. According to an analysis involving 22 European countries, the turnout of voters aged less than 25 was 51% and the turnout of the remaining electorate was 70% (Fieldhouse et al. 2007: 806). Different studies appear to show that although general interest in voting amongst Europeans has declined, there are a growing number of young people disillusioned with traditional representational democracy.

Additionally, it should be pointed out that youth is not a homogenous group. An interesting study by Bhatti et al. (2012) shows that voting turnout is higher amongst 18-year olds, compared to 19-21-year-old voters. The authors conclude that there might be grounds for arguing that the voting age should be lower, especially if an atmosphere favourable to voting is created, for example, in formal education.

According to an ICCS, conducted in 2009, among 38 countries studied globally, the age at which people are legally entitled to vote in elections is 18 in the majority of countries, with the exception of Chinese Taipei where it is 20, Indonesia and Korea where it is 17, and Austria where it is 16. Slovenia has the most unusual approach. In this country, voting is legal at the age of 18, but if people are in paid employment, they can vote from the age of 16 (Schulz et al. 2010: 39). In Norway, 20 municipalities participated in a trial of reduced voting age (to 16) in local elections in 2011. The municipalities organised campaigns and measures directed at such voter groups. The evaluation of the results of the trial process is still in process (Aars 2012; Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development of Norway 2011). It is also known that in some countries, all young people over the age of 16 have the right to vote in municipal elections (city of Vienna, Austria), parliamentary elections (Austria), regional elections (several *Bundeslands* in Germany) and parish elections (Finland).

Direct democracy

Many alternatives to existing forms of representational democracy have been suggested. Direct democracy can be understood as measures which citizens can

decide upon and regarding which they can create a political agenda by voting. According to Butković, when citizens have the independent choice to decide matters themselves, democracy as government by the people can strengthen. Within the European Union, there is some imbalance between member states and, consequently, between the rights of citizens to engage in democratic processes (Butković 2010: 34-37). According to Kaufmann et al. (2010), direct democracy procedures in Switzerland became established as early as the 19th century and have been further developed since. Direct democracy means that popular voting takes place either because a group of voters demands it, or because it is stipulated in the constitution. The government cannot call a popular vote on a substantive issue: direct democracy implies the existence and use of tools for the sharing of political power that are in the hands of the citizens and serve their interests. Not all popular vote procedures are direct-democratic. A plebiscite has a quite different effect from a real referendum. Direct democracy empowers citizens; plebiscites are tools for the exercise of power by those in power. Much misunderstanding and confusion could be avoided if direct-democratic and plebiscitary procedures were clearly distinguished from one another, and even had different names (Kaufmann et al. 2010: 7-9).

From a direct democracy point of view, initiatives at the municipal level in Finland are “agenda initiatives” that enable citizens to submit a proposal that must be considered by the legislature. However, unlike “popular initiatives”, agenda initiatives trigger a (referendum) vote and therefore are not a tool of direct democracy, but of participatory democracy.

It is important to note, however, that although direct democracy might be a complementary measure to improve democratic culture, children and the young are still excluded from the process if they have no right to vote because of their age. Therefore, in order to improve direct mechanisms for the young, different procedures are needed. Providing every young person in a school, residential area or municipality with the opportunity to be consulted might be an example of how the ideals of direct democracy could be translated to promoting participation at the municipal level (Feldmann-Wojtachnia et al. 2010: 18). Of particular importance in this context is the emphasis on the opportunity individuals have to engage in decision making as individuals. This is particularly important in countries where participatory mechanisms for the young tend to be group-based, such as youth councils or school councils, and individual participation mechanisms have been under-developed or ignored.

Participatory democracy

Proponents of participatory democracy claim that representative or direct democracy is not enough. Instead, they believe that sites that are normally considered apolitical, such as schools, working places or youth organisations, can be sites of democratic decision making. By participating in these environments, citizens are better equipped to affect their surroundings. Practical examples of participatory democracy are, for example, workplace democracy or participatory budgeting (Dryzek and Dunleavy 2009: 212-213). According to Morrow, the theories of participatory democracy claim that decisions are better if they reflect the interests of the people participating in the process. But they may also believe that participatory democracy promotes citizens’ sense of having the capacity to impact decision making in public policy. The ideal image of the citizen describes an active participant, not citizenship as a formal relation to the political system (Morrow 2005: 381).

Participatory democracy seems well suited to children and the young because no inherent age limits for participation exist. As participants, children and the young are recognised as powerful agents in their own lives and as citizens in their community. This can mean that the power relationship between the young and adults is transformed (John 2003: 208-209). According to Hart, when participating, the young can learn new skills, acquire confidence, create networks and at best more egalitarian relationships with adults. In addition to the personal level, there could be a transformation at the institutional level, when different organisations learn to better respond to the needs, hopes and ideas of the young (Hart 2008).

There are many instruments for promoting participation amongst young people. In fact, most structured participation mechanisms should be considered participatory. For example, youth councils are not mechanisms of representational democracy because they lack the power to make independent decisions on youth policy. Instead, they can contribute to decision making by making statements or clarifying the position of the young. The real question behind the success of participatory mechanisms is power distribution – if power is not redistributed, and youth have to adapt to the decisions and structures instigated by adult society, participatory processes might actually be disempowering (Farthing 2012: 83). According to Mary John (2003: 209) “participation without influence is mere window-dressing”. This point is well expressed by a young person in Finland:

My opinion is that it is of no use organising youth councils, future forums, hearings, initiation boxes or anything that creates an image of listening to the young, if one is not ready to give power and responsibility to the young. It is of course fine that you can say to outsiders that we listen to the young in this municipality, but there would have to be well thought-out opinions on what are young people’s real possibilities of making an impact (Huhtala and Tontti 2005: 43).

Deliberative democracy

The idea of deliberative democracy emphasises that democracy is about communication, involving the presentation of good reasons and reflecting on the points made by others (Dryzek and Dunleavy 2009: 215). Thus, it claims that democracy is not only about voting, participating or directly expressing one’s will, it is fundamentally about engaging in a dialogue and trying to arrive at a shared understanding of common issues. According to several authors, the ideal of deliberation is based on the idea of a communicative rationality which can overcome attempts to trick, command cunningly or manipulate people behind the same opinion (Honneth 2009: 169; Habermas 1981). In deliberation, one cannot rely on experts or power positions, but on the power of the best argument. Public argumentation and reasoning among equal citizens ensures that public problems can be solved.

According to Cohen, deliberative democratic politics has three conditions. Firstly, there has to be public deliberation on the common good. There probably are alternative conceptions of the meaning of common good, so citizens are required to have a wider perspective instead of narrow, interest-based conceptions. Secondly, equality must be manifest among citizens. Political opportunity must be independent of economic or social position. Thirdly, politics should be ordered in a way that provides a basis for self-respect and creates a sense of political competence. It should shape the identity of citizens. (Cohen 1998: 143-144). These three conditions also emphasise the importance of taking youth seriously, of respecting their ideas and accepting them as equal partners in a dialogue.

The models for promoting deliberation for the young are being developed. There is evidence that although young people are not interested in the formal procedures of party politics, many would like to be heard by politicians and included in the processes of deliberation within the existing structures of society (Harris et al. 2010). One author of this article has been active in developing a method called deliberative “discussion day” where young people and municipal officials can meet.

Discussion days have been organised in over 60 Finnish municipalities since 2008. An attempt is made therein to inspire discussion between young people and local decision makers in a deliberative manner. The objective is to develop local services from the point of view of adolescents representing different bodies, for example youth and pupils’ councils, the youth club visitors and the young people in targeted youth work. Such work begins with group work where the young people become acquainted with each other and the different points of view held by others. At the same time, their own opinions on the state of municipal services strengthens. The main focus of the discussion is on the questions, claims, contentions or proposals presented by the young people to the adults. This ensures that the discussion covers topics that are important to young people. In several municipalities it has been observed that deliberation is achieved: discussion is not “empty talk” or “just talking”. Thus, the discussion days can impact the opinions of the people present (cf. Pekonen 2011: 8, 35, 69). There is evidence that decision makers have begun to increase their trust in the abilities of the young to operate within municipal issues. In some municipalities, there have been intentions to hear youth at an earlier stage of planning and decision making. Age-sensitive discussion days can also be applied to other special groups. For example, children and seniors have participated in a deliberative manner (Gretschel et al. 2013).

During discussion days, deliberation is based on the knowledge of and experience of young people themselves. Citizen jury processes have been organised to obtain the opinions and views of the young on more complex issues. In such juries, the participants are allowed to examine evidence about the issue under consideration provided by visiting experts. For example, in Wales young people aged 16-19 examined the principles of “designer baby technology” (Iredale et al. 2006). In the first Finnish Youth Jury, the theme was “involvement in school community” (University of Vaasa 2010; Raisio and Ollila 2011).

Counter-democracy

Democratic participation is usually seen as involvement in a democratic process. There has been powerful criticism of the idea that youth participation is an automatically positive experience for young people. According to Farthing, the criticism claims that participation does not change power relations because participation events are structured by adults and the young have to accept pre-given roles, structures and even discourse. Participation thus reinforces the very power relations it is supposed to change (Farthing 2012). This has led some theorists, such as Slavoj Žižek (2008: 474), to claim that “our ‘doing nothing’, our refusal to participate, can deal a blow to the power structure, radically de-legitimizing it, preventing its normal functioning”. These observations point out that there might be good grounds for examining what form of youth politics exists outside the scope of representational, direct, deliberative or participatory democracy. Farthing has claimed that the disengagement of the young from politics can be seen as an active rejection of old ways which are incapable of meeting the challenges of environmentalism or globalisation. He claims that not giving authority

to a political system is one way of breaking new ground towards new forms of engaged practices (Farthing 2010).

The French political theorist Pierre Rosanvallon claims that a new democratic culture is emerging. He talks about counter-democracy, a term without connotations of being anti-democratic. Instead, counter-democracy is still democratic life, where the citizen as an elector is replaced by a citizen who monitors how the elected politicians or authorities are behaving. The idea is to ensure that democratic processes work not by participating in them, but by supervising, monitoring or judging the issues in hand. According to Rosanvallon, counter-democracy can be seen as an aspect of democratic life, which complements representative and deliberative processes (Rosanvallon 2008). By using the concept of counter-democracy, we wish to highlight that one can contribute to a democratic process by refusing to participate in the processes directly. Perhaps the idea is not only to oil the wheels of governance, but to occasionally throw a spanner in the works.

Methods of counter-democracy, such as demonstrations, exposures that spread in the Internet and other operations in the social media, legal and illegal methods of activism are also widely used by the young. For example, youth councils and the boards of student bodies use walkouts and demonstrations to deal with situations where their communication has not met with a response from decision makers. This indicates that the young may use different methods of political activism if their iterated demands and needs are not met.

Counter-democracy seems to be somewhat dependent on culture and political system. Finnish sociologist Eeva Luhtakallio conducted a comparative study on Finland and France. According to her, in Finland activists consider themselves citizens and approach their role as such. In France, activism is seen as political activity and as "being-in-the-world", not so much as a commitment to the political system (Luhtakallio 2010: 213-216). A nagging question behind all participation is how much it can remove inherent pluralism and antagonism (Mouffe 2005) in politics. Purely technical hearings would be about giving opinions about the ready-made agenda; participation is also about disagreeing, questioning, being antagonistic or monitoring the process.

→ Instruments for promoting participation

In the first section, we analysed the ambiguous nature of democratic culture, and showed by examining different conceptions of democracy that democratic behaviour can mean voting, expressing will, participating at a local level, and interacting with others on matters of common good or resistance. All these different aspects point to the need to recognise the plurality of democracy. This section analyses international and local instruments for promoting and examining participation. Firstly, when measuring youth participatory activity, the rich variety of cultural, everyday participatory democracy is not recognised. The International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) is analysed as an example of this. Secondly, questionnaires are used to gather information to support decision making, for example in the structured dialogue processes during EU presidencies, yet they fail to obtain information on youth with low social capital. This shows that in order to promote deliberation it should be ensured that all the concerned are able to contribute to the process. Thirdly, the communal urban planning of skate parks is used as an example to highlight the versatility of participatory processes. Based on this analysis, we state that there is an increasing need to recognise different

forms of democratic life and to respond to such versatility by creating mechanisms that are based on qualitative, intensive promotion and research methods involving groups and individuals.

Forgetting the rich variety of everyday participation

“The International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) studied the ways in which countries prepare their young people to undertake their roles as citizens” (Schulz et al. 2010: 15). The aim of the ICCS study was to report on student achievement in a test of conceptual knowledge and understanding in civic and citizenship education. It also measured the political participation related behaviours and behavioural intentions of young people. The ICCS gathered survey data from more than 140 000 students at grade 8 (or equivalent), aged approximately 14 years of age, in more than 5 300 schools in 38 countries. Also, reports from principals or teachers from the schools were used in the analysis. The ICCS documents the differences between countries in relation to a wide range of different civic-related learning outcomes, actions and dispositions. It also documents differences in the relationship between the outcomes and characteristics of countries, communities, schools, classrooms and aspects of students’ personal and social backgrounds in relation to the outcomes of civic and citizenship education (Schulz et al. 2008; Schulz et al. 2010).

Earlier in this paper, the broad scope of democracy was introduced by using five different frameworks for understanding democracy. Now we will show how the understanding of different forms of democracy leads to a need to develop the issues that arose in the ICCS. As noted earlier, one of the key ideas of participatory democracy is repoliticising seemingly apolitical environments, such as schools, work places, and so on. The ICCS included the research question “What aspects of schools and education systems are related to achievement in and attitudes to civics and citizenship?” (Schulz et al. 2008: 10). Several sets of items were assumed to answer this question. For example, students were asked to rate the extent – “large”, “moderate,” “small,” “not at all” – to which their opinions were taken into account in the decision-making process concerning: classroom teaching methods; subjects taught; teaching and learning materials; the timetable; classroom and school rules (Schulz et al. 2010: 164). From the point of view of broad democracy, it is even more important to analyse how young people are expected to influence decision making than the actual issues they may or may not impact. Young people should have the opportunity to be heard in school-related matters using various political instruments, either one at a time or several simultaneously. The ICCS mainly concentrates on representative forms of participatory democracy like “voting for class representative or school parliament” or “becoming a candidate for class representative or school parliament” (Schulz et al. 2010: 135). According to our view, individual forms of participatory democracy for all pupils, for example the opportunity to propose an initiative, take part in inquiries and voting and co-operative planning processes in the classroom, school and community, are missing from the ICCS framework. At group level, even class meetings are missing.

As for the other democracy categories, deliberative forms of democracy like youth juries and discussion days could also have been mentioned as an alternative. As one overall form of participation in the wider community, the ICCS offers “participating in peaceful protests against laws believed to be unjust” (Schulz et al. 2010: 95). According to our knowledge, a mass walkout is a counter-democratic instrument which pupils use in an attempt to impact school-related decision making.

In the representative democracy category, it is favourable to ask school principals if there are student representatives in school-related committees of local authorities. In the direct democracy format, popular votes on school-related themes could be such an instrument depending on the age of the pupils and how low the voting age is in each country. By broadening the scope of democracy to include forms of political participation, which now are missing, it is possible to give credence to the development of real multiple participation opportunities for young people as such. The current focus is slightly more on the question of how actively young people participate, especially vote, when they become adults. The authors of the ICCS international report also concede that their framework requires further investigation (Schulz et al. 2010: 257). Of course it should be remembered, "... because the ICCS is an international study, the concrete and abstract concepts ... are those that can be generalized across societies" (Schultz et al. 2008: 27). However, it must be added that such an assessment simultaneously generates information in guiding how democracy could develop.

The difficulty of reaching all the young

A questionnaire is a good data-gathering method for the ICCS, where a large amount and type of students answer the questionnaire in schools. The situation is different when a questionnaire is used as an information-gathering method for example in structured dialogue processes during EU presidencies. Structured dialogue can be seen as a manifestation of deliberative democracy. According to Jürgen Habermas, the success of deliberative processes is dependent on the quality of the procedures and conditions of communication. There should also be interplay between institutionalised processes and informal public opinions (Habermas 1996: 298).

According to the Council Resolution (2011/C 164/01), the objective of the structured dialogue is to involve a diverse range of young people and youth organisations in the consultations at all levels. The results of the national consultations in the form of national reports considered and compiled by the European Steering Committee are brought to the EU Youth Conferences. It is also said in the resolution that resulting from the nature of the process, young people living throughout the European Union had the opportunity to express their opinions and ideas during the same consultation phase on a common priority theme. According to the resolution, the involvement of young people with fewer opportunities in the process should be promoted (see Council of the European Union 2011). Also, according to the European Commission, "special attention should be given to young people with fewer opportunities. They must be an integral part of the dialogue, but, in parallel, receive special treatment taking into account the specificity of their problems and concerns" (European Commission 2008).

In the period from 1 January 2010 to 30 June 2011, youth employment was agreed by the Council to be the thematic priority in the structured dialogue process. In the "Compendium of the first cycle of the structured dialogue" (2011: 15) it is stated that: "As part of the dialogue process, on-line consultations and debates were organised with thousands of young people all over Europe." In the compendium it is stated that the national consultations together with the joint outcomes of the EU Youth Conferences and the discussions therein, had impacted "the Council Conclusions on promoting youth employment to achieve the Europe 2020 objectives" (see Council of the European Union 2012). Since it is not known who were the young people consulted at a national level, it might be supposed that such a system only stimulates answers from the most active young

people, even when data concerning the employment problems and experiences of young people with a variety of backgrounds are needed to plan European political processes effectively. This was the case also when the Finnish version of the “Youth Guarantee Model”²³ was planned. The methodology included using an open e-questionnaire (N = over 6 300) for gathering the opinions of young people beyond the reach of schools, training, workshops and rehabilitation. For instance, inequality was highlighted in the Finnish “Youth Guarantee” planning process, when the National Youth Council asked registered youth organisations to encourage their members to give their voice (thus effectively representing the voice of all youth) by completing online questionnaires, yet young people beyond the active membership were not activated to do so.

The structured dialogue as a genuine attempt to promote deliberative democracy shows that the success of deliberation (where all the relevant arguments and viewpoints are reflected) is at least partly based on how well different youth groups are reached. This in turn emphasises that there should exist different participatory mechanisms which would create conditions for co-operation. We argue that to be democratic in such cases, more qualitative and intensive participatory research methods involving group and individual contacts should be used in contacting young people living beyond many societal services.

Everyday politics: planning skate parks

As a last example, we will use a skateboarding area establishment process as an illustration of how young people are able to engage in their immediate local surroundings. Our idea is to recognise the blueprint of a good, democratic co-operation model that includes young people in the process of producing skate facilities for skateboarding, roller skating and kick scooters. The model is based on the experiences of skaters and municipal officers in ten Finnish local authorities (Gretschel et al. 2012). The example has inherent limitations, since the skateboarding culture tends to be urban and gender-biased. However, researching local contexts requires looking at specific cases. By using skateboarders we wish to highlight the difficulties in reacting to issue-based participation of the young and reacting to locally and culturally meaningful forms of youth participation. The aim is to look at how participatory, direct and counter-democracy processes combine at the level of local decision making. This so-called politics of the ordinary indicates that youth participation might be ad hoc and networks based, instead of structural and long term (Vromen and Collin 2010).

The skateboarding facility planning process revealed huge differences in how the needs of skateboarders (later skaters) were handled by the local administration. This is a telling example of how the administration is able to contribute to creating participatory mechanisms. In one town, a skaters’ association was helped by the city’s director of sport affairs to find a skate hall facility. In another town, the director did the opposite: he denigrated the skaters by describing them as possible vandals. Finally, in both cases skating premises were found. In the latter case, an interviewed activist stated that he had thought, “This is the last time I come to this office.” The way the matter of skaters was handled in the latter case tarnished the ideal of good administration (see, for example, The European Ombudsman 2005).

23. The Young Peoples’ Social Guarantee Model is one of the Finnish Government’s spearhead schemes. The objective of the scheme is to offer every under 25-year old and every under 30-year old a place of work, training, study, workshop or rehabilitation within three months of becoming unemployed (Ministry of the Employment and the Economy 2011; Ministry of Finance 2011: 20-21).

It also thwarted the efforts made to encourage young people to participate. A group of active young people were not provided with the support to realise their initiative. This indicates that cultivating different forms of participation requires a change of attitude and working culture.

Democratic culture requires stable structures. These structures should also be flexible enough to respond to emerging, new forms of youth cultures. In particular, participatory and deliberative forms of democracy should not exclude different groups. In this regard, the democratic aspect of the process failed. People engaged in skating should have the same rights as those engaged in other hobbies. They should at least receive help if not investment from their local authority when establishing or improving facilities. The aim is not only to develop the level of democracy in planning and decision making, but also to lower the threshold for newcomers and potential new skaters to use the new area by also including their voice in the planning process. Moreover, it is also important to take into account gender-specific needs in planning processes. According to interviews, girl skaters often need lower threshold structures – even lower if they are newcomers to the scheme.

According to data collected in ten cities in Finland, skaters are involved in skate-facility planning processes nowadays. Lessons were learnt after building several unusable skating areas. Some of these were provided as ready-made packets thanks to the goodwill of donators. However, even though the level of co-operation with skaters has now deepened, the idea of collaboration with skaters with skating expertise is not carried through all the stages in the process. For example, mistakes have been made involving a critical few millimetres when asphalt was laid by the labourers. The unusable asphalt clearly displays that increased participatory and deliberative forms of democracy not only create better community, but also mean improved public services if everyday expertise is respected.

When analysing the scope of democracy in the above processes, it is possible to notice that the expert voice of skating often belongs to an older generation, to those who began their lifestyle several years or even decades ago. In Finland, such experts are often over 30-year-old males. They are the life and soul of registered skating associations in the cities and at a national level. They are asked to participate in planning processes by the local authorities. However, it is often forgotten that non-sportive young people can also contribute a significant amount of expertise to the process. For example, young people are very aware of the social openness of the sports facilities in question. Although there clearly are different deliberative and participatory processes used in planning, they tend to be too narrow, particularly if the main potential users cannot be reached. To use Habermasian jargon, democratic opinion- and will-formation requires paying attention to different groups (Habermas 1996: 299). Working with established associations might be easy for the administration, but it does not fulfil the ideals of participatory or deliberative democracy, which aim at offering a substitute to the expert culture.

The quality maintenance of skating structures does not always depend on the economic situation of the city. Data collected in Finland indicates that skating areas are not maintained with the same intensity as other sports facilities in several cities. The city or municipal authority has a gatekeeper role in defining which sports opportunities are available at a local level – which of these receive investment, and which do not. Bodies of representative democracy may have

quite a traditional image of sport. Skateboarding is a manifestation of both youth and sport culture. In some cases, neither the youth nor sports department of a local authority takes the responsibility of skateboarding facility maintenance seriously. It can be observed that cities seem to have a significant amount of difficulty in reacting to needs arising from an increase in the amount of skateboarders. Moreover, skaters' achievements often improve. However, it takes the local authority a considerable amount of time to develop the facilities' levels of difficulty. In contrast to cross-country ski tracks, wrestling rings or swimming pools, which have quite a stable profile in Finland, skate, parcour, snowboarding and trick-biking have continuously changing profiles. Local authorities should be sensitive to the characteristics of different sports. Skating as a sports and youth culture phenomenon provides a fruitful field of co-operation for municipal youth and sports departments. Skate areas could serve as versatile and unique oases of youth and sport culture. From an opposite perspective, many municipalities in Finland order ready-for-use from the same catalogue.

→ Responding to multiplicity

The first two concrete examples mentioned above (the ICCS study and structured dialogue) are adult-led cases where the initiative and structures are given by adults. The skate example shows that there are occasions when young people themselves will propose an initiative. These are likely to be issue-based, short-term projects. As has been indicated, the difficulties in answering the call of the young show that political culture is not always willing or able to recognise the democratic opportunities such projects could generate.

The three examples above highlight a number of points. Firstly, the examples' forms of democracy do not use all the aspects of democratic life described in the first section. Secondly, the choice of democratic instruments tends to narrow the focus group. One of the most challenging tasks in avoiding polarising societies is to ensure that all voices are heard. It is particularly difficult to reach youth with low social capital and whose position in the labour market is fragile. Therefore it is vital that the failure of existing democratic mechanisms to reach a broad base of young people is recognised. And thirdly, short-term everyday politics should not be forgotten in local politics. The linking of such democratic behaviour to long-term processes requires a tangible interface between the different concepts of democracy. The points above indicate that the conception of democracy should be wide enough to cover all relevant aspects of democracy. This in turn could positively contribute to reaching more young people than at present.

The five conceptions of democracy indicate that democracy has both social dimensions (working together, participating, interacting, monitoring administration) and individual dimensions (the decision to participate and speak out). Recently the Council of the European Union (2012) has invited all the member states to develop "an integrated approach similar to the 'youth guarantee' already developed in a number of Member States". In this article, we highlighted two examples (too infrequent structured dialogues, too open questionnaires to cover all types of young people) of how national or European planning of themes such as the "youth guarantee" should ensure to a certain extent that it is not only active young people who are empowered to take part in hearing processes organised to support decision making. We argue that to achieve democracy in these cases, more qualitative and intensive methods

involving direct group and individual contacts should be used to find young people who are beyond the reach of many societal services.

→ Conclusion

At the beginning of our article, we observed that voting is often counted as the only relevant indicator of people's political activity. If this is the case, the analysis is based on an inadequate framework for understanding democracy. In a democratic society, agenda listing and theme prioritisation in decision-making processes should be based on an analysis of citizens' activity in different forms of democratic arenas. This requires considering different manifestations of democracy, highlighted in the different conceptions of the nature of democracy. We have argued that the question of apathetic and passive youth might be misguided because the nature of democracy from which the young are supposedly disengaged is not based on a wide understanding of democracy. Operating within narrow definitions not only generates a false image of the young, it might, in some cases, even prevent mechanisms for seeing youth and consequently block a fair response to their needs.

Recognising the pluralism of democracy and responding accordingly might raise the question why promoting participation would be a reasonable thing to do, given the time and effort required to meet the needs of the young. Arguments for promoting participation can be based on the developmental perspective (helping young people to learn democratic behaviour), service perspective (organising services more efficiently by listening to the actual users), democracy perspective (the more citizens are interested in common matters, the more likely they are to engage democratically), but they can also be based on a community perspective (the more groups feel they are accepted as legitimate members of a community, the safer, more comfortable and creative the community is likely to be). For these reasons, youth participation is not only about the young, it concerns all of us.

One strategy to deepen participation is to react to the shortcomings of a system that prevents some people from voting because of their age. The Council of Europe has emphasised the need to investigate the possibility of lowering the voting age to 16 years in all countries and in all types of elections (Council of Europe 2011). With a lower age of voting, the issues of those less than 18 years of age would be seen more in representative democracy, where the voice of young people is otherwise quite often missing. Another solution is to create a participatory democracy mechanism that mimics representational structures. For example, youth and school councils are forums where social capital and taking broader responsibility for common issues potentially accumulates through the experience and coaching these groups receive. While we feel that these solutions are necessary steps towards a more participatory future, we wish to point out that in addition, different types of solutions are needed. There is also a genuine fear of tokenism – that only a fraction of young people are represented and those that are not are likely to distance themselves even further from society.

In summary, the main consideration in improving democracy or engaging the young in democracy is to clarify the conception of democracy used. Democratic culture can take many forms. The question is not only how the needs of the young could be moulded to stimulate an interest in representational democracy, it is also how society could be reformed to create a culture of multiple voices with an emphasis on participation.

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Active citizenship 3.0/2020 – Youth participation and social capital after post- democracy

Benedikt Widmaier

→ Criticism of and approaches to an ambivalent concept

The concept of participation has been depoliticised in the last few years and preference is often given to the term “engagement”. The German Government’s “engagement report” of autumn 2009, for example, may be regarded as the climax of this creeping depoliticisation of the concept of participation. In it, a new concept was introduced in order, supposedly, to avoid the dilemmas concerning the unsettled definitions, and the proposal was made to refer in future to “*Zivilengagement*” (civil engagement) (see also Priller et al. 2011). It was asserted that the term “*bürgerschaftliches engagement*” (citizen engagement) hitherto employed in Germany was too closely linked to contexts involving political participation and the perception and strengthening of democracy and that the fact that daily commitment to society produced important products and services of the welfare state was quickly overlooked (Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth – BMFSFJ 2009: 11).

As far as youth policy is concerned, the dilemma of the depoliticised concept of participation manifests itself in the excessive importance attached to

voluntary engagement, such as (international) voluntary services (see also, on this and what follows, Widmaier 2011b and 2011c). Even if democracy, in line with American pragmatism, can not only be seen as a form of government, but also as a social and life model (cf. Himmelmann 2001), the focus appears to have continually slipped in the last few years from the political goal and political core of democracy, as well as from youth policy. In terms of democratic theory, it may be a mistaken belief that young people's disenchantment with politics could be compensated for by an increase in social engagement.

This potential dilemma is also reflected in the discussions of democratic theory among political scientists. In an effort perhaps to make the political problem seem less significant than it is, reference is made in America to "engaged citizenship" (cf. for example Dalton 2006), in Germany to "citizen engagement" (*bürger-schaftliches engagement*) and in the European debate to "active citizenship". Even if it sounds paradoxical and is probably hardly intended by those involved in the debate, the continued uncritical and depoliticised view of engagement and participation could contribute to rather than prevent the further development of a post-democratic situation (cf. Crouch 2008).

The aim of the following contribution is to shed light on the European aspects of this debate on democratic theory, especially as far as youth policy is concerned. First of all, a number of important European statements of principle as well as research into issues of active citizenship and the associated challenges for civic and citizenship education are discussed. This is followed by a discussion and critical assessment of the theory of "social capital", which is the dominant paradigm in the debate on democratic theory. Finally, there is discussion of what these debates on democratic theory mean for youth policy and youth education, and an approach is outlined that, in addition to the importance of social capital, postulates the need for political capital.

Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education

To a large extent unnoticed by the political public, but also by political and educational experts – at any rate in Germany – the Council of Europe adopted in May 2010 a Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education. After the disappearance of the Iron Curtain, the Council of Europe had already begun to extend the field of human rights education, which developed from its traditional mandate, and to turn its attention to "education for democratic citizenship" (EDC) (cf. Becker 2008 and 2012; Lösch 2009; Dürr 2011). The charter followed on from this and to some extent rounded off the efforts made over many years to focus more on civic education and learning democracy – that is, citizenship education.

The charter, which dates from 2010, defines education for democratic citizenship as:

education, training, awareness raising, information, practices and activities which aim, by equipping learners with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviour, to empower them to exercise and defend their democratic rights and responsibilities in society, to value diversity and to play an active part in democratic life, with a view to the promotion and protection of democracy and the rule of law.

Human rights education is defined as:

education, training, awareness raising, information, practices and activities which aim, by equipping learners with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviour, to empower learners to contribute to the building and defence of a universal culture of human rights in society, with a view to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Education for democratic citizenship and human rights education are described as being “closely inter-related and mutually supportive” and “(differing) in focus and scope rather than in goals and practices”. The text goes on: “Education for democratic citizenship focuses primarily on democratic rights and responsibilities and active participation, in relation to the civic, political, social, economic, legal and cultural spheres of society, while human rights education is concerned with the broader spectrum of human rights and fundamental freedoms in every aspect of people’s lives.”

A glance at two practical consequences appears interesting. (1) A call is made for democratic principles actually to be experienced in order not only to learn, but also experience democracy and respect for human rights: “Effective learning in this area involves a wide range of stakeholders including policy makers, educational professionals, learners, parents, educational institutions, educational authorities, civil servants, non-governmental organisations, youth organisations, media and the general public.” And the charter continues: “the governance of educational institutions, including schools, should reflect and promote human rights values and foster the empowerment and active participation of learners, educational staff and stakeholders, including parents”. (2) Research on education for democratic citizenship and human rights education should be initiated and promoted in order “to take stock of the current situation in the area and to provide stakeholders including policy makers, educational institutions, school leaders, teachers, learners, non-governmental organisations and youth organisations with comparative information to help them measure and increase their effectiveness and efficiency and improve their practices” (Council of Europe 2010).

Civic skills and lifelong learning in the EU

In addition to the Council of Europe, the European Union has in the course of the last decade closely linked the subject of active citizenship to lifelong learning, that is further education in the broadest sense of the term. Already in the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning (European Commission 2000) “employability” – namely qualification for and integration into the job market – and “active citizenship” were mentioned as the two central and (supposedly) identical aims of lifelong learning.

Later, the “twin terms” active citizenship and employability were given prominence in an EU document entitled “Key competences for lifelong learning” (European Commission/European Parliament 2006), which may be regarded as an important step on the way to the so-called European Qualifications Framework. In that document, key competences are described as those skills “which individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment” (Ibid: OJ L 394/13).

It is conspicuous that “active citizenship” is first mentioned in the English version and that the term is somewhat inaccurately translated into “*Bürgersinn*” (which equates more to “public spirit”). Just as the term “*Staatsbürger*” is often translated into “citizen” or “citizenship” in the documents referred to here, the term “*Bürgersinn*” is more appropriate for an uncritical, affirmative concept of citizenship. In a number of other statements, however, the language employed is more emancipatory, for example when it is stated that civic competence also involves “critical and creative reflection” (Ibid: OJ L 394/14).

“Civic competence equips individuals to fully participate in civic life, based on knowledge of social and political concepts and structures and a commitment to active and democratic participation” (Ibid: OJ L 394/16). The document goes on:

Civic competence is based on knowledge of the concepts of democracy, justice, equality, citizenship, and civil rights Skills for civic competence relate to the ability to engage effectively with others in the public domain, and to display solidarity and interest in solving problems affecting the local and wider community. ... Constructive participation also involves civic activities, support for social diversity and cohesion and sustainable development (Ibid: OJ L 394/17).

Evidence studies and research on “active citizenship”

In 2005, the European Commission created with the Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning (CRELL) its own research institute to deal with issues relating to lifelong learning. In the same year, the centre began a research project together with the Council of Europe on “Active Citizenship for Democracy”. This involved the interdisciplinary collaboration of an international team of academics and experts in the fields of education, political science and sociology. The key objective of the research undertaken by CRELL was the development of a so-called “Active Citizenship Composite Indicator”, a policy consultation tool that enables the status and development of “active citizenship” to be measured and compared among European countries. The data from the 2002 European Social Survey were used as the empirical basis (cf. on this Widmaier 2011a).

Three documents in particular from the CRELL research need to be emphasised:

- “Measuring Active Citizenship in Europe” (Hoskins et al. 2006);
- “Measuring Civic Competences in Europe” (Barber et al. 2008);
- A summary entitled “The characterization of Active Citizenship in Europe” (Mascherini et al. 2009).

In particular “Measuring Civic Competences in Europe” raises the political-educational question “What were the learning outcomes required for an individual to become an active citizen?” The aim of the study, the text goes on, is to “(explore) the learning outcomes – referred to in this paper as civic competence – the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to enable individuals to become an active citizen” (Barber et al. 2008: 11).

CRELL plays an important, indeed decisive, role in the discussion of “active citizenship” in Europe. It was, for example, not only involved in the EU’s Education and Training 2010 Work Programme, but makes its expertise available for the regular reports on “Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training”. Both in those and in many other documents since then, the definition of “active citizenship” developed by CRELL has repeatedly been used. The

following can therefore be more or less regarded as the official EU definition of “active citizenship”:

Participation in civil society, community and/or political life, characterised by mutual respect and non-violence and in accordance with human rights and democracy (Hoskins et al. 2006: 4; see also Hoskins et al. 2012: 17).

Since 2012, reference has also been made in the European debate to “participatory citizenship”, although the debate as a whole continues to be driven by the individuals who are also responsible for the CRELL studies. Last year, the international research group, prominent members of which are Bryony Hoskins and David Kerr, published four reports on behalf of the European Commission under the title “Participatory Citizenship in the European Union” (see, *inter alia*, Hoskins et al. 2012). These reports once again summarised the debate on “active citizenship”.

The dominant paradigm of social capital

In the context of democratic theory, this European discourse on “participatory citizenship”, “active citizenship” and “education for democratic citizenship” is very much dominated by the American communitarian variant (Robert Putnam) of the theory of so-called “social capital”. Robert Putnam is, for example, also one of the main reference authors in the aforementioned European Commission reports. In Report 1, which as a “context analysis report” sets out the foundations for the discussion, there are six references to Putnam (Hoskins et al. 2012: 9, 10, 3 x 11, 28).

There are a variety of reasons for these many references to Robert Putnam, but it can in the final analysis be said, albeit somewhat bluntly, that the social capital theory best fitted in with the (also European) zeitgeist of the 1990s. In the specialist literature of the English-speaking world, reference is made to a “culturally embedded concept” (Amna 2010: 193), which doubtless describes the matter quite well. The social capital theory evidently corresponds to a large extent to the development of political culture and the growing importance of civil society theories of democracy and ideas on governance (see Evers 2011) in the Western industrial countries in those years. The basic summary of the theory is as follows:

People who play an active role in a club or association lead a happier life, have a larger circle of friends and tend to trust others and are physically and mentally healthier and more satisfied with themselves and their environment. ... However, a club or association produces direct democratic effects. ... These effects, which make the member of the club or association appear more competent and more democratic, may be described as the effects of a *school of democracy*, to quote de Tocqueville. Members of a club or association learn the high art of tolerance and peaceful and constructive discussions with people of different opinions and engage in political discourse (Rossteutscher 2009: 61 ff.).

Apart from the fact that the advocates of this variant of social capital theory are consequently also referred to as neo-Tocquevillians, the social capital discourse contains numerous additional cross-references to important socio-political discussions of the 1990s. Related terms on which separate detailed social debates are/have been conducted are, for example, “civic engagement”

and “civil society” or the so-called “third sector” (in addition to the state and the economy) (see for example Zimmer 2002).

In democratic theory, the political science terms “strong democracy” (Benjamin Barber), “participatory democracy” or “associative democracy” are closely linked to Putnam’s social capital theory, and in political theory and political philosophy the communitarianism debate is closely connected to the social capital theory. Robert Putnam is regarded as “America’s model communitarian” (Braun 2002: 6).

Putnam has also played a significant part in shaping the image of the European citizen and the belief in “the benevolent consequences of civil society and social capital for the functioning of democracy” in European politics (van Deth 2009: 177). The strong orientation towards the civil society image of the citizen played a key role as early as the CRELL study entitled “Measuring Active Citizenship” (Hoskins et al. 2006: 9), but it also becomes clear in the current “Participatory Citizenship” report, which states with reference to Putnam that “the quality of democratic governance relies on the civic virtues and engagement of their citizens” (Hoskins et al. 2012: 9). And, with reference to Benjamin Barber (!), it goes on to say: “The result therefore is a shift in the understanding of citizenship to be more than just a legal concept and now to include one of individual involvement in participatory democracy, with a greater focus on citizens’ involvement in decision making, particularly policy development” (Hoskins et al. 2012).

In social capital theory, it is assumed that active social participation in clubs and associations teaches fundamental social skills. “Once such skills and abilities are acquired, they can be turned into political capital at any time” (Rossteutscher 2009: 165). This to some extent automatic development of social and civic engagement towards active political citizenship as the basis of a strong democracy is also referred to in political science as a “spill-over hypothesis” (see for a critical assessment Hüller 2006: 10f.). The fact that the spill-over hypothesis is also/has also been supported at the European level may be illustrated by taking the example of a statement by the European Economic and Social Committee on “Voluntary activity, its role in European society and its impact”. Here, too, there is once again a reference to Putnam. The statement reads, *inter alia*:

Voluntary activity is inextricably linked with active citizenship, which is the cornerstone of democracy at local and European level. ... suitable approach, illustrated in research work on civil society (for example, Putnam, 2000), is “social capital”, to which voluntary activity makes a significant contribution (European Economic and Social Committee 2006: 4, 11).

Deconstruction of the social capital theory

Robert Putnam further developed his social capital theory when critics pointed out to him that extremist groups, for example, could be regarded as civil society associations. He therefore subsequently divided the social capital generated into “bonding social capital” and “bridging social capital”. Clubs and associations can accordingly mainly exert a positive influence on the development of a democratic society when they are prepared to permit a certain heterogeneity of their members and have the effect of integrating people (bridging) and not shutting them out (bonding). This places very high demands on the – at any rate in Germany – generally very homogeneous system of clubs and associations and on compliance with reciprocity standards in relations between their members (see on this Zmerli 2011: 32f.).

In German contributions to the debate, it was possible early on to sense a more detached relationship with the social capital theory. Claus Offe, for example, points out that the quality of a democracy is “not only determined by the level of civic willingness to become involved and the amount of social capital. Rather, the state’s legal and institutional structures and the principle of citizenship on which they are based ... play an independent and at least equally important role” (Offe 2001: 492). Sebastian Braun noted early on that civil society must be further strengthened by “the active responsibility of elites to ensure social justice” (Braun 2002: 11). Roland Roth points out that the democratisation of liberal democracies ... requires new institutional forms and ... cannot be limited to invoking civil society (Roth 2004: 58). And Sigrid Rossteutscher states that societies have historically been and are also today confronted by undemocratic associations (bonding social capital!). Using a simple cause-effect model, she shows that, although voluntary involvement in clubs and associations can – on the positive side – generate a democratic political culture, it is equally possible – on the negative side – that an “undemocratic civil culture” will have an impact on an anti-democratic self-conception of clubs and associations (cf. Rossteutscher 2008). Sandra Seubert warns, at the end of a very detailed examination of the concept in terms of democratic theory, against “celebrating social capital unconditionally as the resource that, if looked after and fostered, ... will help to overcome the problems of democracy” (Seubert 2009: 267).

Most recently, the German debate on “bad civil society” has also had an impact on the discussion on the aims and tasks of civic education – that is, including the objectives of education for democratic citizenship. At the same time, it is made clear with reference to contrary historical experience (such as the extensive involvement in clubs and associations in Germany in the Weimar Republic before the outbreak of fascism) that a properly functioning civil society cannot provide a guarantee of strong democracy on its own (Klatt 2012: 7f.).

Cultural embeddedness and normative reflexivity or reciprocity accordingly appear to be crucially important for assessing the positive or negative social effect of clubs and associations. It may therefore be doubted that sports clubs (the most important youth associations in Europe; cf. Schild 2013) are somehow automatically “schools of democracy”. Lotte Rose has pointed out that, fully reflecting the language of globalised neoliberal capitalism, reference is made in children’s and youth sports today to the human body as a “capital resource”, to the promotion of “the development of biographical capital”, to “performance models” and individual “competitive advantages” that children (!) and young people can already acquire through sport in their young years. According to Rose, young people’s membership of a sports club is subject to “relatively stringent market laws”. In addition, sports clubs quite clearly find it difficult to cultivate a liberal democratic educational style: in sports education, a high degree of “authoritarian behaviour coupled with drill elements can still be found” (Rose 2004: 430).

The references to Putnam and his theory of social capital are now no longer as euphoric in European documents on active citizenship as they once were. In contrast to the introduction to the first CRELL study (Hoskins et al. 2006), the introduction to one of the more recent CRELL documents (Mascherini et al. 2009) states:

As can be seen within this definition [*cf. the above definition of “active citizenship”, B.Wi.*], active citizenship incorporates a wide spread of participatory activities ... However, and in our view correctly, action alone is not considered

active citizenship, the examples of Nazi Germany or Communist Europe can show mass participation without necessarily democratic or beneficial consequences. Instead participation is incorporated with democratic values, mutual respect and human rights. Thus what we are attempting to measure is value based participation. The difference between this concept and social capital is that the emphasis is placed on the social outcomes of democracy and social cohesion and not on the benefits to the individual from participation (Mascherini et al. 2009: 10).

The effect on political-educational theory and practice

The European debates and academic publications, especially on active citizenship, have, in Germany at any rate, only rarely been picked up on and discussed in the (youth-) educational professions up to now. On the other hand, the adoption of the theory of “social capital” plays a not insignificant role in the controversy between a supposedly “new” education for democracy and “old” civic education.

The impetus for discussion on active citizenship in Germany mainly came from the field of non-formal civic education outside the classroom. For example, in 2009 the Haus am Maiberg Academy for Civic and Social Education held a since well-documented conference entitled Active Citizenship and Citizenship Education (Widmaier and Nonnenmacher 2011), at which supranational European ideas on citizenship education and country comparisons of civic education were presented and an attempt made to place them in the national discourse on the teaching of civics.

Between 2009 and 2011, the so-called Researcher-Practitioner Dialogue for International Youth Work (RPD) carried out a research project and submitted an expert report on the subject of active citizenship (Brixius 2010). The report mainly presents and discusses the extensive collection of Council of Europe, European Commission and CRELL publications and makes them accessible by providing links to the expert community, thus creating an initial basis for their possible further dissemination. The RPD project ended in March 2011 with a specialist conference organised by the German Agency for the EU’s Youth in Action programme and other international youth work organisers. As active citizenship is one of that programme’s major funding priorities, the German Agency is one of the most important German institutions with a significant interest in the subject (cf. Müller 2011).

The strong influence of the theory of “social capital” on the learning of democracy has been recently described and discussed by a number of social scientists at the German Youth Institute (DJI) (Gaiser et al. 2009; Gaiser and de Rijke 2010; de Rijke et al. 2010). With the empirical data of the DJI Youth Survey, they have reached the conclusion that:

the central thesis that clubs and associations are “schools of democracy” is only weakly confirmed. Although their effects among individuals actively involved in clubs and associations are found to be more pronounced in all three aspects of democratic-civic orientation [*the idea of democracy, social trust, political skill, B.Wi.*], those effects are much less pronounced than anyone who strongly supports the thesis could have expected (de Rijke et al. 2010: 40).

In educational practice, ideas, concepts and methods based on the theory of “social capital” and the Education for Democratic Citizenship project initiated

by the Council of Europe have mainly become known in Germany through the “Learning and Experiencing Democracy” programme of the Federal and State Commission for Educational Planning and Promotion of Research (BLK-Programm, www.blk-demokratie.de). It is not entirely coincidental that Anne Sliwka, who played an important role with regard to the implementation of the practice in English-speaking countries (for example, service learning) in connection with the BLK programme, also refers to “education for democracy as civic education” (*Demokratiepädagogik als Bürgerbildung*) (Sliwka 2008: 20f.). The concept of service learning popularised in Germany in this context has, on the other hand, been criticised from the point of view of the objective of civic and citizenship education because, it is claimed, it essentially involves social learning with no consideration of politico-structural problems (cf. Nonnenmacher 2009: 277f.; and now also individual papers in Hedtke and Zimenkova 2013).

The fact that “European citizenship education” is a concept of education for democracy – that is, it involves an approach based on social learning and the formation of a democratic disposition – rather than political education (in the broad sense of the German term “*politische Bildung*”) is also criticised by Bettina Lösch, who calls for educators “to work with a more subtly differentiated concept of democracy that refers to the opportunities, conditions and problems of democracy” (Lösch 2009: 854).

So far, three facts in particular may be pointed out in an initial interim assessment: (1) in the documents of both the Council of Europe and the European Union, an extremely close link is established between education for democratic citizenship/citizenship education, human rights education and active citizenship; (2) in the context of European citizenship education, active citizenship is primarily understood as civic engagement in civil society, even if political participation in the narrower sense is not excluded; (3) the strong link to the communitarian theory of social capital reinforces the trend towards a depoliticised concept of the citizen and the relevant concepts of citizenship education. For civic education in the narrower sense, this means a challenge to reduce European theory and practice, which is more oriented towards education for democracy, to a political understanding of participation and to develop and test models in which both approaches are productively linked together (for a current discussion of this, cf. Hedtke and Zimenkova 2013).

Active political citizenship as a challenge of post democracy

The proliferation of ideas for activating citizens at the very time when political scientists are speaking of post-democratic developments in the Western industrial states (cf. Crouch 2008) is not anachronistic but logical since the aim is to counter a rising disaffection with the established political process and an increase in complexity resulting from international developments (Europeanisation and globalisation).

However, studies so far show that there are no magic recipes for activating citizens. For youth policy and youth work, however, taking a critical look at the dark sides of civil society is a big challenge. The differences between social engagement and social learning on the one hand and political participation and political learning on the other make it clear that the preservation and development of democracy will only be possible with both social learning and citizenship education. Both fields of learning complement and build on one another and a democratic society capable of meeting future challenges needs both social and political capital.

Ultimately, political participation is the fundamental principle of democratic politics (see on this Widmaier 2011b) since it is only through political participation that citizens are given a share of power and government. This key correlation is crucially important, especially in the European political context, because, as experience shows, the disenchantment of citizens with the political process is still much greater at the international level – this also applies to the objective of a cosmopolitan world citizenship (cf. Widmaier 2012a) – than in the case of domestic politics. Cross-border political learning projects, such as the “Learning Active Politics Laboratories” (Transnational LAP Labs) proposed by a working group at the Global Youth in 2020 conference held in Germany by the Federal Youth Ministry (Widmaier 2009), should therefore continue to gain in importance (cf. also Widmaier 2012b).

Learning active politics means above all that political issues in the narrower sense should be made more clearly the focus of discussion in the context of international youth meetings, international voluntary services and international school exchanges. International meetings and experience basically already constitute political experience, but they are only perceived as political by young participants when this is actually planned and discussed from the educational point of view. This presupposes that educators first see themselves as political actors in international youth work. Moreover, they need the relevant qualifications and a critical attitude to all issues relating to active citizenship and participatory citizenship. Opportunities to gain qualifications already exist, for example in the form of a curriculum for European citizenship training courses. However, individuals engaged in this field describe their work as a “drop in the ocean” (Schild 2013: especially 31). Furthermore, there should be a self-critical examination of the assertion currently made that “the dominant idea of the uniformity of an education for active citizens’ participation in Europe restrains authorities of citizenship education from reflecting on their own relevant conceptions of state, democracy, citizenship and participation and from thinking about their specific goals of citizenship education” (Hedtke and Zimenkova 2013: 225).

Overall, we have up to now had little practical and reflected experience with “learning active politics” in international youth work, and it is not entirely coincidental that this experience originates from institutions in which international youth work is “understood and practised as civic education” (Schwieren and Götz 2011: 161). A critical look at such international meetings with young people who are already involved in the work of youth councils or youth parliaments must initially produce an ambivalent result. On the one hand, success has been achieved in creating motivation for new engagement and in promoting the idea of political youth representation in the participating countries, such as Bulgaria. On the other hand, however, it has become clear how hard young people find it to understand their clearly political engagement as actually political, because their disenchantment with the political system and the established political process seems too great for them to do so. Young people can clearly hardly draw on their own positive experience with politics and political self-efficacy, so access to politics in the narrower sense is mainly possible through sustained educational assistance and support. Such assistance and support is also unavoidable in order to ensure the sustainability, and therefore effectiveness, of youth participation. Young people’s worlds are so dynamic today and the demands with regard to mobility so great that a permanent political youth forum beyond action-based forms of participation can in many cases only be assured by providing educational assistance. Not unsurprisingly, this becomes clear with initial experience with “learning active politics” (see Schwieren and Götz 2011: 161-170).

However, what “learning active politics” precisely means in conceptual terms will need to be further developed in the coming years – and 2020 is a good target to aim for. In non-formal youth education, experience has been gained based on ideas discussed at the aforementioned Global Youth in 2020 conference (Schwieren and Götz 2011). Nonetheless, it has become apparent, especially in Germany, that political participation in the narrower sense – that is, “participatory/active citizenship” as understood in the European debates – is encountering strong reservations as a practical objective in formal education. First and foremost, schoolteachers do not regard it as their task to prepare young people for active participation in political life by means of practical training approaches and prefer to speak of “cognitive mobilisation”. In their opinion, the individual decision in favour of active participation should be left to the young people themselves (for a current discussion, see for example Scherb 2012: 94ff.).

Here, the European debate, and especially the wide-ranging demands of the Council of Europe’s Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, promises to provide a tailwind for a more open national debate – no doubt not only in Germany. It can therefore only be hoped that the call for democratisation at all levels (school and education policy, NGOs and civil society, education and youth research and, last but not least, the field of politics) is taken up and that, in particular, non-formal youth education exploits the European tailwind for the further development of education for democratic citizenship. In their latest study, Hedtke and Zimenkova conclude that further critical research on this subject is unavoidable (Hedtke and Zimenkova 2013: 236). However, I do not agree with their closing argument that it “could ... be wiser to leave aside enthusiastic participation approaches” (p. 237). Participation is the principle and cornerstone of democracy, including in post-democratic times of crisis, so there is little sense in talking it down as the aim of citizenship education.

A picture painted of young people in Europe who have not only recognised but also actively make use of the opportunities provided by new means of democratic governance can be seen as both a utopian dream and a hope for 2020. To exploit those opportunities, young people possess skills and knowledge of society and politics and act in accordance with their own well-considered critical judgment based on the public interest. The preconditions for this have at any rate been created and the political will also seems to exist.

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*Hans-Joachim Schild,
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The think tank on youth policy in Europe

→ Introduction

Hans-Joachim Schild,

At the start of March 2012, a group of some 20 individuals with lengthy experience in research, policy and practice in the youth field, especially at the European level, gathered together for the first time to debate the existing state of play regarding “youth in Europe” and to consider prospective trajectories for the future. The meeting was held in the context of considerable concerns in relation to the two major European institutions taking the European youth agenda forward – the Council of Europe and the European Commission.

The Council of Europe was going through a process of reform, one that was preoccupied with streamlining its activities around its “core business” of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The youth agenda, broadly conceived, was at that time not particularly under threat, though the Youth Directorate within a broad Directorate-General for Education, Culture, Youth and Sports became a Department for Youth, twinned with the Department for Education within a

Directorate of Democratic Citizenship and Participation as part of a Directorate-General for Democracy.

The intention of the European Commission to amalgamate all EU education programmes (for schools, students, adults and “youth”) into one integrated programme, including the Youth in Action programme, branded as Erasmus for All and later named Erasmus+, was perceived by many protagonists of non-formal education and learning in the youth field as an attempt to sideline and diminish the components of the Youth in Action programme in the context of more formal education and learning agendas directed explicitly at the employability and competitiveness priorities of the EU, rather than objectives around the personal and social development of young people and their capacities and capabilities for civic engagement and becoming actors for social change.

The deliberations of the think tank, however, were more wide-ranging: the meeting was an opportunity to take stock of the progress made in the youth field over the preceding 20 (and more) years and to consider whether, especially in the challenging context of economic austerity throughout Europe, some or most of these developments were now under serious threat.

Consequentially, and in view of the continuing economic and political crisis, which has had a disproportionately negative impact on the lives of millions of young people across Europe, the think tank decided to meet a second time, one year almost to the day after the Berlin meeting, though on this occasion in Brussels. The discussions of this second meeting were more forward looking (described by one presenter as moving beyond the concerns of the present to constructing the future). The Brussels meeting focused on the question “Which youth policy do we really want?”, in terms of priorities, objectives, methods, principles and characteristics.

The reflections of the think tank meetings are documented here in two contributions.

In Berlin, it was agreed that people needed to speak forthrightly and discussions were conducted under what in the UK is quaintly known as “Chatham House rules”: issues and ideas can be transmitted but will not be attributed. Howard Williamson undertook to synthesise both the comments projected during the meeting and the “key concerns” provided on paper by those who participated in the first think tank meeting. This constitutes the first contribution.

The second contribution results from the think tank meeting in Brussels. It is a reworked document prepared by Koen Lambert and Hans-Georg Wicke on “Characteristics of a European youth policy and of youth policy in Europe in 2020”. It served as an input for the discussions on a future European youth policy and fits well with the expectation for this first issue of *Perspectives on youth*, which is to envision the future.

This is the basis for looking to the future from a youth policy perspective. It is done with some trepidation, but equally with a strong commitment from those who are still currently at the heart of independent thinking and action on youth policy and practice in Europe.

→ A matter of concern? The future of the youth agenda in Europe

Howard Williamson,

The discussion

Not everybody at the think tank knew each other, experience differed and ages ranged from just over 20 to just over 60. Forty years really is a lifetime in the course of youth policy development at the European level. Following some icebreaking, the opening plenary session endeavoured to address the following questions:

- What are the current challenges for those working on European youth policy?
- How can they sustain a dynamic approach to formulating and implementing youth policy?
- Who is in the driver's seat (or at least competing to drive the car)?
- What are the priorities being established?
- Is youth at the top of the European agenda, or "out of the game"?

There was a strong assertion that European youth policy was essentially a "bottom-up" development, building on experiences, visions and ideas that had originated at local and national levels, then adapted and amended for European application. There was also acknowledgement that there had always been cycles and phases of youth policy shaping and making, and that sometimes the key issue was simply about "bridging the time" until the moment for sharper and concerted action reappeared. Today, however, in a situation of crisis and economic austerity, there was a feeling that the youth agenda was at risk of disappearing or at least being firmly subordinated to what others might well consider to be more pressing political and economic priorities.

It was this perceived and apparent inaction within member states and inertia at the European level that was concentrating the mind. As the politics of austerity and the polarisation of life chances for the young in different parts of Europe was playing out, the usefully provocative and ambiguous question was raised: "What is Left for young people, what is Right for young people?".

The think tank itself confirmed some level of common agreement on the idea of "youth policy" – its transversality, inclusiveness, positive and opportunity-focused orientation, and relationship to robust research evidence. It commended the Council of Europe for having retained the "co-management" principle and practice in the youth field, whereby decisions and direction were shared between governmental officials and the representatives of youth organisations. What was needed, however, was for the European institutions to bring together relevant parties for a more informed debate that would contribute to the restoration of "commitment, focus, resources and provision" in the youth field.

These, it was felt, had dissipated in recent years, within many member states. Internal economic and political conditions had witnessed the withdrawal of support for youth initiatives and provision. Some participants maintained that the EU potentially had a key role as a catalyst in activating and energising momentum at national levels; others questioned whether the EU had, or should have, such authority. What was not in doubt in participants' minds was what they depicted as the increasing "hollowness" of European youth agendas. And even when national policies and programmes were being cut dramatically, the European institutions had a role, indeed a responsibility, to stimulate transnational youth work projects.

At the very moment when those in the youth field felt “youth work” was more prominent on the map of young people’s learning, development, engagement and inclusion, and was finally getting the institutional recognition it had long sought (see Resolution of the Council of the European Union on youth work 2010 and the report of Belgium’s Presidency of the EU 2010), wider factors seemed to have conspired to squeeze the lifeblood from it. Its place, position and power within the broader youth agenda was seemingly immediately diluted, despite both contentions and some evidence of the contribution to be made across the youth policy field by youth work and non-formal education – and reinforced by the end of the year by a study commissioned by the European Youth Forum demonstrating the “employability” soft skills that accrue from non-formal learning experiences (see European Youth Forum 2012). Yet suddenly the firewalls between education and youth work, formal and non-formal learning, had re-appeared, despite prevailing evidence suggesting that there are in fact few clear divisions and that building bridges and cultivating new learning contexts and methodologies, thereby producing broader educational approaches, are critical both for individual young people and for the societies in which they live. The think tank acknowledged that the proposed Erasmus for All programme (2014-2020), incorporating all previous EU educational measures (for students, schools, older people as well as young people) was a key component of future youth policy. Depending on the future EU budget (negotiations started at the end of 2012), it might well be argued that the programme could no longer afford to support “youth” elements to the extent of the previous Youth in Action programme – but a counterpoint would be that it cannot not afford to do so either. In the context of its perceived weakened political position, and therefore reduced capacity for negotiation and advocacy in the places that mattered, the question was how to communicate the added value of what youth work (non-formal education) did. There was a despondency that the sustaining of youth work within the broader frame of youth policy would be achieved only through connecting – “re-packaging” – it more firmly alongside crime reduction, vocational preparation or labour-market training programmes.

Not that participants were completely hostile to such scenarios; there was always need for adjustment to changing times and contexts. Yet equally there was a determination to defend the cherished values around non-formal learning and to resist their co-option into a single-track preoccupation with economic problems, labour-market insertion and employability.

The meeting concluded with a renewed commitment to exploring, through a “new creativity” between policy makers, researchers and practitioners in the youth field, how the further evolution of “clustered” and “overlapping” youth policy might be secured – beyond the knowledge and skills agenda (though this was accepted as a central task) to questions of participation and voice, intergenerational transfers of experience and resources, intercultural tolerance and understanding, and integration and social cohesion. Structures needed to be adapted or constructed to strengthen sustainability, confidence, trust and decision making at the European level. The balance of power in the youth field in Europe needed to be re-aligned between the Council of Europe and the European Commission, and the European Union needed to connect more forcefully with the youth policy and practice within its member states and, indeed, those beyond – in candidate countries, the Balkans and the Eastern Partnership.

The “concerns”

A central purpose of the think tank was to find ways of moving from expending “defensive energy” towards a position of “creative engagement”, though finding the niche to do so was also a matter for concern. Indeed, the youngest participant was convinced and concerned about the prevailing “loss of hope and enthusiasm” – amongst young people, researchers, stakeholders in the youth field and politicians. Drawing on lines from Pink Floyd’s *Shine On You Crazy Diamond*, the desire was not to “bask in the glory of yesterday’s triumph” but, once more, to “shine like the sun”. Currently, it seemed to many of these individuals with incomparable experience and expertise in the youth field, there were too many “black holes in the sky”.

Two decades, or more, of achievement

Basking in yesterday’s triumph was, however, often a starting point. Many expressed concerns were set in the context of some recognition that there has been significant achievement in the development and evolution of youth policy over the past quarter of a century, or at least the past 10-15 years. This was described, in a consistently similar way, as “considerable progress”, a “formative period”, and a “time of tremendous evolution” in and for the youth field.

The past decade had been “very dynamic”, in which “common ground” and “close co-operation” had been established between member states and the European institutions, producing almost the European youth coalition that had at one point been envisioned by the then Director for Education and Citizenship within the European Commission. That was a framework of co-operation constructed across parties at similar levels of strategy, operation and implementation, and between these levels, through dialogue and participation between youth field actors (see Milmeister and Williamson 2006). Such key planks for exchange and innovation had been strengthened through knowledge production, professionalism, reflection and recognition of the contribution made by the youth field both to the lives and prospects of young people and to the broader youth policy agenda.

Shifts and fragmentation

Today, however, and over the past couple of years, it was suggested and asserted that there had been a breakdown and break-up of the youth field. A situation of “stagnation” had set in: there appeared to be little development or tracking of goals and objectives that had earlier been set through various declarations and policy decisions. The position of youth policy had been weakened, trapped in inertia, as the economic crisis had turned the attention of key stakeholders (within both the European institutions and the member states) to apparently more pressing matters. The “European dynamic” in the youth field had “ground to a halt”, as different players engaged in “regression and retrenchment after two decades of development”. There was now little more than lip service to “evidence-based” approaches to youth policy making; divide and rule strategies now seemed to be adopted in the fields of both practice and research. In short, there had been a disintegration, dilution if not yet complete disappearance of the “vision and drive” that had characterised the youth field for a generation.

The lack of investment and visibility

When setting the scene, some contributors gave disproportionate attention, weight and implied influence and impact to, for example, a succession of networks of

researchers convened by the Council of Europe and latterly the youth partnership, notable publications produced from time to time by academics known to the youth field, the international reviews of national youth policy conducted by the Council of Europe since 1997, and the Partnership's European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy (EKYCP) that was established in 2005. All have, without doubt, played their part in contributing to the dynamic and momentum of youth policy since the turn of the millennium, but all have equally had their weaknesses and deficiencies that few have been willing to point out. Indeed, the youth (work) field had, according to some, become increasingly "hidden", subordinated and subservient to more dominant agendas. The youth agenda had been "dragged" towards education policy, often subsumed at national level within ministries of education, and aligned increasingly forcefully to questions of skills and qualifications and economic and "employability" agendas. As one individual commented, "youth is hard to find – for future action". There was a lack of investment in youth policy, and a lack of recognition of, and respect for, the concept, role and purpose of non-formal education.

Though not subscribing to a conspiracy theory, there were perplexed expressions at the apparent lack of any sense of urgency about defining a future budgetary framework for "youth" and about the poor levels of commitment. No wonder the sense of invisibility for youth. There appeared to be no concern for the autonomy of the youth field, nor advocacy of the added value of the youth sector. Furthermore, some respondents wondered if those in the formal education sector really knew what had been achieved in the youth sector, what it did, and the particular challenges it faced. Probably not, many concluded. The shift from opportunity-focused youth policy to approaches targeting specific problems and issues was a concern to all.

Threats to democracy and debate

In view of the events during the economic crisis – the demonstrations, protests and resistance, most involving if not led by young people – the case for strengthening youth participation and engaging them in democratic renewal, through the established practices of non-formal education, would appear to be unequivocal. This agenda was, indeed, first "institutionalised" (albeit in a reasonably non-institutional way!) by the Council of Europe following *les évènements* of 1968. The year 2012 in fact celebrated the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg, the hub of generations of educational and cultural programmes and activities designed, through experiential learning, to equip young people with the capacity and competence to play their part in Europe. One might ask why this has been so hard to sustain: the numerous political actors at local, national and European levels who once passed through such experiences on the way to their current positions of influence and authority appear to have forgotten what exactly helped them along and oiled the wheels of their human, social and identity capital.

Structures for collaboration and consultation

The EU White Paper on Youth of 2001, notwithstanding what is said above, was heralded as a key staging post on the evolutionary road of youth policy that produced a robust framework for engagement between the European Commission and its member states – the "open method of co-ordination". New arrangements for collaboration, through the "trio" presidencies over periods of 18 months, and through the so-called "structured dialogue" (first on youth employment, then

on democratic participation, now on social inclusion) were viewed as cumbersome, rather unworkable frameworks, that did not produce the same “progress” as the OMC. They did not establish the same structures or agreed content as the former mechanisms that framed the relationships within the youth field between the European Commission and the member states. Indeed, there was often now a disjuncture between the topics chosen for attention by each trio presidency (despite being within the same overall theme), between these topics and themes and issues most relevant to different member states, and between the European Commission’s main projects and the aims of its youth strategy.

The restoration of effective dialogue and the renewal of purposeful platforms for debate, perhaps through the reinstatement of a process by which common objectives were agreed and then pursued by member states, was therefore unsurprisingly viewed as critical.

Reflective self-criticism

The think tank was by no means all about hurling criticism at extraneous bureaucracies and their grinding procedures; there was also a fair share of self-reflection and self-criticism. For example, one commentator asserted very directly that “the youth field has an attitude problem” (a “bad attitude when it comes to change”), while others pointed to the absence of synchronicity between the arguments of youth organisations and the positions adopted by youth researchers, especially in the field of debate around social inclusion. Indeed, the oft-proclaimed “magic triangle” between youth research, policy and practice that promoted purposeful and positive dialogues and networking was portrayed as “far from magical” and frequently tokenistic and even mythical. Even the current aspirations of the youth field were called into question. For example, even should greater autonomy for the youth field be negotiated successfully within the future education and learning programme of the EU, this would “still not take us beyond the status quo”. The youth field had, in some minds, “stagnated”, retreating into comfort zones that in effect colluded with risk-averse officials for whom the mantra was the less work to take home, the better. Arguably, some youth policy was now seriously outdated, at least in some areas: the challenges around formal education, not to speak of employment and housing, had overtaken it.

More was needed. The language used by participants was about “reformulation”, “re-shaping”, “innovation” and “revitalisation”, with the intention of cementing a new “vision”. Not everything, however, was broken and needed to be fixed. Indeed, though new youth policy agendas were called for that anticipated the prospects of and for youth in the first half of this century – to address the democratic challenge, to strengthen inter-professional collaboration, and to accommodate new learning needs – there was no need to discover new tools for their realisation. Being “avant-garde”, through more creative and inspired thinking amongst relevant stakeholders beyond “safe ground”, did not necessitate the abandonment of proven strategies and methods, though perhaps practices and procedures needed to be strengthened, and certainly there was a case for reflection, revision and possibly renaming.

Moving forward to 2020

Both structural and economic reforms, flowing from different quarters and with different rationales, were perceived to have weakened the youth field. Various efforts to produce a new political dynamic in the youth field had, so far, come

to nothing. Three central trajectories, constructed around perceptions of what is lacking and what is needed in the youth field, were identified:

- Lack of a political vision relating to themes, priorities, aims and objectives – taking account of the complexity in which youth policy is situated.
What is needed is a mid- to long-term strategy that provides innovation, continuity and coherence, avoiding “theme-hopping” from one presidency to the next and ticking the “done” box.
- Lack of leadership and a co-ordinated but flexible and open approach to interaction, co-operation and communication, in which all parties involved can take appropriate responsibilities, find their place and commit themselves to playing an active role.
What is needed is a real network structure, not the ritualised and rigid hierarchical relationships that are per se exclusive.
- Lack of concrete dialogue, between all key and relevant stakeholders, at different levels of decision making.
What is needed is a broadening of the coalition of involved partners coming from diverse professional backgrounds, political sectors and levels of governance (European, national, regional, local). There needs to be various levels of formalised dialogical co-operation – between institutions and support structures. There also needs to be informal platforms and forums, beyond ritualised forms of meetings and mechanisms, in order to convene high quality exchange and debate in pursuit of ideas, information, knowledge and understanding on youth and the development of sustainable, reliable and efficient strategies.

The think tank concluded that the kind of communication and co-ordination framework envisaged would only prove to be effective in the context of the restoration of trust between many youth field actors.

Beyond Hebe’s dream

When the EU White Paper was launched in Gent in 2001, the conference bag carried the logo: “Hebe’s Dream: a future for young people in Europe”. Four planks of youth policy development were promoted that day: information, participation, voluntary activities and a greater knowledge of youth. Many would contend that the youth agenda now has a longer, stronger and deeper priority list, demanding urgent and immediate attention. Like the Europe 2050 vision (see European Commission 2011) that presents three prospective scenarios for the European Union (nobody cares – stagnation; under threat – fragmented; and renaissance – expansion), it would be possible to provide a range of scenarios for the future of youth in Europe. One would be depressing, in which “youth” would be generally abandoned in the interests of meeting the political and social demands of older generations, and supported only when they displayed the potential for making a much needed economic contribution. Quite what would happen to other young people – abandoned by welfare frameworks and consigned to the margins – is in itself a matter for a range of speculative scenarios; revolt, resistance, radicalisation or retreat (see Williamson 2013, forthcoming). A more centred scenario might see some level of accommodation and inclusion of more young people, but only to a minimalist degree that contained any threat of urban disturbance and disorder, while more active and participative young people benefited from the “social capital” opportunities and possibilities afforded to them through their civic engagement and internships. A third, more inclusive scenario, would see the harnessing of political and economic energy in the interests of the young, to ensure that all young people received an equitable package of entitlement to provide them with the best chance of achieving their potential. That would include, of course, formal education and training, but it

would also encapsulate a wider range of opportunities and experiences, including non-formal education, exchanges, access to new technologies, attachment to music and culture, platforms for participation and “voice”, and pathways for volunteering and community involvement. This is “youth work” in its broadest and most meaningful sense.

To that end, dreaming towards 2020, there is a pressing need for greater convergence in the youth field. Despite allegations of recent fragmentation, the youth field has always been divided by its pathways to and through the two European institutions most relevant to it – the European Commission and the Council of Europe. Various protocols and partnerships, including the latest youth partnership, have sought to build bridges between the two. But, with the crisis in Europe affecting young people disproportionately and in so many ways (learning, earning, housing, leisure, health and so forth), there is a growing *prima facie* case for creating one coherent infrastructure for political co-operation and policy development in the youth field as well as a single support structure for youth work. Such a vision would include, *inter alia*:

- a long-term joint political strategy, whereby European-level objectives identify the support measures for the development of programmes at national level to further consolidate youth policies within commonly defined standards;
- a comprehensive review process and peer-learning system for national youth policies (building on the experience of the Council of Europe youth policy reviews);
- one single, coherent programme to support exchange and pilot projects, youth work structures and youth NGOs;
- a support structure for research and development in youth policy, at both national and European levels;
- a European Youth Agency responsible for gathering knowledge, giving information, training European youth workers, promoting the exchange of good practice and promoting the participation of young people.

Conclusion

The think tank that met in Berlin in March 2012, and one year later again in Brussels 2013 (see below), was not a representative body, though it did include participants from all sectors of the youth field: European institutions, member states, municipalities, national agencies, youth organisations, youth researchers, and so on. It had no mandate, except to discuss the direction of the youth agenda at the European level. It resulted from one concern – that this youth agenda had lost its way. It gave birth to a range of related concerns as a result of concerted and committed discussion, the very thing that the European youth agenda cries out for on a broader canvas. The arguments and perspectives reported here are intended both to provide some historical context to the current situation and to provoke interest and response in order to move that youth agenda forward.

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→ European youth policy and youth policy in Europe in 2020

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Despite the concerns expressed during the initial discussions of the think tank, ambitions to create new dynamics in the youth policy field were shared by a lot of, if not all, participants. Discussions often started from the idea that a lot has been achieved in the past 20 years and that there is widespread common agreement on the essentials of "youth policy". But there is also a need for a long-term vision, describing where ideally we would like to arrive in some years time and giving some kind of orientation for the next steps to take.

The contribution below is an attempt to formulate, in short, such a vision for 2020. It tries to take into account what we understand as that current common agreement, that common "image" of youth policy as it has been expressed in a lot of official political decisions and contributions, but also in countless informal discussions and debates. But in the end, it is written from our personal perspective of being involved in this debate for a long time as heads of a National Agency of the Youth in Action programme (and its predecessors): a unique place as an actor in the field of youth policy, and at the same time at the European and national level. It is based on ideas and beliefs that have grown from that practice, on observations during the past 20 years, on what we have learnt from other actors in working groups, network meetings, EU presidency events, and many others.

We believe that such "formulation in short" can be of help in a twofold way. It sets steady and long-term goals that can be kept in mind by all those who are concerned about the future of youth policy and fear that its core ideas can get lost in current policy making, inspired by an undoubtedly still-expanding crisis. And on the other hand, right at this moment, it confronts us with the question: how will we get there? What are the stepping stones in between? What do we do first? Do we have clear strategies in mind, shared among all the main actors?

And how do we link that with the urgent needs resulting from that crisis? This is the debate that we want to provoke, that we want to take on board, in the think tank, but also with many others in the youth field.

We have tried to determine the main characteristics of the common “image” in youth policy in Europe, as we believe it exists through the eyes of many stakeholders. The exercise resulted in an inventory of 12 features of European youth policy and youth policy in Europe that exist already or are considered desirable. We consider all of them essential and typical for youth policy in 2020 and, since they are easy to recognise, they can act as cardinal points for our action.

Autonomy and well-being of young people at the centre

Youth policy is a comprehensive concept with a holistic approach. It puts young people as a whole at the centre, aiming for their autonomy and well-being. It focuses on their present life but also their future, moving from childhood to adulthood. Youth policy develops, on the one hand, policy strategies to create and provide space and opportunities for young people, in order to build up capabilities to gain autonomy and to meet or exceed a threshold of well-being. On the other hand, youth policy develops specific policies towards the personal and social development of those young people who are in trouble. It is protective where needed, as well as being empowering and providing second chances.

Transnational policy strategy for young people and their living conditions in Europe

Young people are entitled to have a comprehensive policy focusing on their autonomy and well-being at all levels. Living conditions of young people are affected by circumstances and development that are far beyond national borders. At the same time, the Europeanised and globalised world offers a lot of new opportunities and risks for young people. In this respect, national policies have their natural limitations. On the one hand, European youth policy, as co-operation between countries, is an answer to the demand for transnational policy strategies for young people and their living conditions in an integrated Europe. On the other hand, European youth policy aims to help develop national youth policies of a comparable quality all over Europe.

A categorical policy, focused on all who are young: from children to young adults

Developments beyond national borders affect all who are young, from children to teenagers, young people to young adults. The well-being and growth to autonomy of all of them is involved. Youth policy focuses on a category of young citizens, defined by age, but also by their status as minors or being in transition to full autonomy. It develops its legal framework and its actions taking into account the continuum of growth from child to adult.

Nothing about us, without us

The objectives of youth policy (well-being and growth to autonomy) cannot be achieved without young people themselves. It calls for their action, their responsibility to grow. It invites them to get involved. Therefore, youth policy is participative and transparent in its processes and its leadership. The variety of actors at different levels also calls for a constant dialogue and interaction between policy and practice. Youth policy establishes and uses well-designed

open processes of participation and the necessary structures to guarantee the existence, quality and legitimacy of participation. Youth policy always responds to the outcome of participation.

Interactive field with multi-polar steering and democratic leadership

European youth policy is a hybrid, derived from heterogeneous sources. It enlarges the triangle of policy, research and practice into an interactive field with different actors from different countries, sectors, roles, disciplines and professions, involved at different intensities. It includes civil society as well as young people themselves. It is driven by an interdisciplinary and multi-professional coalition of those responsible and concerned. It has a network structure with different hubs and clusters. It allows for multi-polar steering and is based on democratic leadership.

Co-operation within the EU and Council of Europe and open to the world

European youth policy is based on co-operation in the youth field within the EU and Council of Europe, each within the frame of its own legal competence: inter-governmental for Council of Europe, and supranational (but within boundaries of subsidiarity) for the EU. It aims for stronger links and co-operation between both international institutions. It is equally aiming for political decisions at European and member-state level with regard to legal frameworks and for concrete actions to support the quality of practice at all levels. It includes all three sectors: the “state” and its public agents (organisations and bodies of the EU and Council of Europe, member states, parliament(s), etc.); the “market” and private corporations and foundations; and “civil society” and non-profit organisations. European youth policy touches on all different levels, from local to regional, to national and European. It is open to the world and has a global dimension.

A solid trunk to build on: youth work

Youth policy is a comprehensive concept with a holistic approach. It has its specific themes and practices. In order to realise its goals, it also builds on the practice and experience in the field where this holistic approach is realised by a variety of different types of actors: public service, NGOs at all levels, youth organisations and initiatives, expert organisations, and regional and local authorities (the youth sector). Important roles are taken by professionals (paid and voluntary) working with young people. And a specific role is taken by youth organisations, which provide opportunities for young people by young people. Youth policy cherishes the youth work by these actors, creates adapted legal frameworks, supports the quality of their work while respecting their competence and, when relevant, their autonomous status.

Cross-sectoral policy for a manifold life

Youth policy is a comprehensive concept with a holistic approach. Therefore it is a cross-sectoral policy: it deals with all aspects of young people’s lives and involves all governmental departments and sectors administering these various aspects. It needs co-ordination at the political and administrative level. It builds on the experience of the youth sector, taking the lead in formulating policies. And it has its clearly defined mid- or long-term youth policy process(es) and planning on (a) priority theme(s).

Linking knowledge with policies and practices

European youth policy is knowledge based. Deriving from the knowledge and experiences of heterogeneous sources in this interactive field, European youth

policy is anticipating and analysing new trends and developments, offering deep insights and knowledge about policies and practices, looking at the coherence between policy aims and actions and proposing pathways and measures. New forms of European youth reports and systems of monitoring allow the building of a reliable link to political decision making at European level and a practical link to the implementation of actions.

Platforms for debate and development

European youth policy has its specific and regular places and spaces for dialogue, participation, co-operation and transparency, such as yearly conventions, thematic clusters, sectoral groups, long-term processes and virtual platforms. A yearly “European Convention on Youth Policy and Youth Work” is its regular physical platform. It is working in the long term, in different peer-learning clusters on priority themes for exchange, co-operation and agenda setting. It also brings actors inside the different youth policy sectors together to allow for further development of practices. It has its overarching virtual platform for continuous exchange among all the actors involved.

Agents, driving engines and “transfer agencies”

Besides the policy framework and processes, the interactive field of European youth policy has several different hubs, working as driving engines of process and content, as “transfer agencies” between the different levels and sectors and as agents for ideas and concepts. Therefore, European youth policy is supported by different structures at the European level, for example, by a specialised European Centre for supporting Youth Policy and Youth Work, and by the European NGO sector (European Youth Forum, and so on), but also by the structures of the EU youth programme (national agencies, SALTO Resource Centres, the Youth partnership between the Council of Europe and the EU, and so on). At the same time, European youth policy has corresponding support structures at the national level.

A specific and independent financial instrument and legal basis

The current Youth in Action programme is the main funding instrument at the European level to support the further development and implementation of European youth policy and of youth policy in Europe. With the new programme for education and training, youth and sports, it is embedded in a broader political environment. Links between the education, training and youth work sector are a reality, as is the contribution of youth work to a European strategy for lifelong learning and to the Europe 2020 strategy. Nevertheless, European youth policy and youth policy in Europe needs its own financial instrument and legal basis, specifically dedicated to the aims and needs of the youth sector, reaching out for a sustainable systemic impact on youth policy and youth work at the European and national level.

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Abstracts/Resumés/Zusammenfassungen

→ The intergenerational contract has been cancelled

Karl Wagner

Abstract

The generations currently in charge of managing the earth intend to leave their children and grandchildren an indebted, exploited planet, riddled by resource constraints and the threat of climate change. In doing so, they have essentially cancelled the intergenerational contract. Young generations will have to take charge of creating the fundamental change needed. They cannot leave it to those generations that have caused the problems.

A young generation is emerging which is global, educated, knowledgeable and perfectly capable of managing the transition to a safe world with opportunities for all.

Les générations qui ont actuellement la responsabilité de prendre soin de la planète ont l'intention de laisser à leurs enfants et à leurs petits-enfants une planète endettée, exploitée, menacée par des ressources limitées et par le changement climatique. Ce faisant, elles ont finalement annulé le contrat intergénérationnel. Les jeunes générations devront se charger d'apporter les changements fondamentaux requis car elles ne peuvent s'en remettre aux générations qui sont à l'origine des problèmes.

Une nouvelle génération est en train de naître. Elle est globale, instruite, bien informée et parfaitement capable de gérer la transition vers un monde sûr, avec des possibilités pour chacun.

Die Generationen, die gegenwärtig diese Erde verwalten, haben die Absicht, ihren Kindern und Enkelkindern einen verschuldeten, ausgebeuteten Planeten zu hinterlassen, der von Ressourcenknappheit geplagt wird und sich mit einem drohenden Klimawandel konfrontiert sieht. Damit haben sie im Wesentlichen den Generationenvertrag gekündigt. Jüngere Generationen müssen die Verantwortung dafür übernehmen, den erforderlichen grundlegenden Wandel herbeizuführen. Sie können es nicht jenen Generationen überlassen, die diese Probleme verursacht haben.

Gegenwärtig entsteht eine Generation, die global, gut ausgebildet, informiert und absolut in der Lage ist, den Übergang in eine sichere Welt zu schaffen, die Chancen für alle bietet.

→ Generational changes, gaps and conflicts: a view from the South

Magda Nico

Abstract

The exceptional times most of Europe is experiencing legitimately dispose social scientists to look at other singular episodes in history in their search for a better understanding of the present and future of the social phenomenon and

of the population most affected by it. In this article, it will be argued that the economic crisis that Europe, and especially some European countries and the younger population in a significant way, is experiencing, is an extraordinarily relevant moment for youth researchers to use, adapt and reflect on the concept of generation to analyse and revisit processes of social change and its political and social consequences for young people.

Using the specific case of a southern European country – Portugal – and its less protective regime of youth transitions, employment and migration consequences of the current economic context, and some of the recent political and politicised statements and events, the triangle between trends in youth studies, politics of youth and social reality will be discussed. In this sense, through a national approach (on Portugal, one of the countries where the crisis is most felt and the effects on young people are most severe and worrisome), this article articulates current trends and events related to the specificity of this national reality with theoretical implications (including the re-assessment of concepts such as generational change, gaps and conflicts), on one hand, and political, on the other. This articulation is developed by resorting to important literature in the field of youth studies and sociology of youth, to secondary sources concerning current indicators of emigration flows and unemployment rates, and to extensive research in the field of transitions to adulthood. The article intends to reflect, more than to offer answers, on what is still an ongoing process.

La situation exceptionnelle à laquelle la plupart des pays européens doivent faire face conduit légitimement les chercheurs en sciences sociales à se référer à d'autres épisodes historiques extraordinaires dans leur quête pour mieux comprendre le présent et l'avenir du phénomène social et de la population qui est la plus touchée par ce phénomène. Dans cet article, l'auteur soutiendra que la crise économique qui touche l'Europe, et plus particulièrement certains pays européens et les jeunes, est un moment extraordinairement opportun pour que les chercheurs dans le domaine de la jeunesse utilisent, adaptent et étudient la notion de *génération* et analysent et réexaminent les processus de *changement social* et leurs conséquences politiques et sociales pour les jeunes.

En s'appuyant sur la spécificité d'un pays d'Europe du Sud – le Portugal – et sur son régime moins protecteur de transition des jeunes (Walther, 2006), sur les conséquences en termes d'emploi et de migration du contexte économique actuel, et sur certains des récents événements et déclarations politiques et politisés, le triangle entre les *tendances qui ressortent des études sur la jeunesse, les politiques de la jeunesse* et la *réalité sociale* sera examiné. En ce sens, en prenant l'exemple d'une approche nationale (le Portugal, l'un des pays où la crise est la plus ressentie et où les effets sur les jeunes sont les plus importants et les plus préoccupants), cet article articule les tendances actuelles et les événements liés à la spécificité de cette réalité nationale avec, d'une part, des implications théoriques (y compris la réévaluation de notions telles que le changement générationnel, les différences de mentalité et les conflits entre générations), et, d'autre part, des implications politiques. Pour ce faire, l'auteur cite une littérature importante dans le domaine des études sur la jeunesse et de la sociologie de la jeunesse, des sources secondaires concernant les indicateurs actuels des flux d'émigration et des taux de chômage ainsi que des études détaillées dans le domaine des transitions vers l'âge adulte. L'article propose une réflexion, plus qu'il n'apporte de réponses, sur ce qui est toujours un processus en cours.

Die Ausnahmesituation, die der Großteil von Europa gerade erlebt, erlaubt es den Sozialwissenschaftlern legitimerweise auf andere einzigartige Episoden in der Geschichte zurückzugreifen, um ein besseres Verständnis der Gegenwart und der Zukunft des sozialen Phänomens und des am stärksten betroffenen Bevölkerungsteils zu erhalten. In diesem Artikel wird argumentiert, dass die Wirtschaftskrise, die Europa und insbesondere einige europäische Staaten und die jüngere Bevölkerung in drastischer Weise erleben, ein außerordentlich wichtiger Moment für die Jugendforscher ist, um das Konzept der *Generation* zu nutzen, anzupassen und zu reflektieren, um die Prozesse des *sozialen Wandels* und dessen politische und soziale Folgen für junge Menschen zu analysieren und zu überarbeiten.

Es werden, unter Rückgriff auf die konkreten Bedingungen eines südeuropäischen Staates, i.e. Portugal, und seiner weniger leistungsstarken Schutzvorkehrungen für die Übergänge von Jugendlichen (Walther, 2006), die Folgen auf Beschäftigung und Migration im aktuellen wirtschaftlichen Kontext und einige neuere politische und politisierte Aussagen und Ereignisse die *Trends in der Jugendforschung*, der *Jugendpolitik* und der *sozialen Realität* behandelt. In diesem Sinne erläutert der Artikel, anhand eines nationalen Ansatzes (in Bezug auf Portugal, eines der Länder, in denen die Krise am stärksten zu spüren ist und die Folgen für junge Menschen am schwersten und besorgniserregend sind), aktuelle Trends und Ereignisse in Bezug auf die Besonderheiten dieser Nation, indem er einerseits die theoretischen Auswirkungen (einschließlich der erneuten Beurteilung bekannter Konzepte, i.e. Generationswandel, Gräben und Konflikte) anführt, und andererseits die politischen Auswirkungen erläutert. Diese Erläuterung erfolgt durch einen Rückgriff auf die wichtigste Fachliteratur im Bereich Jugendforschung und Jugendsoziologie, die Sekundärquellen über aktuelle Indikatoren für Auswanderungsbewegungen und Beschäftigungsraten und durch Nutzung der umfangreichen Forschung zum Thema Eintritt ins Erwachsenenalter. Der Artikel beabsichtigt, die laufenden Prozesse darzulegen und nicht, Antworten zu geben.

→ Youth justice in a changing Europe: crisis conditions and alternative visions

Barry Goldson

Abstract

Europe is currently experiencing a formidably hostile economic climate within which crisis conditions are consolidating and millions of young Europeans have been, and will continue to be, especially disadvantaged. The crisis conditions raise big questions of youth justice systems in Europe and it is timely to think about the manner in which such systems might respond in the future. Thinking in this way invokes alternative visions. The “utopian vision” conceptualises youth justice as progressing steadily and incrementally towards a state of penal tolerance, where the “best interests” of children and young people prevail and where recourse to correctional intervention – particularly custodial detention – is only ever mobilised as a “last resort”. In stark contrast, the “dystopian vision” emphasises the emergence, consolidation and development of a harsh “culture of control”. At face value both the utopian and dystopian visions provide seductive conceptual typologies or “totalising narratives” for comprehending pan-European (even global) trends in youth justice but, ultimately, each is singularly inadequate. Neither provides a defensible comprehensive account of the complexity, contradictory

nature and profound incoherence of transnational youth justice in Europe and/or beyond. Notwithstanding this, a crucial juncture has been reached as the separate European countries are currently facing fundamental choices as to the kind of society they want to build for the future. What this will mean for youth justice in 2020 is far from clear, but there are grounds for believing that – despite crisis conditions – “humane pragmatism” will ultimately prevail.

L'Europe connaît actuellement un climat économique redoutablement hostile dans lequel les conditions de crise s'intensifient. Dans ce contexte, des millions de jeunes Européens sont particulièrement désavantagés et continueront de l'être. Les conditions de crise soulèvent d'importantes questions sur les systèmes de justice des mineurs en Europe et il est opportun de réfléchir à la manière dont ces systèmes pourraient évoluer à l'avenir. Cette réflexion aboutit à deux visions. La « vision utopique » conceptualise la justice des mineurs comme évoluant constamment et progressivement vers une situation de tolérance pénale, où l'« intérêt supérieur » des enfants et des jeunes prévaut et le recours à une intervention correctionnelle – en particulier la détention – est toujours une solution de « dernier ressort ». A l'opposé, la « vision dystopique » souligne l'émergence, la consolidation et le développement d'une « culture du contrôle » rigoureuse. A première vue, tant la vision utopique que la vision dystopique proposent des typologies conceptuelles séduisantes ou des « récits totalisateurs » qui rendent compte des tendances paneuropéennes (voire mondiales) de la justice des mineurs mais, en fin de compte, elles sont toutes les deux particulièrement insuffisantes. Aucune des deux visions ne tient compte, de manière exhaustive et défendable, de la complexité, de la nature contradictoire et de la profonde incohérence de la justice transnationale des mineurs en Europe et/ou au-delà de ses frontières. Néanmoins, le moment est crucial car chaque pays européen se trouve face à des choix essentiels quant au type de société qu'il veut construire pour l'avenir. Ce que cela signifiera pour la justice des mineurs en 2020 est loin d'être clair mais nous avons des raisons de penser que – malgré les conditions de crise – le « pragmatisme humain » finira par s'imposer.

Europa erlebt gegenwärtig ein außerordentlich feindliches Wirtschaftsklima, in dem sich die Bedingungen verfestigen und Millionen junger Europäer besonders benachteiligt wurden und werden. Die Krisenbedingungen werfen wichtige Fragen im Bereich der Jugendjustizsysteme in Europa auf, und es ist Zeit, darüber nachzudenken, wie diese Systeme in Zukunft reagieren könnten. Ein diesbezüglicher Denkansatz führt alternative Visionen ins Feld. Die „utopische Vision“ betrachtet die Jugendjustiz als ein System, das sich stetig und schrittweise einem Zustand der strafrechtlichen Toleranz annähert, bei der das „Wohl“ der Kinder und Jugendlichen Vorrang genießt und bei der der Rückgriff auf ein korrigierendes Eingreifen, insbesondere staatlicher Gewahrsam, nur als „letztes Mittel“ bemüht wird. Im absoluten Gegensatz dazu steht die „dystopische Vision“, die das Entstehen, die Konsolidierung und Entwicklung einer harschen „Kultur der Kontrolle“ betont. Beide Visionen, sowohl die utopische als auch die dystopische, bieten verführerische konzeptionelle Typologien oder „Gesamterzählungen“ für das Verstehen paneuropäischer (oder sogar globaler) Trends in der Jugendjustiz, aber letztendlich sind beide auf jeweils eigene Weise unzureichend. Keine der beiden Visionen bietet eine verfechtbare umfassende Darstellung der Komplexität, widersprüchlichen Natur und profunden Inkohärenz der transnationalen Jugendjustiz in Europa und/oder darüber hinaus. Dessen ungeachtet wurde ein kritischer Augenblick erreicht, da die europäischen Staaten sich gegenwärtig mit grundlegenden Entscheidungen konfrontiert sehen, welche Art von Gesellschaft sie in der Zukunft aufbauen

wollen. Was dies für die Jugendjustiz bedeuten wird, ist noch völlig offen, aber es gibt Gründe für die Annahme, dass trotz der Krisenbedingungen ein „humaner Pragmatismus“ letztendlich überwiegen wird.

→ The future of the social dimension in European higher education: university for all, but without student support?

Lorenza Antonucci

Abstract

The mass expansion of higher education is one of the most relevant changes that has occurred in European societies and young people's lives over the past 40 years. This expansion was supported by the double scope of ensuring equal opportunities and creating a competitive knowledge-based economy to compete in the global market. This double-faced rhetoric is now increasingly problematic, given the rising level of youth unemployment among graduates. Moreover, austerity measures across Europe are putting the systems of student support that sustain young people embarking into higher education under pressure.

The paper offers an overview of the ongoing trends of student support in Europe, by conducting a policy analysis of official documents, both at the national and at the European level. The analysis of policy changes will distinguish: the tools of student support policies (for example, grants and the increasing use of loans), the degrees of universalism and means-testing and the settings (for example, the increasing selectivity in student support). The article argues that the mass participation in higher education will not decrease in 2020. It also states that the impact of austerity measures on student support will result in a differentiated experience of higher education, where an increasing number of students will need to privately meet the costs of higher education, in particular through labour-market participation and family support. Finally, the paper discusses elements that could reverse the existing trends, underlining the ongoing processes of integration and Europeanisation of higher education, recently culminating with the creation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

Le développement considérable de l'enseignement supérieur est l'un des changements les plus importants qu'aient connu les sociétés européennes et les jeunes ces 40 dernières années. Cette évolution s'est faite dans l'objectif non seulement de garantir l'égalité des chances mais également de créer une économie de la connaissance compétitive pour faire face à la concurrence sur le marché mondial. Cette rhétorique à double objectif est désormais de plus en plus problématique, compte tenu du taux de chômage en hausse chez les jeunes diplômés (Bell et Blanchflower, 2010). En outre, les mesures d'austérité appliquées dans toute l'Europe exercent une pression sur les systèmes d'aide aux jeunes qui se lancent dans des études supérieures.

L'article propose une vue d'ensemble des tendances actuelles de l'aide aux étudiants en Europe, en procédant à une analyse politique de documents officiels, aux niveaux national et européen. L'analyse des changements intervenus au niveau des politiques distingue : les instruments des politiques d'aide aux étudiants (p. ex. les bourses et le recours de plus en plus important aux prêts), les degrés d'universalisme et la mise en place des conditions de ressources (p. ex. la sélection de plus en plus stricte pour l'octroi d'une aide aux étudiants). Selon

l'article, la participation massive à l'enseignement supérieur ne baissera pas en 2020. L'auteur indique également que l'incidence des mesures d'austérité sur l'aide aux étudiants se traduira par une expérience différenciée de l'enseignement supérieur car de plus en plus d'étudiants devront payer eux-mêmes leurs études supérieures, notamment en participant au marché du travail et en se faisant aider par leurs familles. Enfin, l'article passe en revue des éléments qui pourraient inverser les tendances actuelles et met l'accent sur les processus d'intégration et d'eupéanisation de l'enseignement supérieur qui ont récemment abouti à la création de l'Espace européen de l'enseignement supérieur (EEES).

Die große Ausweitung der höheren Bildung ist eine der wichtigsten Veränderungen, die in den letzten 40 Jahren in den europäischen Gesellschaften und im Leben junger Menschen stattgefunden hat. Diese Ausweitung wurde durch einen doppelten Ansatz unterstützt, zum einen die Gewährleistung der Chancengleichheit und zu anderen durch die Schaffung einer auf Wettbewerb ausgerichteten wissensbasierten Wirtschaft, um auf dem Weltmarkt zu konkurrieren. Dieser zweigleisige Ansatz wird nun angesichts der steigenden Zahlen arbeitsloser junger Schulabgänger immer schwieriger (Bell und Blanchflower, 2010). Darüber hinaus üben die Sparmaßnahmen in Europa Druck auf die Studienförderung für junge Menschen aus, die ihnen eine höhere Bildung zugänglich macht.

Der Artikel bietet einen Überblick der laufenden Trends in der Studienförderung in Europa, indem er eine politische Analyse der offiziellen Dokumente sowohl auf nationaler als auch europäischer Ebene durchführt. Die Analyse der politischen Änderungen wird eingeteilt in: Instrumente der Studienförderungspolitik (i.e. Stipendien und stärkere Nutzung von Darlehen), den Grad des Universalismus und Methodentestläufe und die Bedingungen (z. B. steigende Selektion bei der Studienförderung). Der Artikel argumentiert, dass die Massenbeteiligung an der höheren Bildung bis 2020 nicht abnehmen wird. Er erklärt auch, dass die Auswirkungen der Sparmaßnahmen auf die Studienförderung zu einer differenzierten Erfahrung der höheren Bildung führen wird, wobei eine steigende Zahl von Studierenden privat die Kosten der höheren Bildung aufbringen muss, insbesondere durch eine Annahme einer Beschäftigung und Unterstützung durch die Familie. Schließlich behandelt der Artikel Aspekte, die die bestehenden Trends umkehren könnten, und betont die laufenden Prozesse der Integration und der Europäisierung der höheren Bildung, die kürzlich zur Schaffung des Europäischen Hochschulraums (EHEA) führte.

→ Projecting the category of the NEET into the future

Valentina Cuzzocrea

Abstract

This paper assesses the category of the NEET (not in education, employment or training) as an instrument for future analyses of youth transitions and the full inclusion of youth in society.

Firstly, this paper examines the history of the category and its use within European policy and scholarly debate. Not only has this category catalysed the work of policy makers; it also constitutes a necessary point of reference for researching the field of youth. Yet, few contributions have so far been offered from scholars in terms of analysing and discussing conceptual problems and inconsistencies arising from its use. This paper is therefore intended to fill this gap.

Secondly, it endorses the need to find a category around which discussions about youth inclusion across Europe might develop. However, to be successful this category has to be meaningful whichever welfare systems youth are included in. Currently, the usefulness of the category of the NEET is doubtful at least when, for example, comparing youth living in countries where citizens are entitled to state support regardless of their employment status v. countries where this is a relevant factor; countries where training systems ensure a smooth transition into work v. countries where this is inefficient; or countries where markers of adulthood have very different cultural meanings. Not considering such differences might result in a rushed operation of “putting people in boxes”; which risks drawing a comparative picture not representative of the real needs of youth, and consequently designing inefficient measures.

Thirdly, after discussing these cross-cutting themes, the final section of the paper concentrates on the case of Italy, where the problematic traits of the NEET category are especially relevant, and anticipates future scenarios if such concerns are not incorporated in the discussion.

Cet article passe en revue la catégorie des NEET (ni étudiant, ni employé, ni stagiaire) en tant qu'instrument pour de futures analyses de transition des jeunes et la pleine intégration des jeunes dans la société.

Dans un premier temps, cet article examine l'historique de la catégorie et son utilisation dans la politique européenne et les débats universitaires. Cette catégorie a non seulement catalysé le travail des responsables politiques mais elle constitue également un point de référence nécessaire pour réaliser des études dans le domaine de la jeunesse. Pourtant, jusqu'à présent les experts ont peu contribué à l'analyse et à l'examen des problèmes conceptuels et des incohérences résultant de l'utilisation de cette catégorie. Cet article vise à combler les lacunes identifiées.

Dans un deuxième temps, il soutient la nécessité de trouver une catégorie autour de laquelle pourraient naître des débats sur l'intégration des jeunes à travers l'Europe. Cependant, pour être retenue, cette catégorie doit présenter de l'intérêt, quel que soit le système de protection sociale dont dépendent les jeunes. A l'heure actuelle, on peut douter de l'utilité de la catégorie des NEET au moins lorsque, par exemple, on compare les jeunes qui vivent dans des pays où les citoyens bénéficient d'une aide de l'Etat quelle que soit leur situation relative à l'emploi par opposition aux pays dans lesquels cet élément est pris en considération ; les pays où les systèmes de formation facilitent une transition vers le monde du travail par opposition aux pays où ces systèmes sont inefficaces ; ou les pays dans lesquels les marqueurs de l'âge adulte revêtent des significations culturelles très différentes. En ne tenant pas compte de ces différences, on pourrait mettre hâtivement « les gens dans des cases », risquer de brosser un tableau comparatif non représentatif des véritables besoins des jeunes et par conséquent élaborer des mesures inefficaces.

Enfin, après avoir examiné ces aspects transversaux, la dernière partie de l'article s'attarde sur le cas de l'Italie, où les caractéristiques problématiques de la catégorie des NEET s'appliquent tout particulièrement, et envisage de futurs scénarios si ces préoccupations ne sont pas prises en considération dans les débats.

Dieser Artikel beurteilt die Kategorie der NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training = nicht in Schule, Beschäftigung oder Ausbildung) als Instrument für die zukünftige Analyse von Jugendübergängen und die vollständige Eingliederung der Jugend in die Gesellschaft.

Zunächst untersucht dieser Artikel die Geschichte dieser Kategorie und ihren Gebrauch in der europäischen Politik und akademischen Debatte. Diese Kategorie hat nicht nur die Arbeit der politischen Entscheidungsträger richtungsweisend beeinflusst, sondern sie ist auch ein notwendiger Referenzpunkt für die Jugendforschung. Bisher gab es aber von wissenschaftlicher Seite nur wenige Analysen und Besprechungen der konzeptionellen Probleme und Ungereimtheiten, die sich aus der Verwendung dieser Kategorie ergeben. Dieser Artikel möchte diese Lücke schließen.

Zweitens befasst er sich mit der Notwendigkeit, eine Kategorie zu finden, die Ausgangspunkt für Diskussionen über Jugendintegration in Europa sein könnte. Dafür müsste diese Kategorie jedoch aussagekräftig genug sein, ungeachtet des Wohlfahrtsystems, in das Jugendliche integriert werden. Momentan ist der Nutzen der Kategorie NEET zweifelhaft, zumindest wenn z. B. Jugendliche in Staaten, in denen die Bürger ungeachtet ihres Beschäftigungsstatus eine Förderung erhalten, mit Staaten verglichen werden sollen, in denen dies ein relevanter Faktor ist; Staaten, in denen das Ausbildungssystem einen reibungslosen Übergang in die Arbeitswelt sicherstellt, mit Staaten, in denen dieses System ineffizient ist; oder Staaten, in denen Marker für das Erwachsensein unterschiedliche kulturelle Bedeutungen haben. Lässt man diese Unterschiede außer Acht, kann dies dazu führen, Menschen vorschnell „in Schubladen zu stecken“, was die Gefahr birgt, eine vergleichende Darstellung zu formulieren, die nicht repräsentativ ist für die realen Bedürfnisse der Jugend und letztendlich zur Ausarbeitung ineffizienter Maßnahmen führt.

Drittens konzentriert sich, nach der Erörterung dieser Themen, der Schlussteil des Artikels mit Italien, wo die problematischen Aspekte der NEET-Kategorie besondere Relevanz haben, und nimmt zukünftige Szenarien vorweg, wenn diese Bedenken nicht in die Diskussion aufgenommen werden.

→ Young entrepreneurs owning 2020

Ajsa Hadzibegovic

Abstract

This paper tackles the trends regarding youth employment, education and use of new technologies. The thinking presented in the paper is based on findings described in the EU Youth Report from 2012 and the author's prediction of possible shifts in the next period. Specifically, the paper looks into education and the transformations it needs to undergo, as well as the relations between education, non-formal education and employability of youth. The author analyses possible roles that young people might have in society when supported through the “right” educational process and envisages young people with a leading role in building future sustainable societies.

The paper also looks into re-defining the concept of transitional societies from the perspective of the fast development and modernisation of contemporary societies. The author takes on the challenge to draw parallels between the state of

youth in the ex-Yugoslav post-conflict societies from the 1990s and youth in the newly united Europe of 2020. The challenges of living in a transitional society, as Europe 2020 will undoubtedly be, and their implications for youth are explored.

L'article intitulé « Young Entrepreneurs owning 2020 » aborde les tendances concernant l'emploi et l'éducation des jeunes et l'utilisation de nouvelles technologies. L'auteur fonde sa réflexion sur les conclusions décrites dans le Rapport 2012 de l'UE sur la jeunesse et sur les possibles changements auxquels il estime que l'on peut s'attendre au cours des années à venir. Plus précisément, l'article examine l'éducation et les transformations qu'elle doit subir, ainsi que les relations entre l'éducation, en particulier l'éducation non formelle, et l'employabilité des jeunes. L'auteur analyse le rôle que les jeunes pourraient potentiellement jouer dans la société lorsqu'ils bénéficient du « bon » processus éducationnel et imagine que les jeunes pourraient jouer un rôle prépondérant dans la construction de futures sociétés durables.

L'article se penche également sur la redéfinition de la notion de sociétés transitionnelles sous l'angle des développements rapides et de la modernisation des sociétés contemporaines. L'auteur s'attèle à la tâche d'établir des parallèles entre la situation des jeunes en ex-Yougoslavie dans les années 90, après la guerre, et dans la nouvelle Europe unie de 2020. Les difficultés liées au fait de vivre dans une société transitionnelle, comme le sera certainement l'Europe en 2020, ainsi que leurs implications pour les jeunes sont analysées.

Der Artikel „Young Entrepreneurs owning 2020“ (2020 gehört jungen Unternehmern) befasst sich mit den Trends in der Jugendbeschäftigung, der Bildung und der Verwendung neuer Technologien. Die in diesem Artikel vorgestellte Argumentation basiert auf den Erkenntnissen, die im EU-Jugendbericht 2012 enthalten sind, sowie auf der Vorhersage des Autors bezüglich möglicher Verschiebungen im kommenden Zeitraum. Der Artikel befasst sich insbesondere mit der Bildung und den Veränderungen, die diese durchlaufen muss, sowie mit der Beziehung zwischen Bildung, insbesondere der nicht-formalen Bildung, und der Beschäftigungsfähigkeit von jungen Menschen. Der Autor analysiert die mögliche Rolle, die junge Menschen in der Gesellschaft spielen können, wenn sie durch die „richtigen« Bildungsprozesse unterstützt werden, und erörtert die Führungsrolle, die junge Menschen beim Aufbau zukünftiger nachhaltiger Gesellschaften einnehmen können.

Der Artikel befasst sich auch mit einer Neudefinition des Konzepts der Übergangsgesellschaften und der Modernisierung zeitgenössischer Gesellschaften. Der Autor stellt sich der Herausforderung, Parallelen zwischen dem Status der Jugend in den Nachkriegsgesellschaften im ehemaligen Jugoslawien im Zeitraum der Neunziger und im neu vereinten Europa von 2020 zu ziehen. Die Herausforderungen eines Lebens in einer Übergangsgesellschaft, die Europa 2020 zweifellos sein wird, und deren Auswirkungen auf die Jugend werden untersucht.

→ Challenging structured participation opportunities

Tomi Kiilakoski and Anu Gretschel

Abstract

This article claims that young people interact more widely with societies where the formal structures for engaging them are too narrow to encourage their participation. The paper analyses the scope of democratic culture by looking at different theories

of democracy. Representative democracy and its ideal conception of citizens electing delegations is contrasted with the ideals of direct, participatory, deliberative and counter-democracy and, respectively, the ideals of direct decision making, participation, democratic discussion and surveillance. These theoretical perspectives are combined with the outcomes of empirical youth studies showing the increasing array of methods for conducting everyday politics used by the young. As a practical example, the article analyses three cases of examining and promoting youth participation. It is argued that the issue of uninterested and passive youth might be misguided because the nature of democracy from which the young are supposedly disengaged is not based on a sufficiently wide understanding of democracy.

Selon cet article, les jeunes s'impliquent davantage dans le débat sociétal lorsque les structures formelles de participation ne sont pas suffisamment développées. L'article analyse l'étendue de la culture démocratique en passant en revue les différentes théories de la démocratie. La démocratie représentative et sa conception idéale des citoyens qui élisent des délégations contraste avec les idéaux de démocratie directe, participative, délibérative et de contre-démocratie et respectivement, avec les idéaux de prise de décision et de participation directes, de débats et de surveillance démocratiques. Ces perspectives théoriques sont associées aux résultats d'études empiriques sur les jeunes qui montrent que les responsables disposent de plus en plus de méthodes pour mener des politiques utilisées quotidiennement par les jeunes. A titre d'exemple pratique, l'article analyse trois cas d'étude et de promotion de la participation des jeunes. L'auteur soutient que la question d'une jeunesse désintéressée et passive peut être mal comprise car la nature de la démocratie à laquelle les jeunes sont censés de plus participer n'est pas basée sur une compréhension suffisamment large de la démocratie.

Dieser Artikel behauptet, dass junge Menschen stärker mit den Gesellschaften interagieren, wenn die formalen Strukturen für deren Einbindung zu eng gesteckt sind, um ihre Partizipation zu fördern. Der Artikel analysiert den Umfang der demokratischen Kultur, indem er sich mit den verschiedenen Demokratietheorien befasst. Die repräsentative Demokratie und ihre ideale Vorstellung von Bürgern, die Vertreter wählen, wird dem Ideal einer direkten, partizipatorischen, deliberativen und Gegendemokratie und den Idealen der direkten Entscheidungsfindung, Partizipation, demokratischen Diskussion und Überwachung gegenübergestellt. Diese theoretischen Ansichten werden mit den Ergebnissen empirischer Jugendstudien kombiniert, die eine wachsende Palette von Methoden für die Durchführung der alltäglichen Politik aufzeigt, die junge Menschen benutzen. Als Praxisbeispiel werden drei Fälle der Untersuchung und Förderung der Jugendpartizipation analysiert. Es wird argumentiert, dass die Frage nach desinteressierten und passiven Jugendlichen irreführend ist, weil die Natur von Demokratie, der die Jugendlichen mutmaßlich entfremdet sind, nicht auf einem ausreichend weit gefassten Verständnis von Demokratie basiert.

→ Active citizenship 3.0/2020 – Youth participation and social capital after post-democracy

Benedikt Widmaier

Abstract

The discussion about democracy theory has been dominated by citizen-orientated theories during the last decade. In America (engaged citizenship) as well as in

Europe (active citizenship) or in Germany (*Bürgerschaftliches Engagement*), these theories were dominated by the belief that there are spill-over effects between social and political engagement and participation: citizens that are integrated and engaged in civil society organisation will – sooner or later – also be engaged in political affairs. In particular, in the European version of “active citizenship” we can show that this belief is mostly based on Robert Putnam’s theory of “social capital”.

The essay will present some facts about this development of democracy theory and discuss it especially against the background of the “active citizenship”-philosophy in European documents (Council of Europe, CRELL Institute and others). It will then show that in recent years, doubts about expected spill-over effects are growing in social sciences.

These democracy-theory discussions are not only highly relevant for the future of democracy (post-democracy?) but also for the development of new concepts of citizenship education. In the essay, I will demand that concepts of citizenship education should focus more closely on political issues than in the past few years. The question is, whether we do need more “political capital” beside (the of course necessary) “social capital”, and how we can generate such “political capital”.

I will at least offer a concrete pedagogical concept for the development of European citizenship education. This idea of “Transnational Learning Active Politics Laboratories” was already born in a conference on international youth work by IJAB and the German Ministry of Youth some years ago.

Au cours de la dernière décennie, les débats sur la théorie de la démocratie ont été dominés par des théories axées sur les citoyens. En Amérique (citoyenneté engagée) comme en Europe (citoyenneté active) ou en Allemagne (*Bürgerschaftliches Engagement*), ces théories étaient dominées par la conviction qu’il existe des effets d’entraînement entre l’engagement social et la participation politique : les citoyens qui sont intégrés et engagés dans une organisation de la société civile finiront également – tôt ou tard – par prendre part aux affaires politiques. Surtout dans la version européenne de la « citoyenneté active », nous pouvons montrer que cette conviction repose pour l’essentiel sur la théorie du « capital social » (Robert Putnam).

L’essai présentera certains faits sur l’évolution de la théorie de la démocratie qu’il examinera plus particulièrement dans le contexte de la philosophie de la « citoyenneté active » présentée dans des documents européens (Conseil de l’Europe, Institut CRELL et autres). Il montrera ensuite que depuis quelques années, les doutes concernant les effets d’entraînement attendus se sont intensifiés dans le domaine des sciences sociales.

Ces débats sur la théorie de la démocratie présentent non seulement un grand intérêt pour l’avenir de la démocratie (postdémocratie ?) mais également pour le développement de nouveaux concepts d’éducation à la citoyenneté. Dans l’essai, je demanderai que les concepts de l’éducation à la citoyenneté soient davantage axés sur des questions politiques que par le passé. La question est de savoir si nous avons besoin de davantage de « capital politique » en plus du « capital social » (bien entendu nécessaire) et comment nous pouvons créer ce « capital politique ».

Enfin, je proposerai un concept pédagogique concret pour le développement de l’éducation à la citoyenneté européenne. L’idée de « laboratoires transnationaux

pour des politiques actives d'apprentissage » a déjà été évoquée lors d'une conférence sur l'avenir de l'emploi international des jeunes organisée par l'IJAB et le ministère allemand de la Jeunesse il y a quelques années.

Die Diskussion über Demokratietheorie wurde im letzten Jahrzehnt von bürgerorientierten Theorien dominiert. In den USA (engagierte Bürgerschaft) wie auch in Europa (aktive Bürgerschaft) oder in Deutschland (Bürgerschaftliches Engagement) wurden diese Theorien von der Überzeugung dominiert, dass es Übertragungseffekte zwischen sozialem und politischem Engagement und Partizipation gibt: Bürger, die integriert und in die Organisationen der Zivilgesellschaft eingebunden sind, werden kurz über lang auch in politische Angelegenheiten eingebunden. Besonders anhand der europäischen Version der „aktiven Bürgerschaft“ können wir zeigen, dass diese Überzeugung vorwiegend auf der Theorie des „sozialen Kapitals“ (Robert Putnam) basiert.

Der Essay präsentiert einige Fakten zu dieser Entwicklung der Demokratietheorie und diskutiert diese insbesondere vor dem Hintergrund der Philosophie der „aktiven Bürgerschaft“ in den europäischen Dokumenten (Europarat, CRELL-Institut u.a.). Anschließend zeigt er, dass in den letzten Jahren die Zweifel an den Übertragungseffekten in den Sozialwissenschaften gewachsen sind.

Diese Diskussionen über die Demokratietheorie sind nicht nur für die Zukunft der Demokratie (Postdemokratie?) von höchster Relevanz, sondern auch für die Entwicklung neuer Konzepte der Bürgererziehung. Im Essay fordere ich, dass sich die Konzepte der Bürgererziehung stärker und enger auf politische Fragen beziehen sollten, als dies in den letzten Jahren der Fall war. Die Frage lautet, ob wir mehr „politisches Kapital“ neben dem (natürlich erforderlichen) „sozialen Kapital“ brauchen und wie wir dieses „politisches Kapital“ generieren können.

Zumindest stelle ich ein konkretes pädagogisches Konzept für die Ausarbeitung einer europäischen Bürgererziehung vor. Diese Idee von „transnationalen Laboren zum Erlernen aktiver Politik“ wurde bereits vor einigen Jahren auf einer Zukunftskonferenz über internationale Jugendarbeit des IJAB und des deutschen Ministeriums für Jugend geboren.

→ The think tank on youth policy in Europe

Hans-Joachim Schild, Howard Williamson, Hans-Georg Wicke and Koen Lambert

Abstract

At the start of March 2012, a group of some 20 individuals with lengthy experience in research, policy and practice in the youth field, especially at the European level, gathered together for the first time to debate the existing state of play regarding “youth in Europe” and to consider prospective trajectories for the future. The meeting was held in the context of considerable concerns in relation to the two major European institutions taking the European youth agenda forward – the Council of Europe and the European Commission. In view of the continuing economic and political crisis, which has had a disproportionately negative impact on the lives of millions of young people across Europe, the think tank decided to meet a second time in Brussels almost a year later. Following an introduction by Hans-Joachim Schild, the reflections of the think tank meetings are documented here in two contributions: (1) Howard Williamson undertook

to synthesise the comments projected during the Berlin meeting and the “key concerns” provided on paper by those who participated in the first think tank meeting; (2) Koen Lambert and Hans-Georg Wicke reworked a document on the “Characteristics of a European youth policy and of youth policy in Europe in 2020” which served as an input for the discussions on a future European youth policy and fits well with the expectation for this first issue of *Perspectives on youth*, which is to envision the future.

Au début de mars 2012, un groupe d’une vingtaine de personnes jouissant d’une longue expérience en matière de recherche, de politique et de pratique dans le domaine de la jeunesse, notamment au niveau européen, s’est réuni pour la première fois afin de débattre de la situation concernant la « jeunesse en Europe » et d’examiner les trajectoires potentielles de demain. La réunion s’est déroulée sur fond de sérieuses inquiétudes quant aux deux grandes institutions européennes chargées de faire progresser l’agenda en matière de jeunesse européenne : le Conseil de l’Europe et la Commission européenne.

Compte tenu de la crise économique et politique pandémique qui a considérablement compromis la vie de millions de jeunes à travers l’Europe –, le groupe de réflexion a décidé de se réunir à nouveau, près d’un an plus tard à Bruxelles. Selon l’Introduction de Hans-Joachim Schild, les réflexions des réunions du groupe sont ici rapportées à travers deux contributions : a) Howard Williamson a entrepris de faire la synthèse à la fois des commentaires émis durant la réunion à Berlin et des préoccupations principales que les participants ont transmises par écrit lors de la première réunion du groupe de réflexion ; b) Koen Lambert et Hans-Georg Wicke ont élaboré un document sur les « Caractéristiques d’une politique de jeunesse dans l’Europe de 2020 », qui a servi d’un point de départ aux discussions sur l’avenir de la politique de jeunesse européenne et est parfaitement adapté aux attentes formulées dans ce premier numéro de *Perspectives on Youth* (perspectives sur la jeunesse), qui entend donner une vision sur l’avenir.

Anfang März 2012 traf sich zum ersten Mal eine Gruppe von etwa 20 Personen mit langjähriger Erfahrung in Forschung, Politikgestaltung und Praxis im Bereich Jugend, insbesondere auf europäischer Ebene, um den aktuellen Stand zum Thema „Jugend in Europa“ zu besprechen und Zukunftsperspektiven zu erörtern. Das Treffen fand im Kontext beträchtlicher Fragen in Bezug auf die zwei großen europäischen Institutionen statt, die die europäische Jugendagenda vorantreiben, i.e. Europarat und Europäische Kommission. Angesichts der anhaltenden ökonomischen und politischen Krise, die einen unverhältnismäßig negativen Einfluss auf das Leben Millionen junger Menschen in Europa hat, beschloss diese Ideenschmiede, sich ein Jahr später ein zweites Mal in Brüssel zu treffen. Nach einer Einleitung durch Hans-Joachim Schild sind die Überlegungen der Ideenschmiede hier in zwei Beiträgen dokumentiert: a) Howard Williamson unternahm es, die geleisteten Beiträge und die „wichtigsten Bedenken“, die von den Teilnehmern des ersten Treffens in Berlin in schriftlicher Form vorgelegt worden waren, zusammenzufassen; b) Koen Lambert und Hans Georg Wicke überarbeiteten ein Dokument über die „Merkmale einer europäischen Jugendpolitik und der Jugendpolitik in Europa im Jahr 2020“, welches als Impuls für die Diskussionen über eine zukünftige Jugendpolitik gedient hatte und welches hervorragend zu den rahmengebenden Erwartungen für diese erste Ausgabe von *Perspectives on Youth* passt, in der die Zukunft Gegenstand der Betrachtung ist.

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Anu Gretschel and Tomi Kiilakoski are post-doctoral researchers from the Finnish Youth Research Network. They have gained their knowledge of youth participation at a local and regional level from several projects during the last ten years: guiding the research network “Municipalities of children and young people” which published books in 2007 and 2012 and a comparative study of Finland and Germany (Feldmann-Wojtachnia et al. 2010). Gretschel has contributed to the process of producing Council of Europe policy reviews on child and youth participation (Finland). Kiilakoski has also lately contributed to further developing the concept of UNICEF’s Child Friendly City, where the idea is to develop a local system of good governance committed to fulfilling children’s rights.

Benedikt Widmaier is Director of the Academy for Political and Social Education of the Diocese of Mainz “Haus am Maiberg”. He has been working in citizenship education and in international youth work since 1977 and has taught in several German universities and abroad. He is board member of DVPB (German Association for Citizenship Education), on the jury of the “Joseph-Schmitt-Preis für Internationale Jugendarbeit” award, and a member of the editorial staff for *Journal für Politische Bildung* and of the book-series “Non-formale Politische Bildung”.

Hans-Joachim Schild has worked since 2005 for the Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth focusing on the promotion of knowledge-based youth policies and quality development and recognition of youth work and non-formal learning/education. He previously worked in various environments in the youth sector, including the Youth Policy Unit in the DG of Education and Culture at the European Commission, an NGO in the field of labour market, vocational education and training, social inclusion and youth, and as a trainer and social pedagogue.

Howard Williamson is Professor of European Youth Policy at the University of Glamorgan. He is also Affiliate Professor in Youth and Community Studies at the University of Malta and Visiting Fellow at the Institute for Social Research in Zagreb. Previously he worked at the universities of Oxford, Cardiff and Copenhagen. He is a JNC-qualified youth worker and has been involved in youth work practice for many years. He has worked on a range of “youth issues” such as learning, justice, substance misuse, exclusion and citizenship at European and national levels. Currently he co-ordinates the Council of Europe’s international reviews of national youth policies.

Koen Lambert holds a Master’s in modern history from the University of Ghent. He worked as a civil servant at the Ministry of the Flemish Community, on local youth policy in Flanders, and from 1990 on he became the director of JINT, the co-ordination agency for international youth work of the Flemish Community. The mission of JINT is to support young people, youth organisations and youth policy makers in their international co-operation. JINT is the National Agency for the EU Youth in Action programme in the Flemish Community.

Hans-Georg Wicke is a social scientist and has been the Head of JUGEND für Europa since 1995, which is a centre for European youth work and youth policy in Germany hosting the German National Agency for the EU programme Youth in Action the SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre, as well as the Service- and Transfer Agency for the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy in Germany. He has focused on the promotion of non-formal and informal learning experiences of young people through learning mobility in youth work and on the development of European co-operation in the youth field and of a European dimension in youth work and youth policy.

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