Revisiting youth political participation

Challenges for research and democratic practice in Europe

Edited by Joerg Forbrig

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Preface: participation revisited

Many of the articles and discussions in this publication suggest that there is a direct relation between the real participatory power of young people and their readiness to get involved in the political process and public policies. This can mean all sorts of things, such as voting rights from a lower age; learner-centred policies in education and thus real participation in the development of school and higher-education curricula; participation in the creation of public spaces in urban areas and rural development; involvement in ecological programmes and a stronger recognition of the consumer status of young people and hence their contribution to the economy. Politicians tend to overlook this; future elections might be won with the votes of those aged over 60, but what about the real power of young people? Will it directly correspond to their participation in voting at local, national and European level? Or is a very different pattern of participation evolving: efficient, real, but not reflected in voting procedures? What is the key to understanding the power aspect of the participation of young people in public policies?

This prompts reflection on the changing nature of public policy in the youth field, from government to governance, from purely state action to negotiated co-production of public policies in co-operation with civil society, in other words non-profit organisations, including youth associations. The role of the state might become less and less visible in the future, and the voluntary energy a country is able to mobilise may become crucial for fields such as social services, health care, ecology and education. All this has to do with being able to involve young people in public affairs, with the clear intention of also giving them roles and responsibility at a very early age. Someone who can develop a computer company in the garage can also have his or her voice heard in the city council; someone who understands complex computer programmes at a young age can also contribute to the teaching of mathematics and informatics at school; and trendsetters in modern lifestyle sports can also say a lot about the organisation of urban space. Everybody in politics desires the participation of the young – but in what exactly? In what they think young people should participate in? Or would they also be willing to engage in a risky co-operation project? It is true that youth participation is crucial to overcome apathy in the political process – but honest policy, at grass-roots level, can do this job even better. If such participation is lacking, there is no need to spread moral panic about the young and their distance from public policies. Youth participation does not come cheap any more; it has to be won in the context of a real offer to share power. It is time this happened.

The Council of Europe's and the European Commission's work on the participation of young people in public affairs is part of their youth policy mandate, be it in the area of the new policy following the publication of the Commission's White Paper on Youth or the daily practice of co-management of funds and programmes between public youth authorities and non-governmental organiations (NGOs) in the Council of Europe. But this is not enough: institutional practice needs to be linked to research findings. This way the public authority/civil society duo becomes the public authority/civil society/research community trio, and intentions are confronted with evidence. It is for the reader to judge whether the evidence provided enhances the quality of the discourse on participation. My thanks go to all those who contributed to this publication and the preceding seminar.

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Introduction: democratic politics, legitimacy and youth participation

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When thinking about the participation of young people in contemporary European democracies, one is quickly faced with a paradox. Arenas for youth involvement in political and, more broadly, public life appear to be more numerous than ever before, yet few would claim that these opportunities have resulted in the widespread and effective participation of young people. On the contrary, many lament a dramatic decline in the political involvement of younger generations, and decreasing levels of youth participation in elections, political parties and traditional social organisations are seen to provide ample evidence of this. The pessimistic conclusion is that, in turning their backs on democratic institutions, the young of today are jeopardising the democracy of tomorrow. Other more optimistic voices stress the changing forms of youth political participation, away from involvement in conventional democratic institutions and towards novel patterns of youth engaging in public life. From this point of view, varied youth subcultures or the globalisation movement are but two examples of how young people create new modes of expression and participation that are more appealing to them than those they inherited from their parents and grandparents. In short, this latter angle points to an apparent inadequacy of traditional democratic arrangements for contemporary youth, while the former perspective questions young people as democratic actors in existing institutions.

Admittedly, these two positions are only the extremes of a much more nuanced discourse on youth political participation. They do, however, point to a fundamental question underlying research and practice concerning young people and their democratic role in Europe today. This question pertains to the relationship between democratic institutions and young people. In fact, political participation describes in part this relationship in that, in the broadest sense, it addresses all possible forms of youth involvement in the structures and processes of democratic decision making. It thus relates to the input of young people, individually or collectively, to democratic politics. This input is clearly conditioned by the extent to which democratic institutions are open to the concerns, interests and involvement of young people, whose participation will largely depend on whether or not they see their voice sufficiently reflected in the political process and its outcomes. In turn, democracy also places a more general demand on young people to accept, comprehend and develop democratic institutions through their own participation, even if issues, processes and outcomes are not always to their

liking and of immediate interest. Hence, youth political participation requires permanent accessibility on the part of institutions but also sustained engagement on the part of young people. It reflects the democratic state, maturity and vitality of both structures and (young) actors, and the contrasting positions cited above indicate that there are shortcomings on both sides of this relationship.

These shortcomings have been a growing source of concern in recent years, among youth researchers, practitioners and policy makers alike. This book is a reflection of this renewed and joint interest in questions of youth political participation. It resulted from a seminar held under the aegis of the Council of Europe and the European Commission, which joined forces in the framework of a Youth Research Covenant, in order to inform the efforts of both organisations to address problems facing young people in Europe today. Within this framework, youth researchers and practitioners from across Europe and beyond convened for an interdisciplinary meeting entitled "What about Youth Political Participation?"

This, at least for a scholarly audience, unusually simple and somewhat provocative question captures well the two main driving forces behind the seminar and, subsequently, the present book. Firstly, it appears that youth research of late had come to emphasise a range of questions that are broadly sociological in nature, such as the values, interests and lifestyles of young people; their identity and gender, race and ethnicity, subcultures and peer group socialisation. While this research has contributed much to understanding the condition of contemporary youth more fully, this sociological thrust has tended to eclipse questions of a more political-science nature and rarely spelled out the implications that flow from cultural change and differentiation for democracy, institutions and youth participation. Secondly, youth research stands to benefit much from a greater appreciation of the findings of social-science research in general. Democracy, and a range of sub-concepts relating to it, has become the central concern of social and political thought in recent years, and a wealth of theoretical and empirical insight has been generated that is most relevant for the more specific questions of youth, participation and democracy.

For these two reasons, in particular, this book wishes to re-emphasise and re-visit questions of youth political participation. The book does not, of course, intend to foster a new institutionalist, and therefore limited, agenda within youth research. Instead, it aims to present the broadest possible range of recent research findings and youth-work experiences, and to explore the relevance of these for the role of young people in contemporary European democracy. To this end, a cross-section of studies has been brought together, which examine youth political participation, and the varied factors conditioning it, from historical, sociological, institutional and psychological perspectives, in local, national and European contexts, and based on both scholarly analysis and practitioners' views. These perspectives, it is hoped, will make it possible to shed light on some of the most salient challenges facing young people and democracy in Europe today and to inform the agenda of youth research, practical efforts and policy making in the years to come.

The youth focus of this book, however, should not obscure the fact that problems of political participation are by no means confined to young people. In recent years, scholars and practitioners alike have increasingly diagnosed manifest or emerging deficits of democracy, regarding its institutions and participation therein, for polities and societies at large, and in the contexts of both established and new democracies. This has reinvigorated a more general concern with democracy, the forms it takes and the social underpinnings it requires. Some of these

questions shall be outlined briefly in the following paragraphs, as it is against this broader background that the more specific problems of youth political participation can be grasped more fully and accurately.

Democratic politics: an expanded institutional realm

Since its advent some two centuries ago, modern-day political democracy has dramatically changed its institutional and social outlook. Initially, it rested on a comparably small set of institutions, clearly structured into legislative, executive and judicial branches, and typically organised at the level of the nation state without significant regional or local differentiation. Issues considered politically relevant and therefore requiring state intervention were few, and related to the major issues of internal order, external defence and fiscal stability. Political decision making was based on a narrow social stratum, usually consisting of bourgeois and aristocratic notables, while broad sections of society were excluded. In short, politics at this early stage was – as far as institutional arrangements, issues addressed and people involved in its shaping were concerned – a remote affair for society at large.

Gradually throughout the nineteenth century, and at an accelerated pace during the twentieth century, this distance between politics and society closed. An increasingly wide array of issues appeared to require regulation and steering by public authorities or, in other words, became political. At times, the initiative lay with the state itself, as in matters of economic development, education or science that were considered vital for a given country. In other cases, social pressures required state intervention, as was the case with modern welfare states. Later decades continued this trend towards an ever-broader range of issues considered to be politically relevant including – to name but a few – the condition of minorities and the status of women, environmental concerns and immigration, consumer protection and economic regulation. Regarding substance, therefore, state and society became increasingly intertwined and politics – essentially the expression of state-society relationships – intensified immensely.

Closely related is the gradual expansion of the social bases of politics. Universal suffrage, in most European countries established in the early twentieth century, is certainly the most obvious expression of this development, but the emergence of political parties and other mass political organisations also contributed to this expansion. Less directly political actors also made their voice increasingly heard with regard to politics. Civil society expanded, in the form of cultural, patriotic, charitable or co-operative organisations, through the rise of trade unions. It took the multifaceted form of interest and advocacy groups, whether small or large, and sometimes that of fully-fledged social movements evolving around students and civil rights in the 1960s, around concern for the environment and world peace since the 1970s, and most recently around criticism of unfettered economic globalisation. This growing variety of organisational channels and forms of activities has done much to enlarge that section of society regularly and effectively involved in the political process.

This dual growth in issues and social bases could only be accommodated by more refined and complex institutional arrangements for the political process, on both the input and output side. Government agencies were established for an increasingly wide range of portfolios. Legislation has increased enormously, and with it state regulation of many questions previously considered non-political, such as

economic activity, the position of women and children, or health and hygiene. Taxation expanded to generate the necessary revenues, eventually resulting in state-led redistribution on a large scale. The political process preceding legislative, regulatory and material measures, in turn, diversified beyond the classical arenas of parliaments and parties. The media have assumed major importance for informing the public about politics, and vice versa. Entire sections of the political process have been delegated to specialised forums, from corporatist arrangements for employers and employees to quasi-public bodies for specific social, religious or professional groups. Ombudsmen have been instituted to enhance work in specific areas, such as equal rights for women or access to information. What is more, this differentiation of political institutions has gone beyond the classical framework of the nation state. Supranational institutions have gained in importance, as have cross-border movements, relationships and activities of non-governmental actors. Sub-national levels also play an increasing role, with decentralisation of competencies to regional and local layers. What all these developments have amounted to over time is a significant diversification of institutional arrangements for the political process.

It becomes clear from this brief review that democratic politics has steadily grown in issue orientation, social reach and institutional complexity, and it seems reasonable to assume that this has had an impact on political participation. The highly differentiated institutional structures of present-day democracy have undoubtedly increased the opportunities for individuals and social groups to be involved in democratic processes on a more frequent basis than merely through occasional elections. The near-universal enfranchisement of society makes almost all citizens eligible participants in democratic politics. And the vast range of problems subject to political decision making today has led to a situation whereby each and every person is directly affected by politics and its outcomes, and should therefore have an incentive to contribute to democracy in both process and result. In short, one would expect that the considerable expansion of democratic politics has been accompanied by a significant broadening of political participation.

However, very few researchers or practitioners will claim that these expectations have materialised in reality. Some will admit that the enlargement of democratic politics has indeed drawn into the democratic process several sections of society that had been previously excluded, and youth is certainly a prime example in this respect. Many will agree that, as a result of this development, the potential for participation has become greater than ever before. Most, however, will insist that actual rates of citizen involvement have remained comparably low or are in decline, and not only in traditional institutions but also in more recently instituted democratic arenas. Substantiated by numerous analyses, this apparent discrepancy has led to a renewed interest in the broader social context, in which democratic institutions are embedded and with which they interact.

The social foundations of democracy: problems of legitimacy

Social capital and trust, political culture and citizenship and the key theme of political participation are but some of the concepts that have come to the fore in recent democratic discourse. All of them describe, in one way or another, social conditions that make democracy and its institutions thrive. In turn, and no less

prominent among scholars and practitioners of late, social apathy and corruption, and authoritarian and post-communist legacies are seen as major social obstacles to democracy. Whether positively or negatively, this terminology reflects a growing concern with the social underpinnings of democracy, or its informal dimension. After all, institutional arrangements represent only the formal side of democracy, and it has become increasingly obvious that the vitality of these struc-tures depends on the extent to which they are accepted and embraced by indi-viduals, groups and society at large. In other words, democracy and its institutions will remain feeble unless they generate broad and lasting legitimacy, and it is here that contemporary democracies are seen to have considerable weaknesses.

Legitimacy is, most generally, the belief that democracy is a valuable political and social arrangement, and it has a number of layers, all of which are similarly rele-vant. Firstly, legitimacy relates to the process and outcomes of democratic poli-tics. It is the social judgement of the capability of democratic institutions to tackle substantial questions such as economic development and material welfare, and demonstrable performance on such issues directly relates to support in society. No less importantly, the nature of the democratic process can be a source of pro-cedural legitimacy. Politics respecting individual freedoms and rights, abstaining from state violence, repression and arbitrariness, and offering the possibility to influence decision making is likely to receive such process-oriented acknowl-edgement from citizens. Yet on both substantial and procedural accounts, European democracies are facing notable problems of legitimacy. Their ability to provide for basic social needs such as welfare and security, has increasingly been called into question, and their democratic credentials are regularly questioned, whether through yet another corruption scandal or the more general lack of con-nection between the political class and citizens.

A second aspect of legitimacy is the institutional level it addresses. Most generally, democracy as such can be appreciated as an ideal, suitable or preferable form of government distinct from others. Beyond that, legitimacy relates to existing insti-tutions, incumbent office holders, and the political and social community. At the level of particular institutions within a democratic regime, one often observes stark discrepancies of respect, trust and support for particular institutions. Similarly, individual politicians, parties, office holders and other actors typically enjoy widely differing levels of support. What is problematic is that core institutions of democ-racy, such as legislative bodies, often fare worse than non-democratic institutions such as the military; among individual political actors, populists or radicals regu-larly outnumber democrats. Lastly, democratic politics has come to function on a range of levels from local communities through nation states to European and other supranational institutions, and identification with and support for these arenas differ widely among the public. In short, democratic legitimacy is not mono-lithic but differentiates among a host of different institutions.

A third layer of legitimacy relates to the kind of political actors who consider democracy valuable and act accordingly. Empirically, it has often been observed that support for democracy is biased in favour of urban, educated and affluent social groups. Theoretically, strong arguments have been made for the greater importance of legitimacy among elite political actors, given their closer involve-ment with political decision making, their consequently more frequent confronta-tion with political opponents, and their opinion-shaping function for broad segments of society. None the less, this narrow elite focus has subsequently been

criticised for neglecting the equal importance of legitimacy among the citizenry at large. Only if it embraces democracy more broadly will society be able to exert control over its elites, political and otherwise, and to withstand the less than democratic temptations occasionally invoked by populists and demagogues.

Finally, democratic legitimacy takes different expressions. Cognitively, it is important that democracy as an idea, its institutional structures and procedures, and its opportunities and limits are widely understood. Only if equipped with this knowledge of its workings will citizens be able to accurately assess political processes and outcomes. Behaviourally, patterns of individual and group conduct need to be in place that are commensurate with democracy, and the most important ones include moderation, co-operation, bargaining and accommodation. In terms of attitude, orientations compatible with democracy and indicative of its legitimacy are tolerance, pragmatism, trust, willingness to compromise and civility. Taken together, these three elements amount to nothing less than a fully-fledged democratic culture that, if in place, strongly legitimises and fortifies democracy. Yet few would argue that such a political culture is common across Europe, and especially in the more recent democracies.

On many of these accounts, therefore, democratic legitimacy is being challenged today. Albeit with differences among European countries, there is a considerable lack of connection between political institutions and their social environment, with both being affected. Not only does insufficient legitimacy diminish the capacity of democratic institutions to arrive at widely acceptable policies and to implement them effectively, it also weakens the integrity and functioning of society, which depends on democratic institutions as the central mechanism to accommodate social pluralism. Therefore, it should be beyond doubt that democracies in Europe have one clear imperative at present: to strengthen their anchoring and legitimacy in society.

A primary mechanism for developing legitimacy, and a symptom of its current crisis, is political participation. After all, direct and effective citizen involvement relates directly to several of the layers of legitimacy outlined above, as some examples readily reveal. Incorporating varied social interests in decision making not only renders political institutions more responsive to society but also enhances acceptance of the resulting policies, and thus their substantial and procedural legitimacy. Engaging individuals and groups in the political process on a local, national or European scale strengthens their sense of identification not only with the political institutions but also with the social communities at those levels. Exercising democratic processes on a regular basis, whether in a community organisation, the workplace, the school or political arenas, has educative effects in that it imbues those involved with an understanding of the workings and limits of democracy, and with an appreciation of the skills and attitudes required. One can certainly find several other, more specific effects but those cited may suffice to indicate the potential of political participation for strengthening and broadening democratic legitimacy.

Youth political participation: shaping democracy today and tomorrow

Against this broader background it becomes obvious that political participation plays a crucial role for the development of democracy, both in shaping its institutions and in embedding and legitimising them socially. In an institution-building

capacity, the quest for democratic involvement of varied social groups has been a powerful driver behind the described expansion of democratic politics. Be it women, the working classes, minority groups or environmental activists, pressure from these and many more social interest groups led, over time, to their inclusion in democratic politics and to the establishment of institutional channels to accommodate an ever-wider variety of social pluralism. This evolution illustrates remarkable flexibility of democracy and its capacity for institutional change and adjustment. In academic and public discourse, this has been reflected in shifting meanings of democracy, away from substantial definitions prescribing particular sets of institutions towards procedural definitions describing distinct sets of practices, to which the participation of citizens is key.

Paradoxically, however, much doubt remains as to whether this broadening of democratic politics has resulted in stronger democratic participation, as is indicated by the problems of social support and legitimacy for democracy and its institutions discussed above. To a considerable extent, these problems seem to be inherent to the very process of institutionalisation, as has been observed time and again. For as long as a given group or interest is excluded from democratic politics, mobilising social participation is comparably unproblematic. However, once the group or interest in question is integrated into democratic politics, through one institutional mechanism or another, participation wanes, whether because the public perceives the issue as henceforth taken care of by institutions, or because institutions bureaucratise, professionalise and monopolise the issue and consequently restrict participation by citizens. Institutionalisation therefore has a strong tendency to limit participation, and it seems to be this weakening social anchoring that, over time, also affects the legitimacy of democratic institutions. Countering this trend is the challenge faced by both institutions and citizens, through providing for and engaging in democratic participation.

In all these respects, young people and their political involvement assume particular relevance. In the first place, youth is one of the social categories that particularly benefited from the expansion of democratic politics. More than for many other social groups, a vast range of specialised institutional arrangements catering for young people emerged, from youth groups to students' councils, from youth wings in political parties, trade unions and other social organisations to networks on local, national and European levels, from specific youth support programmes to specialised sections in public administration. Whether or not one considers these existing structures as commensurate with the interests and needs of young people, this institutionalisation has undoubtedly contributed much to establishing and emancipating youth as a distinct and important social category. This development should not be mistaken as a series of concessions that were, in a more or less patronising manner, merely granted to young people by adult politics and society. On the contrary, young people themselves have frequently been at the forefront of institutional innovation and development, and the examples of student, civil rights, environmental and peace activists are but the most prominent ones. In a similar fashion, youth can also be expected to (co-)determine the further evolution of democracy and its institutions.

No less importantly, young people also figure prominently in relation to democratic legitimacy. As outlined above, legitimacy is more complex than a simple translation of institutional performance into public approval or disproval. Instead, it involves (and is mediated by) individual perceptions and beliefs, values and identities, skills and knowledge. These frames of reference, in turn, are the

product of political socialisation, and childhood, adolescence and early adulthood have long been recognised as the fundamental formative periods, after which any profound changes become much less likely. As a result, future democratic legitimacy is, to some extent, determined by the political socialisation young people undergo today. And while this may sound like a truism, one wonders whether the existing means of helping young people to become citizens are sufficient to secure their understanding and support of, as well as active engagement in, democratic institutions.

The contributions in this book

It is with these dual aspects of institutions and legitimacy, present and future, that the contributions in this volume discuss the problems of, and prospects for, youth political participation. Continuing the conceptual thrust of this introduction, Siyka Kovacheva elaborates in her contribution on the broader theoretical landscape in which political participation is conceptually embedded. Theories of democracy and governance, modes and patterns of participation, civil society and social capital, post-materialism and generation change address some of the fundamental social science concepts, upon which considerations of political participation can and need to build. Yet the youth focus subsequently introduced by Kovacheva also reveals some of the limitations inherent to conventional approaches which, largely static in nature, are incommensurate with the dynamism of both young people and contemporary European societies. A more heuristic understanding of youth participation is therefore necessary, which also implies a changing and more comprehensive research agenda. Only then will it be possible to answer the central question of whether youth is rejuvenating, or indeed eroding, political participation.

The two subsequent chapters provide two intriguing historical perspectives that are none the less still relevant today. G. Demet Lüküslü, in a case study of Turkey, demonstrates that the emergence of youth as a distinct social category is closely related to nineteenth-century processes of modernisation and nation-building. Within varied (and often competing) modern ideologies, youth soon assumed a central role for the progress of society, thus further pronouncing youth as a social construct and proclaiming it the constructor of a brighter future, in this case of the Kemalist republic. A comparable dynamic becomes visible from Ofer N. Nur's analysis of Hashomer Hatzair, a youth movement that emerged in the late Hapsburg empire and continued in Palestine in the 1920s. Framed by a clear and positive vision of the future, and deriving much of its strength from a counter-cultural impulse revolting against the values of society at large, Hashomer Hatzair developed into a veritable youth movement, whose influence is still visible today. Yet in both cases, as Lüküslü and Nur observe, participation of young people changed and decreased in the further course of the twentieth century, whether because some original ideologies were realised and others thoroughly discredited, or because for many people liberal democracy – relativist and presentist as it may be – became preferable to radical visions of the future. With this observation, however, the two analyses also raise the question of whether, and how, liberal democracy can muster enough attraction for young people in order for them to once again become its central and active political participants.

To recover such social appeal is a challenge not only for liberal democracy as an idea, but also for the very institutions of democracy, as Marc Hooghe and Dietlind Stolle demonstrate in their study of youth organisations within Flemish political

parties. Over the past two decades, these youth wings have suffered declines in membership that are far more dramatic than those of equivalent adult structures in parties. Given the socialisation and recruitment functions of partisan youth organisations, this certainly does not bode well for the future of political parties. What is more, as Hooghe and Stolle argue, this decline can be attributed to a general transformation of party systems, away from parties based on mass membership towards professionalised apparatus. With the rank-and-file considered to be obsolete, political parties make little effort to attract, recruit and mobilise young people to participate. In making this argument, and pointing to the fact that similar developments also affect civil-society organisations more broadly, this contribution shows that youth political participation depends as much on agency as on structure, that is, on the interest of democratic institutions and how open they are to having young people participate in them.

In contrast with this focus on institutional obstacles to youth political participation, the subsequent four contributions scrutinise how the broader social context conditions the involvement of young people in democracy. In an analysis of the situation in Slovenia, Metka Kuhar notes that contemporary youth is indeed characterised by significantly lower levels of political activity and social engagement than preceding generations of young people. This is only in part a result of young people effectively being treated as pre-political subjects, as inferior and immature semi-citizens who are largely marginalised by adult political structures. Equally important is the ongoing social and economic transformation of the country, which presents young people with problems largely unknown to their predecessors; youth unemployment, extended education and prolonged dependency upon parental support resulted in far-reaching individualisation and the retreat of Slovenian youth into privacy. Lastly, Kuhar emphasises that political apathy is by no means confined to youth, and in this sense, young people appear to reflect the post-political character of Slovenian society at large.

A very similar social mechanism affects Galician youth, as portrayed in a study by Daniel Blanch. In the same way as other Catholic European societies, Galicia is characterised by strong traditional, familial and personal relationships. In turn, more functional ties, social capital and interpersonal trust beyond family and friends remain weak, and translate into frustration and disaffection vis-à-vis political institutions, characterised by particularly low levels of participation therein. Although Galician society has recently undergone far-reaching processes of social transformation and modernisation, these cultural patterns continue to shape the political attitudes and behaviour of the younger generation and impede more widespread and active political participation. This is not to neglect the fact that Galician youth occasionally responds to large-scale mobilisation, volunteering and social activity, as Blanch observes. These outbursts of non-conventional political activity, however, have so far not translated into more continuous and conventional political participation, which has remained constrained by social traditions.

This significance of the wider social context is particularly obvious in processes of political learning and socialisation through family, school, media, civil society, peers and youth cultures. Based on research conducted in eastern Germany, Nicolle Pfaff identifies the five patterns of political learning through which the majority of youth in that region receive education on democracy and politics, and the experiences with participation. Striking discrepancies persist in the opportunities open to young people to develop their understanding and skills for political participation, the most notable contrast being that between the few young people

who actively experience multiple channels of democratic socialisation and those who learn about politics primarily through right-wing youth cultures. This draws attention not only to the deficits inherent in all available channels of political socialisation but also to the less-than-democratic effects some of these channels manifestly have.

This diagnosis is further developed by Edward M. Horowitz. Through the prism of communication research, he addresses the influence of the family and the media on socialising the younger generation in Poland in the areas of politics and democracy. Within the family, differences between concept- idea- and value-oriented discussions and those subordinating exchange to social relationships and conventions determine the political maturation of children and youth. Media consumption, and particularly the exposure to hard or soft news items – to more substantial or shallow information – similarly affects the approach young people develop towards democratic politics. In highlighting these ambiguities, this analysis, along with those by Kuhar, Blanch and Pfaff, does much to underscore the complexity of social processes and agents at work in shaping young people as a highly differentiated group of more or less active and democratic actors.

What results from this complexity is not least a clear need for comprehensive, cross-sectoral and participatory youth policies and youth work. This is very obvious at the level of local communities, which have long been considered to hold particular potential for the participation of young people. This potential is demonstrated – along with some of the obstacles that have left it significantly unrealised to date – by two case studies from Belgium and Norway. In examining developments in local youth policy in Flanders, Leen Schillemans and Maria Bouverne-De Bie find that much goodwill, effort and resources have been invested into improving youth policy in local communities. Yet a mix of inherited problem perceptions, administrative divisions and formal approaches have so far limited the input of young people and, as a result, the effectiveness of local youth policies. To overcome these constraints, as Schillemans and Bouverne-De Bie argue, participation needs to be firmly anchored as a policy principle rather than a mere technique. This also requires the creation of new contexts for involving young people in the democratic process, as Stine Berrefjord illustrates with examples from Norway. In her observation, a long-standing lack of connection between youth research, youth policy and youth work appears to be receding, and new forms of cross-sectoral interaction can be detected, between municipal authorities and youth workers, non-formal and formal education, and local and international projects. According to Berrefjord, initial results indicate that, in both problems addressed and stakeholders involved, more comprehensive approaches are highly attractive for young people and stimulate their interest in participation.

These developments at the local level are complemented by new dynamics within the European framework, where efforts at implementing uniform policies enabling young people to participate in the democratic process have gained momentum in recent years. In a comparative study of the Czech and Slovak republics, Ditta Dolejšiová traces the effects of European youth policies on the national context of policy makers, youth organisations and activists, and young people. In her analysis, European policies have indeed led to government efforts to acknowledge and improve the position of young people, and to more stable relationships between the state and youth organisations. Nonetheless, durable and sustainable national youth policies remain a key challenge for governments, while youth organ-

isations need to find responses to the recent decline and ongoing diversification of young people's democratic involvement. In addressing the complex interplay between European and national levels, government and public administration, youth structures and young people, Dolejšiová's assessment further highlights the multi-dimensional nature of youth policy, and of youth work more broadly.

The European dimension is equally central to the contribution by Lynn Jamieson and Sue Grundy, albeit viewed from a very different angle. In taking their point of departure from the observation that contemporary identities have become increasingly diverse, multiple and layered, their analysis considers to what extent elements of European and national, civic and ethnic identity can be detected among young people. Evidence from six countries suggests that an explicit European citizenship identity is yet to take a hold among young Europeans at large, and elements of ethnic and exclusivist identity remain significant. Underlying varying constellations of identity are clear differentials in the political socialisation of young people, and much remains to be done to strengthen their sense of European as well as civic identity. No less importantly, as Jamieson and Grundy stress, these differences in identity are also relevant for the political participation of young people, as active involvement in local and national contexts facilitates interest and engagement with European citizenship. Accordingly, developing youth participation directly contributes to building an open and civic Europe from the bottom-up.

In taking the perspective beyond Europe and onto a global scale, Geoffrey Pleyers analyses emerging forms of youth participation among alter-globalisation activists. These derive their main impetus from two factors that, as indicated by several authors in this volume, can be seen as characteristic of contemporary youth: strong tendencies towards individualisation, and a profound disappointment with conventional politics and democracy, with traditional civic organisations and social movements, and with the logics of power and institutionalisation more broadly. In response, alter-globalists promote a vision of politics that is based on practice rather than power, and they develop forms of participation that are less institutionalised and more individualised. Although it remains to be seen how these innovative forms of youth participation will relate to more conventional political institutions and social actors, Pleyers' observations contrast starkly with the sweeping assessments of youth political apathy that are so widespread today.
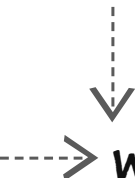
In order to detect such new forms of involvement, and the factors underlying them, researchers, policy makers and practitioners would be well advised to reconsider some assumptions commonly made about youth political participation. In her chapter, Christine Griffin argues, based on British experience, that perceptions, research profiles and youth-related policies have been constrained by largely preconceived, adult-oriented, narrow and formalistic conceptualisations of politics as institutionalised processes of decision making, and of participation therein. By contrast, a more dynamic and encompassing concept of politics as a concern with public affairs not only comes closer to young people's perspectives but also reveals the broad array of themes, contexts, expressions and forms that constitute the public engagement of young people. This amounts to nothing less than a paradigmatic shift in viewing, studying and practicing politics, democracy and participation as they relate to young people. Indeed, this postulate regarding the revisiting of some of the fundamental assumptions about, concepts of and approaches to youth political participation runs consistently through the contributions brought together in this volume.

This thrust towards acknowledging the changing and diversifying forms in which young people are involved in public life is consequently reflected in the concluding recommendations drawn together by Bryony Hoskins on the basis of the research presented here. In addressing the broad constituency of researchers, educators, practitioners and policy makers concerned with young people, these suggestions accentuate youth involvement in civic and community life in general and more specifically in the institutions of representative democracy. In order to strengthen youth political participation across different forms and contexts, education assumes a primary role – not only that of young people themselves but also that of the formal, non-formal, family and peer structures with which young people interact. Taken together, these recommendations amount to an ambitious and encompassing youth policy that, if implemented, will do much to strengthen youth political participation and democracy in Europe today and tomorrow. The Council of Europe and the European Commission can play a key role in this area; their joint Youth Research Covenant, under whose aegis this book emerged, is a very promising step in the right direction.

Acknowledgements

Revisiting youth political participation

Will youth rejuvenate the patterns of political participation?

Siyka Kovacheva

The low numbers of young people voting in the European Parliament elections in western Europe or in the local elections in central and eastern Europe, the decline in youth membership in such traditional institutions as political parties, trade unions and even youth organisations in north-western or South-East Europe in comparison with only fifteen or twenty years ago are all signs of accumulating problems in the realm of youth political participation. They are often interpreted as youth "disenfranchisement" (Adsett 2003), "decline of social capital" (Putnam 2000), young people's "de-politisation" (Vrcan 2002), "social vulnerability" (Tivadar & Mrvar 2002), "marginalisation" (Svynarenko 2001), and "anomie" (Adnanes 2000). Is this a trend toward a lasting youth disengagement from politics and society or a sign that these traditional forms are being replaced by new patterns of civic involvement invented by young people?

Research-based evidence of youth's non-involvement in politics is controversial and its evaluations debatable. One of the main reasons for the diverging visions of present-day political participation is the growing fragmentation and partiality of research perspectives. As Norris (2002) argues, while political scientists who remain uncritically trapped within 1960s concepts mourn eroding party membership, international relations scholars celebrate the birth of global civil society and communications researchers welcome the rise of Internet activism. Methodological fallacies also contribute to this situation through the lack of truly longitudinal data series and, more importantly, through inadequate designs of comparative multi-country surveys. The latter often miss young people's own understandings and even, as O'Toole et al. (2003) point out, impose researchers' conceptions of politics and political participation upon respondents. Comparative survey research tends to neglect the social context in which political participation is set, and hence cannot fully conceive of and explain the differences in its forms.

For its part, youth policy at European level regards youth political participation with both concern and hope. The Commission's White Paper "A New Impetus for European Youth" (EC 2001) defines youth participation in public life as a priority of European and national youth policies. The follow-up to the White Paper (EC 2003b), together with the Council of Europe's Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life (CE 2003) express growing anxiety about the hazards for the practice of youth active citizenship and firmly assert the crucial role of youth involvement in the process of democratisation and European

integration. Young people's engagement in public life holds out great promises, but what social trends are conducive to, or impede, their fulfilment?

This chapter examines the development of the concept of participation from two main theoretical and research perspectives: political science and youth studies. It then addresses some significant challenges to youth participation in the new context of an enlarging Europe. On this basis it attempts to outline new avenues for the growing agenda of research into youth political participation.

The changing concept of political participation

Participation is not a static concept but has been recurring and changing with developments in social theory and research. The varying practices of civic engagement have also affected the ways in which participation has been understood and conceptualised.

One of the channels for elaborating the concept has been the broader theory of democracy and governance. Classic political concepts postulate participation as an integral part of a democratic system of governance. In the abundant literature on democracy there tend to be two basic understandings of citizen participation: a narrow and a broader understanding. The former limits civic participation to voting (Schumpeter 1952) and the latter provides a more substantial definition of the term (Linz 1975), linking it to a broader range of citizens' involvement in politics. While initially Dahl considers elections and political participation as two logically independent dimensions of democracy (Dahl 1971:7), later he combines them in a global measure of polyarchy (Dahl 1989). For Dalton (1988) the success of democracy is largely measured by the public's participation in the process of decision making and responsiveness of the system to popular demands. Multiparty elections are not the single prerequisite for democracy, as they can be used by the winning party to rule without respect to the law (O'Donnell 1994). While they accept that the factors bringing democracy into existence are not the same as those for keeping it stable (Rustow 1970), Rose, Mishler and Haerpfer (1998) stress the importance of popular support for democratisation in central and eastern Europe. They perceive popular demands for freedom and democracy in post-communist societies as a guarantee against the establishment of undemocratic regimes.

Political theory offers various classifications of the forms of citizen participation in solving social problems (Bottomore 1993; Verba, Nie & Kim 1978). The concept of the modes of democratic participation (Kaase 1990) is highly relevant to the study of youth involvement in politics. It distinguishes between conventional or institutional participation and unconventional or protest politics. The first mode confines participation to activities within established political institutions while the second is a direct action, outside institutions and confronting the political elite. Many studies show a growing diversification of the patterns of political participation (Rosenstone & Hansen 1993; Burns, Schlozman & Verba 2001; Micheletti, Follesdal & Stolle 2003). Norris (2002) argues that political participation has undergone a significant transformation – from the involvement of interest groups to new social movements, from conventional repertoires to protest politics, and from state orientation to a multiplicity of target agencies, both non-profit and private.

Modern developments in democratic theory link the rise of new patterns of political participation to post-materialism, civil society, and democratic governance.

The post-materialist thesis links the changing dimensions of political participation to a cultural shift in society. Inglehart (1997) argues that social trends in post-industrial society have brought about the replacement of the old materialist values, associated with security and authority, by post-materialist values associated with a higher concern for the environment, human rights, gender equality, individual autonomy and self-expression. For him, while voter turnout has declined together with support for the old-type hierarchical and bureaucratic organisations, younger generations have become more inclined to participate in issue politics, new social movements, transnational advocacy networks and other "elite challenging forms of political participation" (Inglehart 1997: 296). The strife for subjective well-being and higher quality of life leads to newer and non-traditional forms of self-expression in politics.

A useful conceptual tool for understanding the new forms of political participation is the theory of civil society and social capital. In the post-war era the systematic trend toward erosion in party identification (Dalton & Wattenberg 2000) is accompanied by the flourishing of various types of agencies and social networks, which encourage political participation: voluntary associations, community groups, and private organisations. The social relations and horizontal links that arise among people form a social capital, which is the basis of citizens' public engagement. Despite the fact that these organisations are heterogeneous and not all of them directly target political power, they create "social networks, norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness" (Putnam 2000:19), stimulating a shared concern for the public good which in turn influences political participation.

The development of social capital is closely linked to trust, which is understood as both general interpersonal trust and political trust, that is, confidence in institutions (Pharr & Putnam 2000). Being a significant prerequisite for collective action, trust and solidarity are not a constant value but differ among different regions in the world and different stages in the development of each society. Putnam considers that social trust and civic engagement have declined significantly in the United States toward the end of the twentieth century. In contrast with this interpretation, Salamon et al. (1999) argue, based on research evidence from twenty-two countries, for the rise of a global civil society, through a global associational revolution, a massive upsurge of organised voluntary activity in the unique sphere outside the state and the market.

Fresh impetus for the concept of participation comes from the newly placed focus on governance in democratic theory. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines democratic governance as a system in which all people can participate in the debates and decisions that shape their lives (UNDP 2002). The participation of citizens, as well as that of political and economic actors, guarantees the systemic management of market, democracy and equity. The idea of governance developed from its limited understanding as the exercise of authority and control in the institutional economics school (Beausang 2002) into the concept of participatory or joint governance (Kay 1996; Unesco 2001).

Joint governance creates a form of participatory democracy adapted to the present-day realities of global interdependence. Participatory democracy is not a substitute for representative democracy but acknowledges the need for more participation and accountability in global decision making (Dupas 2001). Global governance based on participatory mechanisms is possible not only through interstate efforts but also through a global civil society, an alliance between the new and the old social movements. The anti- or alter-globalisation protests

dominated by young people represent an attempt to put powerful economic forces under social control. Sobhan (2001) argues that the involuntary constraint on the sovereignty of decision making in the nation state can be overcome by giving a stake to all citizens in the outcomes of the globalisation process, as well as by an increased participation of global civil-society groups in the workings of multilateral institutions.

The new developments in the concept of participation from the perspective of political theory are strongly linked to the understanding of values and behaviours dominant among youth. Political science most often interprets youth as an age group, a cohort like others or at best the least experienced cohort. It is young people who are most likely to see politics as boring and irrelevant to their lives (White, Bruce & Ritchie 2000). It is the youngest age group among eligible voters who are the least likely to vote in elections (Sinnott & Lyons 2003). Youth is the age cohort predisposed to unconventional political participation (Dalton 1988; Kaase 1990). Another interpretation of the specificity of youth, popular with political science researchers, is that of generation. According to Ingleheart (1997), the young generation is leading the way to the value change toward post-materialism in advanced societies. Similarly, Putnam (2000) explains the decline in civic participation and social capital as a generation change. Sinnott and Lyons (2003) identify age as an indicator of generational mobilisation or demobilisation. They argue that different generations acquire habits of political participation or non-participation early in life and carry those habits forward into later life. This ties in with Mannheim's concept of generations (Mannheim 1952). Young people are influenced by the significant historic events which took place during their formative years – the period when they became politically aware.

The evolution of the concept of youth participation

If age is a strong predictor of political behaviour for political scientists who do not agree whether this is an age cohort or a generation effect, participation is a central concept in youth studies and has risen to the top of research and policy agendas (Chisholm & Kovacheva 2002: 45). In the youth field the idea has also evolved considerably, although following a different path.

The classical approach to the idea arises from the socialisation theories of Eisenstadt (1956) and Coleman (1961). Parsons (1952) conceptualises the participation of young people as their integration into the structure of society through internalising dominant social norms. The social position of youth is accomplished through their involvement in existing institutions and arrangements. Thus participation turns out to be more about controlling young people and regulating their activities in concordance with the requirements of the state system than about their autonomy or self-fulfilment. This understanding has been criticised as biased toward preserving the status quo, perceiving the young only as passive acceptants of adult values and practices (Hartman & Trnka 1985).

A later perspective has as its departure point the concept of citizenship as formulated by T. H. Marshall (1952). According to this concept, youth participation is seen as the problem of young people's access to the wide range of civil, political and social rights in a given community. Citizenship rights, gradually acquired during youth, and the transition to civil, political and social citizenship together produce the right to full participation in society. It is also about "belonging" to one's nation and having the responsibility to contribute to its well-being.

Following T. H. Marshall's explanation of the relationship between citizenship and social class, as well as other dimensions of stratification (such as gender, race, ethnicity, etc.), the debate on citizenship links the concept of participation with the issues of social exclusion and inclusion. The notion of social participation of individuals and groups offers a framework for examining the opposite process of social exclusion.

Citizenship theory has important consequences for the understanding of political participation. The new understanding of citizenship envisages it not as a passive conferring of social rights and responsibilities but as their active appropriation by the groups previously excluded from them. Citizenship is a wider concept than a legal or civil status and is linked to people's willingness and ability to actively participate in society (Dwyer 2000). Also, citizenship is no longer limited to the structures of the nation state (Delanty 2000) but is performed when citizens take responsibility in their relations to a wide range of private and public institutions. Applying the broader approach to citizenship, Roker and Eden (2002) develop a concept of constructive social participation. It encompasses various social actions: formal voluntary work, informal community networks, neighbourliness, informal political action, awareness raising, altruistic acts, and caring work at home and in the community, through which young people "participate in their communities and influence policies and practices in the world around them" (Roker & Eden 2002: 7).

In the 1990s, the Council of Europe's European Steering Committee for Intergovernmental Co-operation in the Youth Field (CDEJ) developed a new pro-active understanding of youth participation, postulating that "participation is not an aim in itself, but an approach to becoming an active citizen, [a means of] taking an active role both in the development of one's own environment and in European co-operation" (CDEJ 1997: 7). Such an approach was accepted in the design of the study of youth experiments in European Union member states (Boukobza 1998). The operational definition used in this study accepts Golubovic's (1982) ample interpretation: "power based on the possibility of exerting influence on the economic and social aspects of life in the broad community".

Unlike the classic notions of youth participation as a passive process of development and integration into societal structures, youth researchers in communist eastern Europe in the 1980s linked it to the concept of "juventisation". Mahler (1983) and Mitev (1982) offered an understanding of youth as an active and committed group and described participation as a two-way process: interaction rather than integration, a development of both young people and society. From this perspective young people were seen as the group who produced new values and who, through their active participation in social life, changed and "rejuvenated" society. The effect of youth participation was societal innovation. In the political context of the societies with one-party regimes, however, this concept was soon blended into the dominant constructs of the official ideology, leaving aside and subduing its critical dimension towards the status quo.

Breaking with the ideological myth about the "great mission of youth" in building the classless communist society, youth research under post-communism turned from the concept of "juventisation" to "youth citizenship". Following T.H. Marshall (1952), some authors shifted the conceptualisation of participation back to the more passive notion of integration into existing social structures (Chuprov et al. 2001; Ule et al. 2000). Others embraced a more proactive understanding, linking it to involvement in associational life (Machacek 2001) and social capital more

generally (Spannring et al. 2001). In a study of youth participation in eastern Europe, Kovacheva (2000a) implied a proactive, problem-solving approach to youth participation perceiving it as the active involvement of young people in the social transformation of their societies. Defining participation as youth initiatives to solve various social problems, the study examined the process of implementation of youth participation projects, focusing on three major indicators: a well-defined problem situation (acute and unjust conditions in need of changing); resources for participation (individual participants, group structures, influential allies) and outcomes (on individuals, organisations, community and society).

Youth research generally focuses on three basic forms of political participation (Chisholm & Kovacheva 2002):

- involvement in institutional politics (elections, campaigns and membership);
- protest activities (demonstrations and new social movements);
- civic engagement (associative life, community participation, voluntary work).

There are new developments in all three forms brought about by young people – in the way they participate in election campaigns or launch protest demonstrations, act collectively in the community or on the global arena. Significant innovation might be sought in the realm of the third pattern, which expands the notion of political participation to encompass wider issues and arenas that have become foci of the particular demands of young people. Siurala (2000) defines these types of participation as "postmodern" types, including expressive, emotional, aesthetic, casual, virtual and digital participation.

To explain young people's civic activities youth studies employ a more substantial definition of youth than that used by political science. From this perspective young people do not form just another age group in the population but a group with a specific social position in each society. Youth research offers at least three approaches to conceptualise youth: as a generation, as a life stage and as a social group. The first concept is similar to the one applied by political science, departing from Mannheim's (1952) seminal essay. It is highly relevant in times of the rapid social changes Europe is enduring now (Becker 1992; Semenova 2002). The second approach starts from the social psychological specificity of this life stage – the search for self-identity – and explores the values that shape its consciousness (Cote 2002; Helve 1996). The third understanding conceptualises youth as a group in a process of transition from dependence into autonomy, while moving between the spheres of education and employment, from the parental home to an independent housing and family formation (Bynner & Roberts 1991; Wallace & Kovacheva 1998).

The exploration of the new formative experiences in a transforming Europe at the bridge between the two centuries, the new points of identification in the globalising world and the new social context in which youth transitions are made are all points of departure for a heuristic understanding of political participation.

Youth political participation in a changing Europe: challenges to democracy

Conceptual debates in political science and youth studies have to consider various emerging trends in youth political participation in the context of an enlarging Europe. They pose significant challenges to the creation of a citizens' Europe and

to democracy more generally. Many of them fully merit the interpretation of changing forms of youth political participation instead of its erosion.

While voting levels have started to decline in many European countries, this trend is not all-pervasive. When young people feel democratic development in their countries threatened, they enter the ballot boxes in great numbers, as in Bulgaria in 1997 and Slovakia in 1998. Youth participation in voting is usually high when combined with the other two forms of activities: unconventional and civic. Young people quickly mobilise around single issues, such as the spill from the Prestige oil tanker in Spain or the protests against the war in Iraq, which were particularly widespread in countries such as the United Kingdom and Spain, whose governments supported the war efforts. Political self-expression through the arts and sport, voicing environmental concerns, human rights, gay and lesbian politics, and consumer boycotts have spread to post-communist countries (Roberts & Jung 1995; Ule et al. 2000). Youth in Nordic countries, and in Estonia, is playing a leading role in using the Internet for renovating the forms of institutional participation, for example contacting government officials, online consultations, and policy discussions.

The spread of consumerism among young people might be a serious challenge to their civic participation, as it presents a shift away from collective solidarity and ideological engagement. For Putnam (2000), the civic disengagement observed in the United States of America has been the result of the trend towards the privatisation of leisure, particularly among the young generation. In central and eastern Europe, the anti-state connotation of leisure typical of the communist regimes no longer exists (Wallace & Kovacheva 1998). Whereas under communism youth consumption was rendered political by the oppressive state, which politicised and punished all youth autonomous activities aimed at self-expression, at present consumption is seen as being led by the market only and encouraged by the state. Some authors interpret the spectacular consumption of the affluent groups among youth as behaviour that ignores politics and the rest of society (Meier 2002). Others explain this pursuit of pleasure by the encouragement of parents who try to open a generational umbrella over their offspring and provide them with fashionable clothes or the latest mobile phones, willingly limiting their own personal consumption (Mitev 2003). However, it might also be seen as a form of new, more individualised and flexible political participation (Micheletti 2003).

Individualisation is another global trend affecting the political participation of young people in Europe. Attitudinal surveys (Iacovou & Berthoud 2001; Kovacheva et al. 2003; Macháček 2001) have documented the growing inclination to search for individual solutions and the dislike of collective action. Not only opportunities but also risks are being fragmented (Furlong et al. 2000). One of the consequences of this trend is the widespread unwillingness among young people to participate in formal youth organisations with regular membership and routine activities. There is still a need for more flexible models of participatory microstructures that will appeal to young people in Europe.

It is not so much individualisation as the continuing centralisation of political and social life in many European regions – in south-western and most of eastern Europe – which inhibits young people's experiences of participation in politics and civil society. The short-term financing of youth projects, the invisibility of youth initiatives in the regions, outside the metropolitan areas, the low level of co-operation within the third sector also contribute to young people's preferences for participation through more flexible and informal structures (Roker & Eden 2002; Kovacheva 2000a).

Mobility in Europe usually enhances the civic engagement of youth, being a form of experiential learning from other cultures and institutions. While Western cities become more and more multicultural, the exposure of rural youth to "otherness" remains limited. Young people in the United Kingdom and in Mediterranean countries also have a low "European competence" (IARD 2001: 52) in terms of experience and language skills. For most young people, however, challenging racism and ethnic intolerance has come to the fore in their participatory actions. In eastern Europe, a lot of the participatory potential of young people in the region is lost because of emigration. Youth emigration from South-Eastern and eastern Europe is mostly for economic reasons – the wish to participate in Western markets and welfare systems. At the same time, young emigrants are more disappointed and critical of the current situation in Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine and Belarus, and more impatient with respect to their countries opening up to the West. The desire to leave is not a totally apolitical stand and might be interpreted as striving for individual integration (Kovacheva 2000b) in cases where the young are weary of the slow and ineffective efforts of their country's integration into the European community.

The above trends in youth political participation arise from the changing experiences and predicaments faced by young people in Europe. Their efforts to solve current problems contribute to the rejuvenation of political participation by developing original participatory forms, and give fewer grounds to be interpreted as political disengagement or apathy of participation.

The emerging agenda of youth participation research

The short synopsis of the conceptual development in political science and youth studies, combined with the overview of emerging trends in youth participation, provides valuable insights into the mutual enriching of the two perspectives. This paragraph focuses upon some issues that cast brighter spots in the mosaic of youth participation research.

The concept of the political

First of all, youth participation research needs to question the concept of the political in the same way as gender researchers have done previously by disputing the established border between the public and the private (Siltanen & Stanworth 1983; Goddard 2000). Youth researchers should go further and create a broader concept of politics relevant to young people's own definitions. More studies may add additional details but the overview of existing literature suggests that for young people politics encompasses not only those actions attempting to influence government policy but also issues of wider social concern. A political action is every action that challenges the established hierarchies of values and norms, institutions and authorities. Norris (2002) speaks about lifestyle politics, which breaks down the dividing line between the "social" and the "political" even further.

The scope of political participation

At the same time, and under the conditions of decentralisation and globalisation, political actions are not actions directed towards the nation state but also towards smaller and wider constituencies – towards regional and local communities, as well as those at European and global level. We need to widen our research coverage across the full range of national and cultural contexts and

study participation patterns in the "consolidated democracies" of central Europe, the emerging democracies in South-Eastern and north-eastern Europe to the "insecure democracies" further east in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries (Haerpfer 2001).

Youth research has to become more receptive to differences in young people's participation caused not only by European enlargement but also by the growth of social inequalities in the process of globalisation and in the prolongation of the youth phase. Youth has long stopped being a short sip of happiness, which it was in pre-industrial Europe or indeed in the early decades of modern societies. Different groups among youth might have different definitions of politics and different forms of political expression.

The forms of participation

Researchers have to develop concepts that are more sensitive to the political aspects of such forms of youth participation as leisure activities. Stolle, Hooghe and Micheletti (2003) reveal the possible ethical and political repercussions of consumer behaviour. They see the political nature of such participation in the fact that young people's actions to boycott certain goods and services and buy others on moral grounds target issues, values and institutions that concern the authoritative allocation of values in society. De Leseleuc, Gleyse and Marcellini (2002) envision sport as a theatre of social concerns, which surpasses the practice of sport itself. Sports such as cliff climbing present a symbolised and ritualised way of relating "one" to "another". It has a truly political mission – to create new civic links and integrate participants into a community. The cliff climbers construct "territories" which challenge the existing order of social relationships, the very political balance in society. Research should not underestimate the political implications of other types of leisure activities, of volunteering and social work, mobility and migration.

The resources of youth participation

Political action is also not only the action structured through political institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) but also involvement in less structured, looser networks and friendship circles, and even individual action, such as political consumerism. Inglehart (1997) points to the preference of younger generations for participation in loose, less hierarchical informal networks and various lifestyle-related sporadic mobilisation efforts. Stolle, Hooghe and Micheletti (2003) also stress young people's inclination to participate in less bureaucratic and hierarchical organisations or to pursue individualistic and unconventional action, such as political consumerism.

The Internet has become another innovative resource for youth participation (Norris 2002). Until now it has been used mostly in advancing both traditional and unconventional forms of participation and new social movements: E-mail lobbying, networking, mobilising, raising funds, recruiting supporters, communicating their message to the public. However, it is too early yet to predict what alternative avenues for political expression this resource is giving to young people.

The methods of studying participation

We need to renovate our research methods to make them more sensitive to new trends in political participation. One avenue for such development is the collec-

tion of good quality data for comparative and intercultural analysis, which acknowledges variations across national, regional and local contexts in Europe. Another route is to widen the scope of research methods used to study youth participation patterns, which up to now seem to be dominated by quantitative designs. There should be more case studies of youth participation projects, in-depth interviews and group discussions, as well as representative surveys and multi-country comparative studies. Action research merits particular attention in the investigation of youth participation. The innovation potential of focus group interviews is particularly relevant to the study of young people's understanding and experience (Brannen et al. 2002; O'Toole et al. 2003). This methodology allows participants to present and argue concepts in their own terms in a more equal and democratic dialogue, avoiding dominance by the researcher.

Summing up the new developments in young people's political participation and studies thereof, we might argue that youth political participation has become an attractive concept in political theory and youth research, promising democratic innovation in society. It is also appealing to young people themselves as an effective way to influence social change in Europe. When studying participation, however, there should be a degree of caution against simplistic assumptions of participation being always "a good thing", because intolerance and xenophobia, terrorism, and the "ethnicisation" of politics also occur among youth groups.

Whether youth is rejuvenating the forms of political participation is not only a theoretical question. Systematic research-based evidence will confirm or refute such a hypothesis. A more flexible and reflexive methodology will contribute to a better understanding of youth political participation. Only by developing and implementing a comprehensive research agenda can we provide a conclusive answer to the question about the forms and avenues for the renovation of participation and democracy.

Constructors and constructed: youth as a political actor in modernising Turkey

G. Demet Lüküslü

Youth is a social construct invented by the industrial and urban modern world, which has been highly active on the political scene, in particular during the processes of building nation states since the nineteenth century. In the Turkish case, youth was "constructed" with the creation of a modern and occidental education system in the Ottoman Empire. As a result, a "young generation" appeared at the beginning of the twentieth century, a generation educated in a European manner, influenced by European thought, and having demands concerning the transformation of the political system. From this very generation, the founding fathers of the Turkish Republic, established in 1923, would be recruited. For the new Republican political culture, youth was to represent the "young" Republic, with the "old" standing for the ancient Ottoman Empire, the sick man of Europe. In other words, since the beginning of the Republic, there has always been a myth of youth, and throughout the history of youth in Turkey, youth always appears as a central political actor.

This importance reached its peak in the 1970s, with the violent conflicts between the youth movements of the right and the left. The *coup d'état* of 1980, which used the violent conflict of the 1970s as a pretext, marks an important watershed for Turkish political culture. For many intellectuals of the Turkish left, the young generations socialised after the 1980s are the apolitical or depoliticised generations (the terms "apolitical" and "depoliticised" are used alternatively by the Turkish press), born into the oppressive political culture of the *coup d'état* and its still existing oppressive institutions. At the same time, they are seen as the generation of neo-liberalism introduced by the governments since 1983. Throughout this article, the main concern will be to analyse this change in the image of youth in Turkey by studying the three generations of the Turkish Republic. It will be argued that in the history of modernising Turkey, youth has played a dual role, acting as the "constructed" and the "constructors" of their period, whether politically active or inactive, but each time representing the spirit of the time, in reference to the notion of *esprit du temps* of Edgar Morin.

The advent of youth: enlightenment, nation state, modern ideologies

Youth, the transitory category between childhood and adulthood, has not always been a universal and stable category. Rather, it is a construct of the modern and

urban world, and has played changing roles throughout the twentieth century. Studies of the history of childhood or youth demonstrate that in traditional societies the passage from childhood to adulthood was realised through rituals and ceremonies, which cut this transitory stage comparably short. It is interesting to observe, with Philippe Ariès, that in the Europe of the Middle Ages, children did not constitute a distinct category at all but were conceived as "miniature adults" (Ariès 1973).

A collective study on the history of youth in Europe, edited by Giovanni Levi and Jean-Claude Schmitt, demonstrates the changing role youth has played at different times. Apparently, there is not only one history of youth, but plural histories, changing according to contexts such as time, society and social category (Levi and Schmitt 1996). It is interesting, for example, to examine the transformation of the image of youth that occurs with the Enlightenment. In the progressist Enlightenment ideology, education (of the mind as well as the body) becomes crucially important. With the project of nation-building, the education of younger generations becomes an important investment for the nation state. As a result, youth finds itself at the centre of the process of nation-building, and it soon becomes one focus of all the modern ideologies.

In this context, Jean-Claude Caron demonstrates how education of the young generation has developed in France and in Europe since the end of the eighteenth century, and how it continues to evolve throughout the nineteenth century (Caron 1996). Other examples can be found to demonstrate how youth was constructed through education systems in other European societies at the same time. Even though youth studies for that time are scarce, there is sufficient research on the history of education and of nationalism to provide information on the perception and the image of youth, as links between nationalism and youth have always been close. The Czech Sokol movement, founded in 1862 and playing an important role in the development of national consciousness, is a good example. Here, nationalism combines with physical education to strengthen the health of the younger Czech generation, and thus of the future Czech nation. Evidently, physical education, such as gymnastics in the nineteenth century, was very much related to the development of nationalism, and the bodies of youths assume importance for the whole project of nation-building. It is hardly surprising to see Ling, the founding father of Swedish gymnastics, as a member of the patriotic "gothiques" in the early 1800s (Thiesse 1999: 239).

Closely related is the importance of youth as the "new," "healthy" and "powerful", acting as a symbol for modern ideologies from fascism and nazism to communism. During the Third Reich, for example, being "young" did not refer to a social group nor to a moment of biological development of the individual. Instead, being "young" signalled first and foremost an adherence to a new national-socialist *Weltanschauung* (Michaud 1996: 309). In Mussolini's Italy, youth similarly represented the fascist revolution. According to Laura Malvano, youth is "therefore eternal youth of an eternally young nation," and for the fascist regime, "young people are the strong point of its action, the momentum of its organisational system" (Malvano 1996: 278).

Finally, Pilkington argues that the same holds true for Russia. Lenin's speech in 1906, even before the revolution, clearly illustrates this point: "We are the party of the future – and the future belongs to youth. We are the party of innovators, and youth is always more open to innovation. We are the party of selfless struggle with old evil, and youth is always the first to take up the selfless

struggle."[1] In other words, according to the socialist ideology of Russia in the early twentieth century, youth is a crucially important social category, as Pilkington observes: "in the forging of the new, modern society, youths were dually important: as the youngest, most educated, and most modern elements of society they were seen as vital to the natural, linear progression of society, but as the natural representatives of the youthful and backward society, their preco-ciousness, intuition and even maximalism might allow Russia to evade the mis-takes of the older generation of modern societies and leap-frog into a better society. In youth, the irrational, the past, the Russian merged with the rational, the future and the internationalist. In effect youth constituted the body and mind of the new society" (Pilkington, 1994: 49).

When examining youth movements since the nineteenth century, it becomes clear that youth played an ambivalent role: on one hand, it was "constructed" by dif-ferent ideologies in the name of modernity and progress; on the other hand, youth itself was at the forefront of constructing new societies. In reference to Russia, Hilary Pilkington puts this dual role very succinctly in the title of her book: *Russia's Youth and Its Culture: A Nation's Constructors and Constructed*. More generally, youth came to be the symbol for the projects advocated by various ideologies.

Youth emerging as a social category and as a political actor in modernising Turkey

In Turkey, youth had emerged as a social category with the modernisation process that started in the nineteenth century. As a result, a young generation appeared at the beginning of the twentieth century (Young Turk Movement), postulating a transformation of the political and social system. Ottoman historian François Georgeon observed that the use of words like "youth" or "generation" in the Ottoman language is a recent phenomenon that dates back to the Young Turk Revolution in 1908. It is with this generation that generational conflicts emerge. Contradictions between the "old" and the "new" become apparent, with the latter questioning the authority of the former, upon which the traditional system depended (Georgeon 2004). This conflict continues in the Turkish Republic after 1923, whose founding fathers belong to this "new" generation. In other words, what was observed for other modernist ideologies also holds true for the Turkish case: youth is a symbol of Kemalist ideology. What is more, Turkish youth also played an ambivalent role of being "constructed" by, and being the "constructors" of, nation-building. Constructed by the modernisation project in the nineteenth century and further by Kemalist ideology, youth were simultaneously constructors of the new Turkish state.

The history of youth in Turkey shows it to have been a central political actor, starting with the very first generation of the Turkish Republic. At that time, youth actively supported the founding father of the republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, and the principles of his Kemalist ideology. Leyla Neyzi defines this first genera-tion as "the guardians of the regime" (Neyzi 2001). The same idea, the role of youth as guardians of the republic, is also clearly expressed by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk himself. In 1927, he ends a book by addressing the present and future young generations of the Republic as follows: "Turkish youth! Your first duty is to maintain and protect Turkish independence and the Turkish Republic forever. This is the primary basis of your existence and of your future. This constitutes your most valuable treasure. Child of Turkey's future! Your duty is to save Turkish

independence and the republic. You will find the strength that you need to achieve this in the noble blood that flows in your veins!"[2]

Other official documents of the dominant party of that period, the Republican People's Party (CHP), which outline Turkish republican ideology, also demonstrate that youth was constructed as a social category devoted to Kemalist principles (Lüküslü 2001). However, one cannot fully understand the first generation of the Turkish republic by perceiving it exclusively as a product of political socialisation (or rather indoctrinisation) during that period. It is similarly important to account for the enthusiasm and devotion this generation felt for the newborn republic. It would, however, be mistaken to extend this enthusiasm to the entire young generation, as it applies only to the small minority that had the privilege of good education and conceived of itself as the future elite or intellectual class of society. It must not be overlooked that the Turkish republic inherited from the Ottoman Empire a largely under- or non-educated population that was primarily rural in nature.

Yet this small part of Turkish youth had internalised the principles of Kemalist ideology, and it had come to see itself as the "guardians of the regime," whose mission was to develop and improve the country. This internalisation of the principles and values of the republic becomes obvious from the results of an oral history project conducted recently by the Turkish History Foundation. This project scrutinised the first generation of the Turkish republic by using the biographical interview method. Running through the interviews are enthusiasm for being constructors of a new society, and devotion to Kemalist ideology, which is seen as the only avenue for developing and modernising Turkey.[3]

The sixties' and seventies' generation: rebels with a cause

The image of youth in Turkey started to undergo profound changes in the 1960s, particularly with the generation of 1968. Before going into the details of Turkish youth at that time, it is important to acknowledge that, all over the world, the young generations of the 1960s and 1970s left their mark on the image of youth. Once again, youth played a role of being influenced, or constructed, by the developments of the time as well as influencing or constructing these very developments.

With the 1950s, a youth culture emerged first in the United States and spread worldwide, through fashion, rock and roll and new lifestyles. A new generation, very different from older ones, was born. Several studies in the United States seek to understand and rehabilitate this generation, which has often been viewed as deviant and as threatening to society. By the 1960s, this youth culture had successfully transformed itself into a youth movement worldwide, with an image of the young as "rebelling" and "contesting" the established system, often starting in universities. Youth, initially seen as "rebels without a cause," came to have a goal – the transformation of the world. Beginning with the United States, this youth movement had strong repercussions in France after May 1968 and eventually became a global phenomenon, with the young generation rebelling in the United States, in Europe, in Latin America, and also in the Middle East.

To be sure, this movement was not a homogeneous one, but differed in the context of each country. In some cases, strong political violence emerged, while in other countries its course was more peaceful. The degree of violence did not only depend on the characteristics of the movement but similarly on the reaction of

the state. Studies on violence have shown that in societies ruled with rigid systems, movements tend to become more violent in addressing the regime. Michel Wieviorka, for example, argues that violence can become a way of "expression" in cases where other forms of expression are prohibited (Wieviorka 1988).

In the Turkish case, it is interesting to observe that youth, the original "vanguard of the state", came to rebel against this very state. In fact, the youth of the 1960s and 1970s are still loyal to their mission as a vanguard. The difference is that the formal government is seen as illegitimate, and in referring to the war of independence, youth sees its duty in fighting an "illegitimate" regime. The youth movement in Turkey, which originally started as a student movement, later came to include high-school students. With the 1970s, the Turkish political sphere became more openly violent, with the line of conflict running between leftist and rightist youth groups. As Leyla Neyzi argues, "during this period, youth was constructed in public discourse as a 'threat' to the national interest" (Neyzi 2001: 419). Violence was steadily exacerbated, and according to a study by Ruşen Keleş and Artun Ünsal, the number of deaths caused by political violence increased each year to reach a figure of 1928 casualties in 1980, that is, immediately before the military coup (Keleş & Ünsal 1982: 35).

In-depth studies of this period are still lacking. However, what becomes clear from this cursory glance is that the image of youth in Turkey in the 1960s and, in particular, the 1970s was transformed. Youth now became a "rebel" fighting against the system, later to be coined "anarchists" or "terrorists" by Turkish politicians or the press. This is a generation that opposes the values both of their families and of society. Research demonstrates clearly that this generation differs from older ones in its perceptions of society and politics. Turkish observers explain this contrast with the rapid transformation of society, with youth being a revolutionary social category, while older people remain more conservative (Kişlali 1974; Köknel 1970; Mardin 1997; Ozankaya 1978; Saran 1975).

Globalisation generation: "apolitical" individuals in a consumption society

The pretext of the military coup in 1980 was to stop the political violence of the 1970s and to create a peaceful society. Even though the military regime, which lasted until the elections in 1983, managed to stop the bloodshed, it established a repressive apparatus that aimed to "rehabilitate" youth. Turkish society went through a harsh process of depoliticisation that continued after the election of a right-wing neo-liberal party, ANAP, into power. ANAP conducted a discourse that hoped to unite the competing ideologies. In fact, however, this discourse was deeply apolitical. During this time, Turkey opened up to international markets and neo-liberal economic policies were dominant. This left its mark on the young generation. Post-1980 Turkish youth are commonly seen as apolitical consumers of a global market. It is the first generation of Turkey to have been socialised in a society that is open internationally and globally, and it can appropriately be called the first "globalisation generation" of Turkey.

Of course, similar tendencies towards a globalised world can be observed everywhere. Now that the Berlin Wall has fallen and mass communication is developing, a strong neo-liberal wind is blowing. In the intellectual sphere, the "end of history" has been declared, with the cold war having ended and the two major opposing ideologies having disappeared. The post-1980 generation was

socialised in a largely unopposed system of neo-liberalism, with the 1983 gov-
ernment of Turgut Ozal and the subsequent cabinets making Turkey part of this
process. This led to stark contrasts in society that were felt strongly by young
people. They listened to the stories of their parents and grandparents about how
hard it had been to make internal or international calls, about the impossibility of
finding international brands in Turkey, and about how few cars there were in the
streets. By contrast, the young generation was born into a period of communica-
tion and consumption. While their parents did not have television at home when
they were children, young people had now grown up watching American or
European films and spending long hours surfing on the Internet. Here again, a
transformation of the image of youth in Turkey has taken place. After long years
of being politically active and concerned about social problems, youth is now per-
ceived to consist of individualistic consumers socialised in a globalised world.

Needless to say this new generation does not have a positive image, especially
among Turkish leftist intellectuals who view them as passive consumers, in the
individualistic pursuit of their own happiness only. Clearly, this question merits
more in-depth research likely to relativise this view of the post-1980 generation
as passive recipients, which would need to understand the ideas and experiences
shared by young people. In fact, this is a generation going through an individu-
alisation process which, in many ways, sets them apart from preceding young
generations in Turkey (Yazıcı 2003; ARI Association 2001; Konrad Adenauer
Foundation 1999). Similar processes of individualisation have been observed for
a long time in the West, yet the case of Turkey indicates that this process is
becoming a phenomenon of modern societies in general. Recent studies of youth
in Morocco (Bennani-Chraïbi 1994), and even in Iran (Shirali 2001), demonstrate
that individualisation of youth is under way in these societies as well.

Here again, youth in Turkey and around the globe are being constructed by yet
another juncture of their time, often labelled globalisation, neo-liberalism, or the
information society. At the same time, youth here and elsewhere also shapes, or
constructs, the "new" culture that is emerging. It seems that in order to grasp this
new culture, it is most important to understand the young generation instead of
judging it. For this purpose, it is important to distinguish the individualisation of
youth from the neo-liberal idea of the free-market individual, and to stop seeing
the individual merely as egoistic, indifferent or hedonistic. Rather, the question
would be to ask whether or not "individuals, despite all the glitter of the cam-
paign for their own lives, [are] perhaps also in the vanguard of a deeper change?
Do they point to new shores, towards a struggle for a new relationship between
the individual and society, which still has to be invented?" (Beck & Beck-
Gernsheim 2003: 22). Empirical data from interviews with young people in
Istanbul demonstrates that Turkey is much in line with this argument. All the
young people interviewed stated that they are not really interested in politics and
they do not trust political parties and political leaders. Yet at the same time they
emphasised that they are concerned about the problems of the country and its
future, and that they are interested in what is going on locally and globally. They
perceive the political space as corrupted and the political parties and organisa-
tions as ossified structures that prevent youth from expressing itself freely.
Therefore, they prefer to express themselves in the private sphere, which they see
as more open and free than the political realm, and where discourse can be less
old-fashioned than in politics.

For this reason, it would be mistaken to conclude that young generations today are not interested in politics. Instead, youth develops a different understanding of what is political, not dissimilar to the way feminists once did by saying "the personal is political!". This is also reflected in more general observations relating to Western societies: "We are witnessing today an actively unpolitical younger generation which has taken the life out of the political institutions and is turning them into zombie categories. This Western variant of antipolitics opens up the opportunity to enjoy one's own life and supplements this with a self-organised concern for others that has broken free from large institutions. It is organised around food, the body, sexuality, identity and in defence of the political freedom of these cultures against intervention from outside. If you look at these cultures closely, what seems to be unpolitical becomes politicised" (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2003: 213).

Conclusion

By examining the three generations of the Turkish republic, which correspond to the history of modernising Turkey, the changing roles and the changing images of youth have been traced. The emergence of the first generation was closely linked to the birth of Turkey as a nation state, and it has been argued that, in this project, youth figured as both constructed and constructors. The generation of the 1960s and the 1970s has been labelled young "rebels," while the post-1980 generation is conceived of as the first "individualised" generation born into a globalised consumer society. The characteristics of these three generations in Turkey not only demonstrate the transformation youth in this country has lived through in the twentieth century but can also be observed more universally. After youth being part and parcel of the process of nation-building, the 1960s produced a new young generation that placed demands on the political system which, in its view, did not function. While there may be differences across different societies, this generation is rightly coined "rebellious" also in more universal terms, with Turkey being a good illustration. The third generation, the globalisation generation, or individualised youth, is also a worldwide phenomenon. At each of these stages, as was shown above, youth played a dual role, being constructed by the conjuncture of the period and the same time acting as constructors of their time, and carriers of a new culture.

Endnotes

1. Cited in Strokanov, A. and Zinov'ev A. (1988), ' "Molodezh'... chast' revoliutsii', Pravda, 24 October:2 and cited in Pilkington, H. (1994), *Russia's Youth and Its Culture: A Nation's Constructors and Constructed*, London: Routledge.

2. Atatürk, Mustafa Kemal (1989), Nutuk (Speech), Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, p. 1197 translated by Neyzi, Leyla (2001), "Object or Subject? The Paradox of "Youth" in Turkey", *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* No. 33, August, pp. 411-432.

3. This research of the Turkish History Foundation (Turk Tarih Vakfi) has already started and some of the interviews have already been published in the Milliyet newspaper.

The relevance of countercultures and visions of the future: examining the historical example of Hashomer Hatzair

Ofer N. Nur

Hashomer Hatzair was founded in 1916 in Vienna as an independent and autonomous Jewish youth movement. The term "autonomous" is used here to describe youth movements founded by young people, for young people, and which were relatively independent of adult influence. The prime example of an autonomous youth movement is of course the German Wandervogel, which began its activities around 1896 and was more formally organised in 1901.[1] In the history of youth movements, only a handful of movements achieved such autonomy.

Hashomer Hatzair was founded in Vienna but did not originate there. It began its activities around 1911 in Eastern Galicia, an agrarian province of the disintegrating Hapsburg empire.[2] It was a movement of higher-middle-class, assimilated Jewish youths. It started out as a merging of two organisations: the first was Tse'irei Zion (The Young of Zion), a Zionist movement founded in Lwów in 1902 as a study group for high school students. This organisation practised extra-curricular education in the framework of study groups. It emphasised the value of belonging to the Jewish culture. Many members knew Hebrew and were interested in the study of Jewish history and literature. The second organisation, Hashomer (The Watchman), was modelled in 1913 after the Polish Scouts. It was named after the Hashomer organisation in Ottoman Palestine, a Jewish vigilante organisation. The years of the First World War were spent by many of the movement's members, along with their families, as impoverished refugees in Vienna. In this intellectual metropolis, the members were exposed to a wide variety of intellectual trends such as anarchism, Nietzscheanism, spiritual socialism, youth culture and psychoanalysis. Many of those trends, little known to non-Viennese circles at that time, have been adopted into the movement's nascent worldview.

After the Vienna years, in 1918, many members returned with their families to their homes in Eastern Galicia. Without doubt, it was the trauma of the civil war that broke out in Galicia between Poles and Ukrainians in late 1918, with Jews caught in the middle, that was the ultimate driving force behind the immigration to Palestine of the several hundred members of the movement. Although deeply assimilated into the Polish nation, they felt rejected by that – now independent – nation because they were Jewish.

The movement began its immigration to Palestine in 1920. There, it came to be one of the founders of the kibbutz movement of the early twenties. Only several years later, in 1927, it founded its own political party. This party was called the United Workers Party and was always considered "the third way" in socialist Zionism, more radical than the two other parties, which eventually merged to form the Labour Party (1929), but not as radical as the communists. Politically, Hashomer Hatzair is quite marginal today. It is still represented in Israeli politics as it constitutes one third of Meretz, Israel's most progressive leftist party. It is also important to note that the United Workers Party was a strong supporter of the idea of a bi-national Jewish Palestinian state.

Counterculture as a basis for the movement

Until the founding of the party in 1927, however, Hashomer Hatzair was an apolitical movement, indeed a fiercely anti-political one. One of the movement's members wrote in her diary that, when her youth group met in Vienna's Jewish cemetery to commemorate the founder of political Zionism, Theodor Herzl, they made an oath to never involve themselves in party politics. The early Hashomer Hatzair was a passionate, modern, countercultural movement, better described using Georg Lukács' term "romantic anti-capitalist".[3] The fusion of Zionism as a form of ethnic nationalism with the universalist counterculture is a paradoxical characteristic of the movement. On the one hand, Hashomer Hatzair was experiencing a most sweeping and most profound rebellion. On the other hand, it was deeply committed to actively "saving" the Jewish people, which for the members was in an abysmal crisis.

The early years of Hashomer Hatzair in Palestine were shaped by these two motivational poles. One pole was expressed in Zionism – a Jewish national framework, in which the movement sought to achieve individual and collective fulfilment in forming kibbutz communities. The other pole belonged to a broad Western cultural phenomenon – counterculture. The movement's rebellion in its earlier years manifested itself, for example, in the publication of the poem entitled "The son's rebellion" in the spring of 1922 in the opening issue of *El-Al*, one of the movement's journals: "My son, do not obey your father's instruction. And do not heed your mother's teachings ... pave your own path. Depart from your father's way. For why should you betray the young generation. The generation of the future, so distant and full of light."[4] In order to make the impression of this poem more poignant, the publishers chose to add two effects: they used an old Hebrew typeface – scroll type – and they placed on a facing page a reproduction of the "Prayer to the Sun." This was a painting by the German artist Hugo Höppener, then well known by the name of Fidus. Adopted by many German youth movements and other life-reform movements, the "Prayer to the Sun" depicted a young man standing nude on top of a cliff with his hands spread: he appeared to be yearning for freedom.

The publication of this poem in a Hashomer Hatzair journal stirred up widespread fury in rabbinical circles throughout Poland. There were even rumours of an excommunication decree. The chief rabbinate of Warsaw declared the publication an abomination. The fact that the poem had already been published several years previously in a literary journal did not matter. The rabbis felt the subversive potential of such a publication only when it appeared in a youth movement journal because they saw it as a powerful pamphlet.

The publication of the poem and of the "Prayer to the Sun" suggested rebellion. The most salient feature of this poem is the rejection of tradition. If we look closer, tradition here is associated with the family – the son is advised not to follow the ways of his father and his mother. The adoption of this poem by Hashomer Hatzair indicates a stark discontinuity through the rejection of the family and tradition. "The son's rebellion" and the reproduction of the "Prayer to the Sun" expressed the combination of rejection of Jewish tradition and the embrace of new ideas, previously unknown in the Jewish world.

The poem and the picture are a manifestation of a counterculture that had appeared among the younger generation of central European youths. This counterculture was, both in content and form, a particular central-European cultural phenomenon of German origin. At the end of this essay, this phenomenon will be crystallised into a historical hypothesis on anti-political attitudes in the West.

Modern Western counterculture is intimately connected to attitudes that do not favour direct political participation. It first appeared in an extreme degree in central Europe when a variety of protest groups developed a worldview alternative to that of the liberal middle class. It then spread throughout the West, and then to the middle classes of other nations.[5] It is a multi-faceted phenomenon and overlaps with more concrete groups and categories such as anarchism, the avant-garde, bohemianism, movements for life reform such as back-to-nature movements, nudism, vegetarianism, anti-smoking societies, communes and the hippie and green movements. Any given countercultural persuasion only attracted an extremely small number of followers, led by a handful of mentors, intellectuals or gurus. As was the case with Hashomer Hatzair, groups that belonged to the counterculture sought to provide a normative and regulating value system motivated by conflict with the values of the larger society around them, which was seen by them as powerful and oppressive.

Counterculture today, as well as in its historical outbreaks in the 1920s and 1960s, included groups that rejected the major Western values and attempted to replace them with an alternative set of values that stood in direct opposition to the values being rejected. The counterculture movement that originated in central Europe around the end of the nineteenth century was deeply anti-bourgeois and anti-liberal. Because its adherents came from the younger generation of the very centre of the dominant culture, the middle class of a society undergoing rapid industrialisation and urbanisation, the repercussions of countercultural movements were sharply felt. Whether posing a subversive challenge to industrial capitalism, upholding utopia, revolution, or anarchism, or consisting of the most hopeless of adolescent fantasies, the counterculture was fundamental and original in its challenge to Western values, and especially to liberal political values and political process. Its manifestations were always short-lived, vehemently anti-capitalist and motivated by a gaping generational conflict.

The transformation into a political party

Hashomer Hatzair's countercultural outlook involved several aspects, mainly involving the historical narrative it felt part of, the formation of the kibbutz society, and the foundation of a number of boarding schools in Palestine, which employed the most progressive and up-to-date educational methods. For the purpose of this analysis, it is necessary to examine the movement's path from this anti-liberal, romantic anti-capitalism to the foundation of a fully-fledged Marxist

party between 1924 and 1927. The rhetoric of, for example, "a federation of autonomous communities" or "psychological utopia" and values such as voluntarism, spontaneity or authentic living, had now been supplemented with the rhetoric of "revolutionary struggle," class struggle or a dictatorship of the proletariat. The party even considered joining the Third International.

It is important to emphasise here what the meaning of the turn to political activism (the radicalisation into socialism and even communism cannot be elaborated upon here) was: it meant reaching the widest possible population in order to recruit young people as members into individual kibbutz communities. It also meant the use of the democratic political system in Jewish Palestine in order to reach a set of revolutionary goals, inspired by revolutionary Marxism.

How did Hashomer Hatzair make its way from a romantic youth movement to a Marxist political party, and what were the implications of this transformation? This is a question that is difficult to answer. Perhaps the simple fact of becoming older, and less *Sturm-und-Drang*-oriented, played its role in the willingness to join the establishment – the enemy as it were – to accept its rules and plunge into the previously hated world of political participation. At the age of romantic rebellion, the members of the movement were usually between 15 and 20 years old. When they established their political party, they were usually between 20 and 25 years old.

In the context in which the young members were living, it became clear to them that political participation was an effective means of furthering their goals. The Yishuv – that is, the organised Jewish settlement in Palestine prior to the foundation of the state of Israel – established an effective political system with universal suffrage. Until the 1990s in fact, many public institutions from youth movements and sports clubs to hospitals and health organisations were originally established and organised according to affiliation with each of the parties. In that context, the members of Hashomer Hatzair were convinced that political participation would further their goals, exploiting the democratic political system and playing according to its rules.

A vision of the future

An important difference between Hashomer Hatzair as youths in the 1920s and young people today lies in the fact that Hashomer Hatzair promoted a clear vision of the future. This vision was based on the proposition that certain ideals such as community, equality, liberty, authentic living or national autonomy were lacking, and that it was young people's mission to recreate a society that would uphold these ideals. The imagining of future society has been an important characteristic of Western history and its revolutions. It often involved the creation of a "new man."

Certain crisis points in Western history, which expressed discontent with human society, combined with a utopian vision, have been accompanied by images of a "new man." Such images in early Christianity or in the Italian Renaissance reflected an explicit wish to mold a new human personality that could fit into a new society and carry forward its vision.[6] At one of the more influential of these crisis points, the French Revolution promoted an ideal of a regenerated "new man," who could replace the old, obsolete man of the *ancien régime*.[7] Later on in the nineteenth century, it was the pivotal role of Friedrich Nietzsche that generated a number of diverse ideals of a "new man." Nietzsche's enormously influen-

tial call for human self-transformation was transmitted and incorporated into the vision of the major artistic and ideological movements of the early twentieth century.

The political myths of the Russian Revolution, Italian Fascism, Nazi Germany and the National Revolution of Vichy all incorporated very similar images of a "new man" into their social and political visions, which included an exaltation of youth and masculinity, of heroism, of dynamism of action, and one version or another of a leader principle.[8] These ideological regimes devised official educational programmes whose purpose was to promulgate this image into the real lives of people.

A clear vision of the future, which could also entail dangers of oppression, was part and parcel of the utopias these movements had promoted.[9] In the twentieth century, young people have been mobilised by images of a better future. The majority of young people in the West today have lost faith in promises to revolutionise society. In view of many historical cases where such promises have brought terror, oppression and distorted ideals, perhaps we stand on firm ground when such atrocities are concerned. We are still faced with the problem of political apathy, which seems to be the price to pay for a stable liberal democratic ethos. In other words, to make democracy and liberal values a future-oriented vision for young people still remains a challenge.

In the case of Hashomer Hatzair the optimistic, clear vision of the future was manifested in the movement's political posters, most of them based on socialist realism. It is also evident in the movement's gamble on its own future expansion: as it formed its political party, Hashomer Hatzair had five kibbutz communities. Within thirty years, this grew to over seventy communities (out of a total of approximately 300 kibbutz communities at the height of the kibbutz movement in the 1970s).

Conclusion

The European liberal democracies, on the other hand, have no conception of a future to offer their young people. This situation is reflected in the image of the political system. It is believed that, once civil rights, human rights and stable democratic institutions have been effectively established, there is no need for a change of political system. It is perhaps time to hypothesise the importance of the conception of the future as a mental construct and as a constructive fantasy for youth and adolescent age-groups in particular. In the late modern age, young people are encouraged to only think about the future with regard to their individual professional career. This condition depresses the potential of youth to find interest in the political process, as it encourages them not to hope for a better future because this "better future" has already been achieved.

Western concepts and sets of practices related to youth culture and its themes, interests and venues originated in the central European counterculture and its youth culture, first conceived and experienced in Germany. This *Jugendkultur*, a variation of the German *Kulturkritik*, was rebellious and contained the anti-liberal seeds of anti-politics. It despised liberal of politics, that is, political parties, parliamentary debates and facts of political life, such as loose political alliances and coalitions. Hashomer Hatzair's embracing of politics, therefore, is an exceptional case of a return to the establishment, not dissimilar perhaps to the act of hippies

turning into "yuppies". In other words, the return of countercultural movements to the very establishment against which they rebelled is possible.

Judging from youth political participation in Europe today, the vestiges of counterculture have had a damaging effect when it comes to the lack of trust in politics qua politics, which is so widespread among young people. The absence of a programme for the future and the historical seeds of anti-politics have combined to leave their imprint in the form of a lack of interest in democratic political participation and the blatantly unheroic liberal values underlying European democracies.

Endnotes

1. On the German youth movement, see Laqueur 1962 and Stachura 1981.

2. The best accounts of the history of the Hashomer Hatzair youth movement in English and German are Margalit 1969 and Jensen 1995.

3. On this concept, see Löwy 1979.

4. See, for example, Lamm 1998: 26.

5. For a very useful introduction to counterculture, see Nelson 1989. A historical discussion of the origins of counterculture in central Europe is found in Green 1986. See also Kerbs & Reulecke 1998.

6. Küenzlen 1994.

7. Mona Ozouf (1989), pp. 116-57, esp. pp. 122-23.

8. Yagil 1997: 11. See also Mosse 1996.

9. A classic is Talmon 1970.

Youth organisations within political parties: political recruitment and the transformation of party systems

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In the current debate on the alleged decline of civic engagement in Western societies, young generations figure prominently on the list of "usual suspects". In his study on engagement patterns in the United States, Putnam (2000) claims that a process of generational replacement is responsible for the bulk of the observed decline: as older and more civic generations are being replaced by younger age cohorts, participation levels decline systematically. What is too often forgotten in the literature on (the decline of) youth participation, however, is that participation acts are not just a matter of agency, but also of structure. In practically all studies the focus is on agency, and therefore it is taken for granted that if youth participation declines, the main cause is that young people are less interested in public affairs than they were a few decades ago. Or to put it differently: if young people refrain from participating, they are the only ones who are responsible for this decline (Stolle & Hooghe 2004).

Considerations of structure, however, could be just as important: every participation act is inherently the result of an interplay between the individual, who is participating, and the structure, which is mobilising. Previous research has shown that mobilisation efforts are of crucial importance if we want to explain participation: being asked to participate or having been targeted by mobilisation campaigns is the most important element explaining individual participation behaviour (Verba, Schlozman & Brady 1995). Our aim in this article, therefore, is to shift the focus toward structural considerations: if young people participate less intensively (and we have ample empirical evidence to substantiate this claim), this is not just a matter of less interest, but might also be a result of the fact that traditional mobilisation channels are no longer available to them. In exploring this line of explanation, we follow the lead developed by Theda Skocpol (Skocpol 1999, 2003). Based on a careful re-examination of historical evidence, Skocpol endorses the claim that membership and participation levels have been declining in previous decades. Her main argument, however, is that it would be one-sided to seek the explanation for this downward trend exclusively at the individual level, as is the case in some of the writings by Putnam (2000). What has been happening, according to Skocpol, is a radical transformation of organised civil society in the United States: mass membership organisations have been

weakened in favour of professional advocacy groups, which are no longer in need of a mass membership base. These advocacy groups, therefore, no longer invest in mobilisation, with the result that fewer people actually take part in voluntary engagement.

Applying Skocpol's insights and research results to the current discussion on youth engagement has important policy consequences. If we take her structural argument seriously, this implies that there is little future for a moralistic approach, simply urging young people to become more engaged. Any policy effort to raise young people's engagement levels should also look at the demand side: who is mobilising these young people, and with what effect? In this paper we try to apply Skocpol's approach to one specific kind of youth participation: membership of youth organisations of political parties. While these youth organisations used to be an important channel for political recruitment and political socialisation, their importance has been declining substantially in recent decades. It can be argued that political parties have become increasingly professionalised, and that as a consequence they are less likely to invest in recruitment channels for future and potential members. Therefore, these youth associations provide an ideal testing ground for our theoretical assumptions: do young people refrain from joining party politics because they are no longer interested, or because nobody bothers to ask them any more?

Young people and political parties

The claim that young people engage less intensively in political and social life is indeed substantiated by various empirical indicators, especially with regard to conventional political participation acts. In Canada, for example, turnout rates prove to be rather stable for older cohorts, but show a significant downward trend for voters under the age of 30 (Blais et al. 2002). Also with regard to political interest, political knowledge and newspaper reading, younger age cohorts differ significantly from their older counterparts. Nowhere is this downward trend more clearly visible than with regard to party politics. For at least two decades party membership has been declining in most liberal democracies (Dalton & Wattenberg 2000; Mair & van Biezen 2001). Whereas in the 1960s roughly 13% of the electorate paid their dues as members of political parties, in the 1980s this proportion shrank to 9%, and in the 1990s only 6% called themselves party members (Putnam 2002: 406). This downward trend might signal that mass parties are losing ground in liberal democracies, only to be replaced by new types of political parties (Dalton & Wattenberg 2000; Scarrow 2000). The thesis that party systems are gradually being dominated by "cartel parties" is by now well known (Katz & Mair 1994, 1995). According to Katz and Mair, cartel parties are rooted less firmly in society than traditional mass parties, while they tend to approach state institutions more closely. The "party on the ground" is overrun by the "party in public office". It does seem clear that political parties nowadays rely less on volunteers and on mass membership. Election campaigns have become professionalised and are mainly conducted through the mass media, thereby making the use of volunteers obsolete. While in the past "catch-all" parties invested money and other resources in efforts to attract as many members as possible, this function has become all but obsolete in the current media-dominated political landscape. Nowadays, political parties need media figures, spin doctors and campaign money – they are less interested in volunteers and members. Therefore, instead

of asking whether young people are still interested in party politics, we might as well turn the question around: are parties still interested in young people?

In this paper we focus on one specific element of the recruitment of party members: the role of youth organisations within political parties. Traditionally, this kind of auxiliary organisation has played a very important role in mass parties, as they have served as one of the key instruments in establishing links between political parties and society (Duverger 1951). Youth organisations are especially interesting in this respect, since they serve as an important recruitment channel for party members.

The study of youth party organisations allows us to address the issue of the political participation of young citizens from a new perspective. It has been stated that especially young citizens are more likely to refrain from political activity, and in some cases the drop in civic engagement among the younger age cohorts has been shown to be responsible for the general decline in participation and turnout rates (Rahn & Transue 1995; Putnam 2000). With regard to the decline of party identification too, Dalton (2000: 31) concludes: "the decrease of partisanship in advanced industrial democracies has been disproportionately concentrated among the young." This decline in youth participation could have long-term consequences, since research suggests that participatory habits tend to be picked up quite early during the life cycle (Jennings 1987; Fendrich & Turner 1989; Hooghe & Stolle 2002). This also applies to elections: those participating in elections when they become eligible to vote (in most countries this is at the age of 18), remain far more likely to vote throughout their life cycle (Plutzer 2002). This implies that if young people abandon youth organisations of political parties now, it will become more likely that in future decades too, political parties will find it increasingly difficult to attract new members (Hooghe & Stolle 2003). Our basic assumption, therefore, is that the current state of youth organisations allows us a glimpse of the potential future of party organisations. If youth organisations are less successful with regard to their recruitment function, this most probably implies that parties will continue to attract fewer members in the future.

In this article, we develop this thesis using the example of youth organisations within the main political parties in Belgium (Flanders). We examine the importance of the recruitment function of these youth sections for political parties by using a survey among Flemish city councillors. In the conclusion some general implications about recruitment patterns and their consequences are drawn.

Youth organisations and political socialisation

Despite the fact that numerous political parties throughout the world have important youth sections, as far as we know youth organisations of political parties have never before been studied in political-science research. Scattered evidence suggests that the membership base of youth organisations is in decline, even more so than party membership in general. In Germany, where the Social Democratic Party has a powerful youth section (Jusos), the decline in youth party membership has been considerable (Offe & Fuchs 2002: 216). In Sweden youth organisations lost more than 60% of their members: from 220 000 in 1972 to less than 50 000 in 1993 (Rothstein 2002: 294). As we will see later on in this article, figures for Belgium suggest a comparable magnitude of membership loss: it seems clear, therefore, that youth organisations within political parties lose members much more rapidly than the "adult" parties do.

The study of youth organisations is highly relevant from the point of view of political socialisation research: it can be expected that youth organisations function as socialising agents for partisanship and organisational learning processes. Not only do they introduce young members to the ideology of the party, they also function as a kind of learning school, where the members gradually grow acquainted with political and party life. The fundamental insight of socialisation research is that age matters in this process: all new members of organisations adapt to, and subsequently help to shape, the group culture within the organisation they enter, but the socialisation experience is stronger at a younger age. Although not all political attitudes or behavioural patterns are stable throughout the life cycle, the general assumption is that socialisation experiences early on in one's life will have a more lasting and a more enduring impact on future behaviour and attitudes (Jennings & Niemi 1981; Fendrich & Turner 1989; Hooghe & Stolle 2002; Sears & Levy 2003).

The enduring impact of youth participation on adult activism can be explained by invoking two different causal mechanisms (Hooghe & Stolle 2003). On the one hand, an attitudinal mechanism suggests that the effects of socialisation experiences on attitudes and beliefs are most powerful at a relatively early age, and remain discernible as actors grow older. On the other hand, a network mechanism suggests that networks are established more easily and more effectively at an early age, and will remain accessible throughout the life cycle. Therefore, actors who are already immersed in politicised networks at an early age will continue to be more easily targeted by any kind of political mobilisation effort later on.

Lending credibility to the claim that the demise of youth organisations spells trouble for party membership in the future requires evidence on two fronts. First, it has to be demonstrated that the membership base of youth organisations declines far more rapidly than the membership base of parties in general. The second task is to demonstrate that youth organisations fulfil, or have fulfilled, an important recruitment function for the adult political party. In this article, both of these claims will be tested using data from Flanders, the Dutch-speaking autonomous region in Belgium.

Youth organisations of Flemish political parties

Early on in the development of the Belgian party system, political parties invested heavily in their youth organisations. Already in 1891 the Belgian Socialist Party founded the National Federation of Socialist Young Guards, a highly successful organisation with over 25 000 members in the 1930s. The official start of the youth organisation of the Christian Democrats can only be traced back to 1951. The "CVP Youth" was especially successful in the 1970s, and two of its leaders, Wilfried Martens (1981-1992) and Jean-Luc Dehaene (1992-1999) moved on to become prime minister of Belgium. The Liberal Young Guards were founded in 1904, and they too had their heyday in the 1930s, with well over 20 000 members. The current prime minister, Guy Verhofstadt (since 1999) was chairman of the liberal youth section from 1979 to 1981.

Just as in Germany and Sweden, however, Flemish youth organisations have lost a lot of their appeal since the 1980s. From newspaper reports, one can gather that the most important organisation, the young Christian Democrats, has lost almost half of its members in two decades, while the youth organisation of the Socialist Party is immersed in a deep crisis. It is very difficult, however, to establish reliable

time data: for youth organisations it does not seem a priority to keep good membership records over time, partly because of the constant turnover in staff and officials. As a result of this, it proved to be impossible to gather regular membership records for every year from the 1970s onwards. We do have access to some membership figures, and these were collected from the archives of the youth sections, from interviews with individuals currently in charge of the administration of the youth section, and from various publications of the section. The overall tendency of these figures is clear: in Flanders too, youth organisations of political parties are confronted with a heavy loss in their membership base. The youth organisation of the Christian Democrats has lost half its members: from ca. 12 000 in the 1980s to 5 000 in 2003. For the Liberals the loss is even more dramatic: from 8 000 members to less than 2 500 in 2003. Within the Socialist Party, the youth organisation now has less than 1 000 members. While it is a reasonable guess that in the early 1980s these three youth organisations together had some 25 000 members, in 2003 this number had shrunk to less than 10 000, or a loss of more than 60%. In the same period, the "adult" political parties limited their membership loss to about 25%.

Table 1 – Membership Base of the major youth organisations in Flanders

	Christian Democrats (CD&V)		Liberals (VLD)		Socialists (SP.A)	
	Members	%	Members	%	Members	%
1969	4 000	3.6				
1972					8 988	8.6
1973	1 500	1.5				
1974					9 181	8.4
1975	5 000	4.1	8 000	18.3		
1977	8 000	6.4				
1978	9 000	7.2				
1979	11 220	9.6				
1980	11 238	9.0				
1981	11 966	9.6				
1982	10 697	9.2				
1983	12 285	11.3				
1984	11 218	10.5				
1985	11 988	10.5				
1986	13 955	10.9	8 220	11.2		
1987	11 608	8.3	7 589	10.1		
1988	11 114	8.3	9 568	12.7		
1989	11 930	9.5	8 467	11.2		
1990	11 309	8.6	8 189	11.5		
1992			7 000	9.1		
1993	7 880	6.3	7 745	9.6	1 280	1.4
1994	11 629	9.6			2 374	2.7
1995	10 048	9.2	6 611	8.3	1 096	1.4
1996	10 611	9.1			1 087	1.3
1997	8 946	8.0	6 200	7.8	1 119	1.5
2001	5 900	5.7	2 500	3.1	900	1.2
2003	5 058	4.9	2 269	2.8	870	1.2

Members = number of members in that year; % = as a percentage of the total number of members of that party.

The results in Table 1 are limited to the three major parties in Flanders, but together they account for some 86% of all party membership in Flanders, so including the various smaller and usually more recent parties would not change the general pattern in a substantial manner.

It will be remembered that our claim is not just that youth organisations are losing members, but that they are doing so more rapidly than the parties themselves. Therefore, we include not just the absolute number of members in Table 1, but also the percentage of the total number of members of that party. It is important to present the figures this way, because the Socialists and the Christian Democrats in particular have lost members in the previous decades, and therefore what we might be observing in the figures for the youth organisations is just a general downward trend for the party as a whole (Mair & van Biezen 2001). A look at the relative figures shows that this is not the case: the youth organisations lose members more rapidly than the party in general. In order to test the implications of this trend for the future functioning of political parties, we now turn to our second area of investigation: the recruitment function of these youth organisations.

The recruitment function of youth organisations

An obvious point of departure for an investigation of the recruitment function of youth organisations within a party is a survey among adult party members: our question is not how the youth organisations recruit their own members, but rather how many members youth sections "deliver" to the adult party. A survey of party members or militants, however, is difficult: a representative survey can only be conducted if all parties are willing to collaborate and make their membership lists available, and not all of them were eager to do so. So we decided to approach the level of active party militant members as closely as possible by the study of city councillors. The Flemish political parties taken together have 297 000 members, and ca. 10 000 (3%) of them serve as city councillors. The councillors cannot be considered to be representative of the ordinary, passive members of the parties but they are closely related to the group of locally committed party activists. Furthermore, career research demonstrates that being a city councillor is often the first stepping-stone in building a political career (Best & Cotta 2000).

For this project, 32 of the 308 municipalities in the autonomous region of Flanders were selected in a random manner. All mayors were asked whether they would allow a short questionnaire to be distributed and collected at a city council meeting. In most municipalities this was allowed, and the result of this form of distribution, involving face-to-face contact between researcher and councillor, was a very high response rate of 76.3%: of the 881 city councillors in these municipalities, 672 returned a full questionnaire. There were no significant differences in the response rate for the five provinces in Flanders. The respondents can be considered as representative with regard to the distribution of local councillor seats, with 30.4% belonging to the Christian Democrats, 23.1% to the Socialists and 22.5% to the Liberals. In total, the sample included 498 "ordinary" councillors and 174 aldermen and mayors (in Belgium, aldermen and mayors are elected members of the city council).

Recruitment for the party

The survey offered solid evidence for the recruitment function of youth organisations: 41% of all councillors indicated that they had started their political career in the youth organisation of their party. This percentage was a little higher for the

Christian Democrats, and substantially lower for political parties having entered the Belgian political arena as recently as the 1980s: the Greens and the extreme-right Vlaams Blok.

Table 2 – Previous membership of the youth organisation

	%	councillors
VLD (Liberals)	45.3	150
SP.A (Socialists)	43.2	155
CD&V (Christian Democrats)	48.0	204
VU/ID/NVA/Spirit (Flemish Nationalists)	(44)	18
Agalev (Greens)	(15)	26
Vlaams Blok (extreme right)	(34)	35
others (mainly local lists)	(22)	79
Total	40.9	670

% percentage of respondents (city councillors) who said that they had been a member of the youth section of their party.

Councillors: number of councillors

The mere finding that more than 40% of all city councillors started their political career in a youth organisation already demonstrates the importance of these organisations and warrants their inclusion in political-science research. We believe that this percentage is reliable since it is in line with the results of a general population survey conducted in Flanders in 1998. That survey showed that 6% of all adults belonged to a political party – and this percentage corresponds to the actual figures on party membership. However, this survey also included questions on youth participation, and it was shown that among those who had never been a member of a youth organisation of a political party, only 4% belong to a party. On the other hand, for those who had been a member of a youth organisation, this number rises to 43% (Stolle & Hooghe 2002; Hooghe 2003). Although the figures from these two surveys cannot be compared directly, both the general population survey and the survey of city councillors show that a very substantial number of all party members started their party career in a youth organisation.

If youth organisations function as a recruitment channel for the adult party, it is possible that members who were youth party members receive a political career boost and enjoy a competitive advantage in comparison to their colleagues who were recruited in some other way. It can be expected that their political careers will be facilitated because of their youth membership. Networks tend to be very important for any kind of political recruitment, and so we might expect that those who are strongly integrated into the party fabric, partly because of their youth membership, will have a better chance of acquiring leading political positions.

There are indeed striking differences with regard to the careers of previous members and non-members of youth organisations. To start with, those who were a member of a youth organisation start their careers earlier; on average they were 31 when they first entered a local election, while for others the age was 39. They received their first mandate at the age of 34, while the others had to wait until the age of 42 (Table 3). This eight-year difference can be extremely important. Almost all political parties now have an upper age limit of 65 for an elected mandate, and this implies that former members of youth organisations have on average 34 years available to build their political career, while for non-members this period is limited to 26 years. To start eight years earlier than one's competitors and/or colleagues can therefore make an enormous difference with regard to the chances of eventually arriving at a senior position.

The figures, however, show that former members of youth organisations do not move ahead more rapidly than non-members: for them too, it takes on average three years to move on from their first candidacy to their first mandate. This implies that their competitive advantage is not a result of the fact that they move faster through the career track it only means that they start earlier, and therefore have more time available for the remainder of their career.

Table 3 – Age for first candidacy and first mandate

	First time on list (1)		First time elected (2)		Difference (1)-(2)	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Member youth org.	29.9	32.1	33.4	35.3	3.5	3.2
Non-member youth org.	38.8	38.9	41.6	41.5	2.8	2.6
All	35.9	35.9	39.0	38.8	3.1	2.9

Average age for respondents at the moment (1) they were first a candidate at a local election; (2) they were elected for the first time in the municipal council.

Conclusion

As far as we know, this is the first systematic research to be carried out on youth sections of political parties, and this study has shown that they clearly merit further attention. A survey among local politicians in Belgium shows that over 40% started their political career in a youth section. Furthermore, youth sections have lost 60% of their members since the 1980s, so it is clear that their traditional recruitment function has weakened. There are two conclusions that can be drawn from this survey.

The finding that structural inequalities accompany entry into political life is in itself not new. Earlier research has shown that gender, family links and traditions, education status and income largely determine people's chances to build a political career. This research has shown that inequality is further strengthened by membership in youth organisations. Political careers seem to be ruled by the same mechanisms as any other career: early starters are better off, and remain better off. It is important to note that the two phenomena are necessarily linked, like two sides of the same coin. Establishing that youth organisations are important recruitment channels means that those who had this experience gain a competitive advantage compared with those without such a head start. This is an

important finding with regard to recent policy initiatives to ensure unbiased party recruitment, addressing gender, ethnic background and other inequalities. What we can learn from this study is that this kind of initiative should start at an early age: if only adults are targeted, as is the case thus far, some patterns of inequality are already well established.

The second conclusion is tied more closely to the functioning of political parties. Not only do youth organisations have an important recruitment function, but additional evidence suggests that these organisations are rapidly losing members, far more rapidly than the parties themselves. The figures associated with this decline are very much in line with what is known from Germany and Sweden. This implies that in the near future, parties will be confronted with the fact that one of their main sources for the provision of new members is running dry. This confirms the Katz and Mair hypothesis that political parties are becoming less interested in attracting a mass-membership base, as they are gradually becoming more strongly dominated by concerns of power, media exposure, professional communications expertise and security office.

Several counter-arguments against the importance of youth involvement seem plausible at first sight. Maybe young people do no longer need separate youth organisations, as new members immediately move on to the adult party; or it is possible that they arrive later in the political party. Even so, one should not forget that youth organisations are a highly effective solution for a problem facing every organisation. Organisations tend to be dominated by certain age cohorts, and as a result they are often less attractive for new recruits. Establishing a separate youth organisation is an institutional way of defusing this conflict, as it allows new recruits to have their own playing ground, which is only loosely controlled by the older party elite.

Although at this moment it cannot be predicted what kind of strategy party organisations will pursue, the most likely development is that in the foreseeable future they will face an uphill battle if they want to recruit new members. The theoretical relevance of this investigation into youth sections, therefore, is that it lends credibility to the claim that in the near future, parties will continue to lose members. Given the importance and the strength of youth socialisation, it is likely that feelings of partisanship will continue to weaken if new recruits integrate into the party system only at a later age. Furthermore, it is extremely likely that they will do so in ever-smaller numbers. Although these findings about one specific recruitment channel cannot fully address issues of party transformation in general, it is clear that the dramatic decline of youth organisations in political parties confirms the assumption that the days of mass-membership parties will not return in the near future. Therefore, it is not really effective to urge young people to become involved in political parties if these parties themselves no longer seem interested in attracting new members. Civil society has changed, and has been thoroughly professionalised (Skocpol 2003), and political parties do not seem to be an exception to this rule. This implies that the demand for political militants and volunteers has become smaller, and that it has become less likely that young people will be targeted by mobilisation efforts by political parties. If we want to arrive at a full explanation of the decline in the conventional political participation of young people, it is important to incorporate this kind of structural explanation, rather than simply to invoke a widespread political malaise among young people.

Youth and politics in Slovenia: a pre-political group in a post-political age

Metka Kuhar

This article addresses the social and political role of Slovenian youth since the Second World War, the participation of young Slovenians in political processes at present and the factors underlying recent changes in participation patterns. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, young people are a politically marginalised and infantilised social group, in particular when compared to more active previous generations. Research data from the Mladina 2000 (Youth 2000) survey – a sample of 1 262 young people aged 16 to 29 – demonstrate the lack of young people's interest in politics, their political distrust and feelings of subjective political inefficacy. The young generation's pre-political status is set in the context of the post-political age in which it is growing up. Among the most important barriers that prevent young people from more active political participation are: ever-longer economic dependence on their family; unemployment pressures; a diminishing role of politically active autonomous peer groups; and the consequent retreat into petty, banal private shells. Nevertheless, young people seem to be prepared for "guerrilla attacks" out of their shells, for example in the form of political protests, and for different kinds of socio-political activism.

The social and political role of youth in Slovenia since the Second World War

Before the political independence of Slovenia in 1991, the story of young people in Slovenia was written by Yugoslavia. Accordingly, it was a socialist story, although it differed from other real-socialist stories in the region.[1] The development of the Slovenian youth scene and the formation of an independent political public contributed theoretically and practically to overcoming the existing politics and to the general modernisation of social relations. Ule (1988, 1999) distinguishes three phases of attitudes towards youth and their emancipation movement in the post-war socialist Yugoslav society. Her categorisation suggests that birth cohorts who were in the youth phase in certain periods of time have the same levels of political interest and involvement. This categorisation can be classified under the theories of political generations, which postulate that levels of political interest reflect differences in the political-historical contexts of one's upbringing (see for example, Inglehart 1997). Studies concerning political generations expose the rise of a specific generation – the so-called "protest generation"

born between 1941 and 1955 – that shows an unprecedented level of political activity never reached again by subsequent generations.[2]

The first phase, identified by Ule (1988), is the "socialist construction of youth", which started directly after the Second World War and lasted until the middle of the 1960s. In the decade immediately following the Second World War, the socialist ideology was a constituent part of the construction of youth. Young people were firmly included in the project of the social rebuilding of the state from ruins. In this project young people saw opportunities and experienced improvements in their personal and social standards. This was the reason why the role of the youth in the first phase of post-war Yugoslav society was clearly integrative.

From the 1960s onwards, warnings against the various "non-socialist", "bourgeois" habits of some young people began to appear in the speeches of politicians and in the media. It was a time of revenge against "liberalism" in Yugoslavia, of repeated purges in political circles and among the intelligentsia at universities, and of an intrusion of the ideology of self-management into the educational system. Students, traditionally the group that was most resistant to seduction by the authorities and ideology, were particularly suspicious. Conflict between the youth, especially university students, and society had intensified by the end of the 1960s and culminated in the student movements. These movements appeared at approximately the same time as in other parts of the world. By the end of the 1970s, a sensible and diverse youth scene had developed in Slovenia, which in the 1980s represented an important part of the independent political public. It took shape in the various forms of youth subcultures. Ule (1988) has termed the phase between 1960 and 1975 "protest and pleasure".

The years between 1975 and 1990 represent the phase of deconstruction of youth as a unique generational and social institution. The 1980s were years of the expansion and breaking-up of youth subcultures into the various alternative scenes. Young people explicitly engaged in public life and politics in an informal and even personal way. They used their media, which became the main alternative and opposition media in Slovenia. This was the first young generation to form its own political and cultural profile, and it became a motor behind new political and cultural trends. Surveys on public opinion in Slovenia showed that the public accepted the main and innovative ideas of the young, and as such their behaviour, especially their political behaviour, overcame generational borders and became trans-generational.

Birth cohorts who entered adolescence at the beginning of the 1990s – for empirical reasons the age group considered in the article will include young people aged 16 to 29 years – spent most of their adolescence, and for the younger ones most of their childhood, in independent Slovenia, and thus in a new socio-political system.[3] Research indicates that the political culture (for example, political interests, beliefs, attitudes and values) of the contemporary generation of young people greatly differs from that of previous generations (Ule 1988; Ule & Miheljak 1995; Ule et al. 1996; Ule 2000; Ule et al. 2002).

The young generation of the 1990s had the opportunity to obtain a good education and to receive information through ever-expanding and diversifying forms of communication technology. Nevertheless, from the 1990s onwards, one of the main problems has been the eventual unemployment of the young and changes in the way employment was realised. It seems that young people have lost their

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illusions about a smooth transition into adulthood and economic independence, and about the danger of not fulfilling their parents' expectations. They see the social world as incomprehensible, unpredictable and full of risks. The new feature is that they perceive these risks as individual crises rather than the effects of processes outside the reach of their influence. Young people try to achieve as painless and risk-free a path to the future as possible (Ule & Kuhar 2003).

The 1990s have also been marked by a regression of youth movements, an increased social anomie of youth, and a destruction of alternative youth cultures. The "space for youth" has come to be limited to the spheres of privacy and leisure time. Data from surveys carried out in 1993 and 1995 show a shift in the value system of young people from socially engaged values to individualist ones, towards those which are a general prerequisite for a safe and stable life: health, true friendship, family security, peace in the world (Ule & Miheljak 1995; Ule et al. 1996; Ule & Kuhar 2002a).[4] According to the surveys, the positive link between the individualisation of young people and social activism, which was dominant among youth in the mid-1980s, has disappeared. The critical attitude and social engagement of the youth have declined (Ule & Miheljak 1995). It seems that the prime characteristic of growing up in the post-transitional period is a "redirection of dealing with society to dealing with oneself".

How is this retreat into privacy reflected in the political attitudes of young people in Slovenia at the turn of the century? In the following, an explanation of this turn of the tide will be attempted relying on data obtained in the Mladina 2000 (Youth 2000) study conducted by the Centre for Social Psychology at the University of Ljubljana in the autumn of 2000, using a representative sample of 1 262 young people in Slovenia aged 16 to 29 years.[5]

Present attitudes of young people towards politics

The individual attitudes towards the political system and political phenomena addressed in the Mladina 2000 survey were measured using indicators of political culture. Political culture is defined in much of the social-science literature as a conglomerate of different individual values, convictions, expectations, behaviours and viewpoints that constitute collective viewpoints on politics and political life (Almond & Verba 1989). It results from the history of a specific political system, but also from individual life experiences. Young people constitute a group newly entering the space of an existing political culture. The "tasks" of young people during the phase of accustomisation to such a political space are: first, to develop an ability to judge and understand politics and democracy; second, to develop critical political skills and establish distance towards politics on the one hand, and trust in the political system on the other; third, to develop party-identification; and fourth, to develop the ability of independent political determination (Miheljak 2002).

For the purpose of this analysis, the following indicators of political culture were used: subjective interest in politics, frequency of political discussions, sense of personal political competence, trust in or distrust of, institutions.

According to the findings of Mladina 2000, as many as 56.6% of young people between 16 and 29 years of age stated that they had little or no interest in politics.[6] Only 8.9% stated that they had a strong or very strong interest in politics. Similarly, on the values scale, interest in politics came near to the bottom, constrasting with the importance attached by young people to the individualistic

values of a private nature, such as health, family life and friendship. The cross-referencing of data pertaining to different ages of respondents showed that disinterest in politics declined slightly with age, while interest did not grow significantly. The cross-referencing of data pertaining to genders showed a minor, but statistically significant difference: men are slightly more interested in politics than women. The likelihood that a person will show interest in politics is also influenced, to a certain extent, by the type of school that he or she was attending at the time of the survey, or by the attained level of education. The higher the level of education (or the level one aims to attain) the smaller the number of those who are completely disinterested in politics.

Data on the frequency of discussions about politics, showing that politics is a relatively rare subject of discussion, also confirm the lack of interest in politics among young people. Approximately three quarters of young people rarely or very rarely discuss politics with their parents, friends, partners, schoolmates or colleagues at work. When they do discuss politics, this is usually within the family circle. The proportion of young people who discuss politics with their parents often or very often is around 30%; almost the same proportion of respondents discusses politics often with friends. Approximately one fifth does so frequently with intimate partners, schoolmates and co-workers.

Mladina 2000 survey data further point to a high degree of a subjective sense of political inefficacy, which may be defined as the conviction of respondents that they cannot influence political events and processes through their own efforts. It is measured by the degree of the respondents' belief that their voice counts in government matters and that the government responds to their wishes. The majority of young people do not feel that they understand politics, or that they can influence the political decisions or actions of the political elites. Only 10% say that they understand politics pretty well. More than three quarters think that politics is too complicated for ordinary people to understand. The same proportion of young people agrees that young people do not have any influence on the political decisions or actions of the political elites. Slightly more respondents agree that there are some influential people, but that all others do not have any influence on the political decisions or actions of the political elites. In addition to revealing the subjective feeling of political incompetence, their answers also point to a low level of trust in politicians and politics in general. Only one fifth of respondents are of the opinion that politicians are interested in what young people have to say. Only one tenth of respondents did not agree with the statement that politicians are only interested in being elected and do not care about what the voters really want.

The lack of a feeling of political competence is also clearly illustrated by the answer to the question: "If you thought that your viewpoints or visions stood a good chance of being realised, would you run for political office?" Only 21.3% of respondents said that they would decide to run for political office, 57.4% would not, while the remaining one fifth was undecided.

Data on the level of trust in institutions point to a tendency to retreat to privacy and to expressly low trust in political institutions and figures. Factor analysis showed an explicitly uniform trust in the institutions and persons in one's private life (family, relatives, friends), and an explicitly uniform distrust of political parties, leading politicians, priests and the church. Most respondents said that they trusted schools and the head of state, and some of them expressed trust in the media (newspapers, television), the courts and the Slovenian army. As regards the

European Union and NATO, in 2000 the distrust of these institutions was greater than trust in them.

Factors underlying recent changes in youth participation patterns

Young Slovenians are of course not a monolithic group, and have very different interests and value orientations, but on the whole their interest in politics has decreased noticeably compared to the socialist period.[7] We can even talk of a generational shift from an expressly open youth responsive to social events in the mid-1980s towards a self-centred and pragmatic youth in the 1990s. The historical collapse of various forms of socialism as social utopias has shattered various civil-society projects and efforts towards basic democracy. Wallace and Kovacheva (1998) similarly noted that the collapse of communism has meant a decline in formal organisations representing "youth" as a category, and young people are no longer compelled to give up their free time for so-called voluntary activities, which formed part of the communist socialisation programme.

Otherwise, the distancing of young people from institutional politics and the low level of their involvement in formal political processes are not new phenomena.[8] Life-cycle theories of political interest maintain that the relation between age and political interest is curvilinear at the individual level. Political interest increases as the individual matures and reaches its maximum in the mid-life. As an individual grows older, he or she also retires gradually from public life (van Deth & Elff 2000: 11).

Young people as members of a specific minority social group, which does not (yet) have social power, function in stable societies and, during stable periods of history, more or less tacitly inside the established power relations. In this respect, they have been politically marginalised ever since they emerged as a separate social group – except in rare situations such as wars, revolutions and radical reforms. Speaking in terms of predominant politicality, young people could be referred to as "semi-citizens" or pre-political subjects. In reality, they are not counted as autonomous citizens who can participate in social matters on an equal footing with adults until they have approached their middle age – although they have all citizens' rights and duties, and although there are no legal barriers to their participation.[9] Their inferiority is also visible in the political parties, where the ruling principle is that of seniority, which is why young people have a difficult time entering party leadership, from which the road to a position of power is usually the most rapid (Ilišin 2002: 158). Most contemporary political parties in Slovenia maintain party youth groups, because it is considered that the young are not yet qualified for political work.

Despite their minor participation in institutional politics (political parties, government bodies), young people are at the same time considered to be an important segment of the electorate. Owing to their low interest in predominant politics, politicians try to approach young voters using various "marketing" strategies, for example by participating in events popular with young people. One particular feature of the Slovenian political scene is the Party of Youth, which was established in 2000 and won a sufficient number of votes to enter parliament. Its trump card was the approach that, although young people are not interested in politics, political engagement could improve their position, and so it made sense to endorse several friendly, likeable and rhetorically skilful individuals to represent them, or

in other words, to endorse several market pundits to engage in politics on their behalf.

The low level of political interest is a phenomenon that is characteristic not only of young people but of other sections of the population as well, in developed as well as in new European democracies. According to survey data, despite trendless fluctuations in the level of political interest, only about 15% of Europeans on average still pay attention to politics (van Deth & Elff 2000). Moreover, 80% to 90% of citizens are not sufficiently informed about local, national and international politics (ibid.). They are not only ignorant of what is going on, but they do not even know how politics can influence them or how they could influence politics. What is more, the majority of citizens feel that they do not have any political influence whatsoever. As a result, they are disappointed with political processes; for them, politics appears to be senseless and exclusivist (Wahl-Jorgensen 2002).

Some media critics suggest that the media are at least in part to blame for citizen alienation (Wahl-Jorgensen 2002). They often construct politics as a distant spectacle restricted to politicians and media, in which citizens can participate only as passive spectators. In the era of political cynicism, political scandals and sound-bite information, the major part of political knowledge is of a non-operational and voyeuristic nature and cannot be of much benefit for political consumers or potential political actors. One example is the colonisation of public life by personal matters – "public interest" has been reduced to curiosity about the private lives of public figures; the skills of public figures to present themselves in public have been reduced to the public presentation of private affairs and public admittance of private sentiments (the more intimate these confessions, the better for the politician in question). The general level of interest in institutional politics in society (and on television) rises only with the appearance of serious social problems. In that sense, young people are a reflection of the post-political majority society or, more precisely, of the social groups with less social power, so we can speak of the "post-politicality" of young people.

The contemporary post-politicality of Slovenian youth as a particular social group deserves special analytical attention because the noticeable decline in manifestations of the critical and innovative potential of youth has occurred recently (after the break-up of the socialist system). Young people are no longer a pressure group exerting pressure on adult society. Their (sporadic) protests elicit the paternalistic response of contemporary society, which ignores or neutralises them in one way or another and treats them as socially inferior, immature and incompetent. The young no longer think of their "youth" as a social frame for thinking and acting but rather act as individuals with their own educational, vocational, economic and other interests. This represents a problem for two basic reasons: on the one hand, a democratic society demands – or should at least stimulate – a certain degree of political participation by all citizens (who are of age); on the other hand, young people are the ones who simultaneously participate in the present and carry the potential for the future, when they will be the decision makers (Ilišin 2002: 197).

Another factor that prevents young people from achieving (social and political) autonomy lies in unemployment pressures and the scarce supply of jobs. The tendency to carry on schooling far into the period of adulthood has led to the increasing economic and social dependence on the assistance and support of close social networks, especially parental support and protection (Ule & Kuhar

2002a). Because of competition enforced on them in the race for jobs, their experience of school and work has become individualised and they do not see themselves as being "all in the same boat", but seem to think that every person steers his/her own boat while competing with his/her peers. Young people have a feeling that they have to take care of themselves on their own and do not rely on the traditional help furnished through collective political action. Nor do those with experience of unemployment think of uniting and struggling for better social positions although they especially lack trust in the political system. The lack of autonomous peer groups and socially active youth subcultures forces young people to rely on their own personal projects, commercialised culture and inter-generational solidarity as a source of shaping identity, self-realisation and building self-confidence. Their private lives represent for them a shelter from the more brutal world of adults.

Despite the lack of interest in conventional politics, a part of young people seems to be involved in lifestyle politics, that is, their self-actualisation in a reflectively ordered environment (Giddens 1991: 214). A "politics of the new generation" reveals the disintegration of the old forms of collective identity and rejection of those forms of politics that are based on the old social order, rather than just disinterest in politics per se (Mencin Čeplak 2002). Political engagement of young people is most often realised outside of institutionalised political activities. At least a small part of young people in Slovenia expressed interest in campaigns on specific issues, such as environmental problems, animal rights, peace movements and so on (ibid.). These are activities with wider perspectives for social and economic change.

The past decade saw the development of many social movements mainly based on similar basic values and political views. These movements most frequently converge around a post-materialist philosophy and a vision of a new society with limited capitalist expansion. Various groups endeavour to become a threat, or at least a challenge, to the established political, social or economic order of developed capitalist societies. Among these movements are those attempting to protect nature and the social environment against perceived threats, particularly that of losing one's personal security and freedom (for example, environmental, anti-nuclear and peace movements). Others resort to the politicisation of certain problems in an attempt to extend social rights to the groups that used to be suppressed by the state, such as gay and feminist movements (Furlong & Cartmel 1997). We also cannot ignore the mobilising ability of the anti-globalisation movement, but it should be kept in mind that these forms of social criticism and protest no longer take the form of generational or age-determined social movements, but of a dispersed, fragmented socio-political scene, in which young people do not necessarily play the role of active subjects who know how to formulate their demands clearly.

The demonstration of young Slovenians' eagerness to participate in the world that affects them (for example, environmental activism, consumer activism, single-issue pressure groups, community and voluntary activities) needs to be studied further. The culture of young people's participation in society is not well developed, and there are many barriers to that participation. But if young people growing up in a world of complex and incessantly changing local and global realities do not become conscious, competent, reflective and responsible citizens, they will become an easily manipulable mass of inhabitants in a political evolution that is already taking place before our eyes.

Endnotes

1. The distinctiveness of Slovenia can be seen in its relative openness to the world and greater autonomy of the individual within the system. Thus, it was neither a typical Eastern socialist story, nor a western European one. Extensive survey on youth in the Former Yugoslavia carried out in 1986 on a sample of 6 849 young people showed large inter-republic differences in values and life orientations on the territory of the Former Yugoslavia (Ule 1988).

2. A theoretically based demarcation of birth cohorts for the development of political and social engagement in Dutch society has been presented by Becker (in: van Deth & Elff, 2000: 33), which suggests a distinction between (1) the "prewar" generation (people born before 1930), (2) the "silent" generation (people born between 1941 and 1955), (3) the "protest generation" (people born between 1941 and 1955), (4) the "lost generation" (people born between 1956 and 1970), and (5) the "pragmatic" generation (people born between after 1970). The prewar, the silent and the pragmatic generation are expected to show relatively low levels of political involvement. The lost generation will show modest levels of interest. Relatively high levels of political involvement are the expected characteristics of the protest generation. In this perspective, birth cohorts keep their relative level of political interest as they go through their life cycles.

3. The age range of "youth" cannot be firmly defined or clearly delineated because of the changes in life courses. The age frames are widening in both directions – in one direction because of ever-earlier psychosocial independence, and in the other due to prolonged economic dependence.

4. The Mladina (Youth) 93 survey was carried out on a group of 2 345 secondary school pupils; the Mladina 95 survey on a group of 1 829 students.

5. The empirical conclusions and theoretical reflections arising from this study were published as a collection of essays entitled *Mladina 2000* (edited by Miheljak 2002).

6. Political interest has a prominent role in normative democratic theory: more interested citizens have more opinions on political issues, participate more actively in campaigns, and expose themselves more to political information than less interested people (van Deth & Elff 2000: 1).

7. Young people's political interests, values, attitudes and forms of behaviour are most often influenced by their level of education, socio-professional status, and age (see Miheljak 2002; Ilišin 2002).

8. Siltanen and Stanworth (1984 in Ule, Ferligoj & Rener 1990) pointed out that there are two kinds of politicality: (1) the predominant kind, which relies on the power of argument and government and on old, established institutions, and (2) one that is, political in the broader sense, that essentially includes sensibility to social and ethical issues in one's environment. The first form – conventional, traditional or institutional politicality – is, according to the authors, predominant in public life. Such a definite demarcation between the two forms of politicality is objectionable. A more appropriate view is that there is a continuum between formal political activities and more non-mainstream forms of political involvement.

9. The voting age in Slovenia is 18. In the past five years there has been a debate on the voting right threshold. The results of the Mladina 2000 survey show that, at least for the time being, this debate is rather abstract because young people do not show any interest in this right.

Between the traditional and the postmodern: political disaffection and youth participation in Galicia

Daniel Blanch

One of the main questions currently under research in the social sciences concerns the stability and success of democratic institutions as societies move towards post-material values. These new values generally involve less support for authority and for traditional institutions, and less conventional participation. What are the implications of these changes for democratic political systems, and particularly for youth participation, especially in places where political disaffection is already widespread?

For comparative purposes this study seeks to provide a snapshot of youth in a specific geographical setting. Galician youth constitute a particularly good example of the process of value transformation as a result of globalisation, as this Spanish region has undergone a rapid industrialisation and modernisation process. This makes it an ideal case study for testing the broad modernisation theses that attempt to explain the transition from traditional societies to modern ones and on to post-materialism. A brief overview of the current theoretical debate will prove to be fertile ground for studying specific elements of Galician youth activity in politics and social transformation.[1] This region recently experienced some unusual political events that have affected confidence in government and political performance evaluations.

Trust, social capital and democratic performance

Trust, as a central component of democracy, is a crucial element of political participation and a key factor in societal stability. Trust allows bonds of social and functional co-operation, establishing links that are fundamental for stability and progress, good administration, and conflict resolution. Trust may be considered a – or the – central element of social capital, which has been defined as people's involvement in associations, networks that link citizens, or shared resources. According to this way of thinking, voluntary associations are a key vehicle for reinforcing a culture of participation that promotes the health of democracy. The European Values Survey indicates that membership in voluntary associations is an important predictor of higher levels of trust. As Anheier and Kendall (2002: 344)

observe, "there is almost a linear relationship between increases in membership and the likelihood of trusting people."

In a key study on social capital and democracy, Putnam (1993) found that in Italy the regions that had the highest degree of social capital also had the highest level of governmental performance.[2] A heritage of co-operation created a culture that was supportive of democratic institutions. The civic culture of a region was a key to predicting future economic development and political performance (Putnam 1993: 179). Regions with vertical patron-client links and a weak popular culture of collaboration or co-operative association with people outside the family circle tended to have much weaker governmental performance and approval ratings.

Subsequent research suggests that social capital fluctuates over time and may be linked to democratic performance by several intervening variables. Rossteutscher (2002) found that associations reflect the current culture, so that in eras of prevailing nationalist or fascist tendencies, organisations were particularly good examples of these ideologies. As Berman (1997: 427) states, "social capital is by itself a 'politically neutral multiplier', depending on the mediating agency." Social capital provides the glue, but in order to have collective action it also requires agency (Krishna 2002: 440).

Newton (2001: 211) suggests that social trust helps foster a bottom-up process of co-operative social relations, while effective social and political organisations encourage effective and legitimate government in a top-down process. Rothstein (2000: 477) holds that a reputation for efficiency and honesty gives an institution the popular support it needs to function successfully, yet even "good" and "efficient" institutions may suffer from generalised distrust. Confidence in government therefore depends on both social trust and institutional performance, in a two-way relationship.

Institutional performance may also be a function of different types of trust and social capital.[3] Both positive and negative social capital have been identified, as well as forms of trust and association that help democracy perform and remain stable, along with others that seem to hinder civic participation. Anheier and Kendall (2002: 350) find "thick" trust "embedded in highly personal relations that usually form the densest part of an extended network of family and friendship ties." In contrast, "thin" or "social" trust is "based on everyday contacts, professional and acquaintance networks, [and] involves a much greater number of ties that form less dense relations." As societies develop they move from thick to thin trust, which allows people to function in broader or more institutional contexts. Modern democracies are built upon trust in people we do not personally know but can rely on, based on a collective memory of an institution and its performance (Zucker 1986: 60).

Social capital in a Catholic European culture: from the traditional to the postmodern?

European Catholic countries cluster together, demonstrating lower than average figures in areas related to social capital and support for government. Membership of voluntary organisations and volunteering are two measures of social capital, and on both measures the lowest scores in Europe are for Spain, followed by Portugal, Italy and France (Montero & Torcal 1999: 172). A more direct measure of social capital – interpersonal trust – is lowest in Portugal, followed by France,

Italy, Belgium and Spain; in levels of conventional and unconventional political participation, Spain ranks the lowest in all of Western Europe (Montero & Torcal 1999: 174, 183). Other countries at the low end are Belgium, Italy, Ireland and France. Spain also shows a very low and decreasing level of confidence in parliament, while political interest fell between 1981 and 1990 to the lowest level in all of Europe and North America (Halman & de Moor 1994: 47). Therefore, along with other Catholic countries in Europe, Spain can be found at the low end of political participation.[4]

In Europe, Catholic societies have traditionally been quite distinct from Protestant ones with regard to several social indicators. Strong families, close networks of relationships among friends, and comparatively less advanced economies co-exist with values typically associated with post-material societies.[5] Catholic cultures tend to be more oriented towards collectivism. Many national values are determined less by the national income level than by cultural heritage, especially religion. In contrast with Protestant countries, Catholic ones tend to show lower levels of trust between citizens; larger households; more people living in them; stronger family links; a greater differentiation between male/female roles; stronger gender expectations; lower divorce and abortion rates; more religious commitment; greater dependence on the state than on personal initiative; and a greater emphasis on equality than on freedom. Using the Spanish region of Galicia and the attitudes of Galician youth as an example of this southern European Catholic cultural distinctiveness, it will be attempted here to outline elements that hinder the growth of social capital and provide a picture of how social relations impact the political realm.

Spanish college students typically express a sense of distrust, frustration and disaffection when asked about their conventional political activity, such as voting, and their sense of feeling heard by political parties, or being able to impact governmental policies.[6] It is therefore interesting to note the fact that there has been a significant amount of youth political activity in Galicia in the last few years. Three mobilising events triggered higher than usual involvement in the political arena: a series of rallies against the new law regulating Spanish universities,[7] the catastrophe of the Prestige oil tanker off the coast of Galicia,[8] and protests against the Iraq war.[9] Each of these events led to ongoing and unusually large numbers of students participating in demonstrations, boycotts, lock-ins, graffiti and public actions against the political system. In each case Galician youth demonstrated a high level of mobilisation, at times virtually closing down the universities, turning out for rallies, and even volunteering in significant numbers for the oil clean-up efforts along the Galician coast.[10]

Is it possible that these mobilising events may have created a diffuse social capital that does not appear in conventional politics? Why was student volunteering for beach clean-up so high during the Prestige oil tanker crisis, when Galician students have such low levels of association and volunteering?

Youth and mass protests: high mobilisation but low conventional participation

The ecological and economic effects of the Prestige oil tanker disaster touched Galicians close to home, as contamination spread along the coastline, threatening to destroy the environment, tourism and fishing industry. Galicians' pride in their land and young people's concern for the environment, in conjunction with a

higher than average level of public information and debate regarding the disaster, led to one of the most socially active situations in a decade.[11]

The Nunca Mais (Never Again) platform initially channelled discontent in a non-partisan fashion, gaining rapid support throughout the region, mobilising thousands in large marches that sought a solution to oil spills.[12] Coming close on the heels of the highly politicised reform of the university system, which virtually led to a shut-down of Galician campuses for a semester, these events resulted in youth being much more active than usual. The Nunca Mais movement was generally supported by a broad spectrum of citizens spanning much of the centre-left, and although it gradually became an umbrella for anti-government slogans, its status remained that of a movement.[13]

Did this activated citizenry increase conventional political participation? In the subsequent municipal elections there were few indications that these political and social movements had actually been translated into votes, as the ruling party suffered only a moderate setback in spite of the strong protest discourse that had been evident in the region for over two years.[14] The Galician nationalist party, BNG, attempted to channel this popular discontent towards nationalism but achieved only moderate gains. These issues and positions were not successfully translated into the political arena in a fashion that would bring about changes. Mobilisation had only a moderate effect on turnout and even less on policy. Thus, the Iraq war was supported by Spain's government despite overwhelming public opposition, the university reform went ahead in the face of massive protests, and the Prestige oil-spill fiasco had no direct negative consequences for the ruling party, regionally or nationally, despite extensive mobilisation and calls for removal of those involved in poor governmental performance.

On a deeper level, one may wonder how these events will affect Galician youth and their attitudes towards voting and political participation. A majority of Galician youth indicated that governmental performance had been insufficient, or that its policies had been incorrect, and yet there were no clear modifications of the regional or national government's positions, or incorporation of the protesters' demands.[15] If youth become sporadically activated on specific issues but appear to have no impact on governmental policies or positions, this may contribute to their disaffection and distancing from politics.

Interest in political participation among Spanish youth has not only declined over time, but is also lower than that of the older cohorts.[16] Orizo (1996: 25) finds that in Spain "the great majority of youth express little interest in politics or in belonging to political organisations." In spite of recent protest activity, youth have a decreasing tendency to vote.[17] One possible explanation for a lack of participation is that disaffection stems from a national culture of distrust of government and parties that goes back several generations. Putnam found (Putnam 1993) that in regions of Italy where civic participation was low during past decades, this participation did not increase significantly when the political system decentralised. A similar process of decentralisation in Spain has given Galicia significant regional powers and competencies, yet Galicia demonstrates a political culture of distrust that continues to influence the region's youth today. Apparently, institutional changes in the political system have not resolved the problem of political disaffection which is characteristic of Spain, particularly Galicia.[18]

Spain's history during the century prior to the 1977 transition to democracy can be summarised as an era of anti-democratic lessons that have remained in the

national psyche. Collective stories of what politics means can have tremendous force, determining to a large degree the apathy or involvement of citizens. Banfield's (1958) influential analysis of an Italian village concluded that amoral familism impeded economic and political development due to a lack of trust outside family circles. Although this village became modernised (Jackman & Miller 1998: 69), collective memories take time to transform.[19] Montero and Torcal find that, "[d]espite the dramatic changes that have taken place in Spain over the last thirty years, the lack of social trust has been transmitted from one generation to another virtually intact" (Montero & Torcal 1999: 176). Their results substantiate the idea that interpersonal trust or distrust gradually accrue through cultural accumulation, and tend to be passed from one generation to the next. Political culture is not just the result of benchmark political events; it is also influenced by family structure and processes of transmission of values.

One element of disaffection is anti-party sentiments, which tend to manifest themselves most among older Spaniards, suggesting that "persisting 'cohort effects' were the long-term products of socialisation experiences, particularly those encountered during the crucial formative periods of each respondent's life" (Torcal, Gunther & Montero 2002: 276). Once acquired, these attitudes are particularly durable and at an aggregate level remain fairly stable over time. Attitudes of disaffection with politics do not vary with the fortunes of specific parties or candidates. In societies where trust is built overwhelmingly on family or long-term relationships, modern democracy will face especially significant challenges if these negative attitudes are transmitted from one generation to the next.

Along with tight social networks that transmit values inter-generationally, a characteristic element of many traditional societies is the patron/client system known as clientelism, which undermines social capital, as the networks of links to patrons allow no horizontal equality and therefore undermine democracy.[20] Research indicates that today's Galician youth express rejection of clientelistic networks, although they recognise the existence of some level of clientelism. Local youth strongly support performance-oriented evaluations of work, tolerance, democracy, gender equality, and functional social relations. They do not look back to the old ways, to a clientelistic structure in politics that worked when face-to-face relationships were the norm or to a family structure that was set up to provide everything for its members.

Youth transitions: gradual changes rather than revolutions

Galicia is currently in a process of societal transition towards the global economy. This modernisation tendency encounters a regional cultural paradigm that discourages geographical mobility, supported by social norms that emphasise localism and tradition. Strong family ties and economic constraints on youth emancipation also weaken the development of thin social capital. These factors combine to slow down the transition process, making the family's social contract of self-protection and survival weigh more heavily than youth's desire for independence and emancipation. Breaking with family is still a rather uncommon option for most Galician youth, who seem to prefer compromise over conflict.[21] Thus, the tendency towards globalisation, individualisation and specialisation of a world economy encounters strong localism, much traditionalism and low mobility in Galicia.

Most youth surveyed locally indicated that no great social revolution had taken place, but rather a gradual change more analogous to continuity.[22] This was represented using the expression that "we are now free to do what our parents formerly would have liked to do". Freedom and modernisation have brought some changes to the Galician social landscape. Having been raised in large extended families with strong ties to community, parish, and relatives, Galicians are now overwhelmingly forming small families, with alterable marital ties, more egalitarian gender roles, less community involvement, and almost no religious commitment.[23] This has weakened the localistic, clientelistic and traditional tendencies of the past. Yet Galicia's transition from a traditional to a mixed modern/post-material society has not revolutionised the family network in the region. Though modernisation has influenced youth attitudes, actual political behaviour is dependent on additional factors such as the ability to live out a new lifestyle and to develop a new political culture, which require economic emancipation from the family and social networks that support innovations. Currently neither of these are extensive, and thus Galician youth remain dependent on their families.

Although the degree of political mobilisation of Galician youth was recently intensified by three polarising events in the socio-political arena, and despite the fact that these events generated intense social activity, they had only limited influence in the realm of electoral participation. The potential increase in social capital caused by mobilisation did not have an immediate or obvious effect on democratic performance, due in part to a lack of intervening variables such as successful political agency that could transform discontent into political initiatives. Unconventional political acts such as ecological volunteering and mass demonstrations did not directly translate into votes in the following elections. The traditional left/right party structure appears to be unable to successfully channel many of the needs and issues of today's youth. Aging political parties in Spain do not attract youth in the way they did in the past, and political institutions have not been successful in creating a collective memory of efficiency or good performance.

Disaffection among Galician youth derives in part from past clientelistic practices and the historical legacy of dictatorship, which are transmitted as anti-party values from one generation to another through strong family networks. If there is a decrease in the level of transmission of disaffection between generations, tradition-sustaining factors may gradually give way to a new social structure that fosters social capital among youth. An inter-generational transmission of political values is not uncommon in Europe, especially in traditional societies.[24] In countries that have had a culture of political participation, the transmission of inter-generational values tends to favour political participation, while in countries that have undergone negative socialisation concerning politics, transmission of these values encourages disaffection. In this case, greater social and economic emancipation of youth may in fact act to break the negative cycle.

At the same time, youth face a post-material Western culture that hardly encourages conventional participation. If European citizenship were to create a sense of new political possibilities for youth, participation might increase. However, new forms of participation are often not conventional. Galicia illustrates the fact that youth are not disinterested in politics in a broad sense, and periodically become actively involved in movements, volunteering and social activity. Even though social-capital indicators such as levels of association, interpersonal trust and

political confidence have not increased in Spain, unconventional participation levels suggest that youth are not politically alienated.

The shortcomings of measuring politics along purely conventional lines are evident – failing to consider events that incorporate youth as active citizens but not as voters. Unconventional participation may need to become more fully a part of the conceptualisation of democracy, in order to allow youth a greater margin for participation and impact in ways that reflect their needs and concerns. Equally important is the need to transmit to youth the value of conventional participation, even when they sense it may have slim immediate effects. The political system can only remain healthy when citizens are active, both conventionally and unconventionally.

Endnotes

1. The author is grateful for the expert work of Elisa Rustenbach and Craig Charnley at the CIDEFA Research Centre on Youth, as well as for the suggestions of Joerg Forbrig and the participants of the seminar on youth political participation, Strasbourg, 24 to 26 November 2003. Any errors are entirely the author's.

2. By "social capital" we are referring to "norms and networks of civil society that enable citizens and their institutions to perform more productively. Without adequate supplies of social capital – that is, civic engagement, healthy community institutions, norms of mutual reciprocity, and trust – democracies and market economies may begin to falter" (Pharr & Putnam 2000: 26). Social capital fosters a sense of mutual obligation.

3. Putnam (2002: 11-12) lists several types of social capital as dichotomies: formal/informal; thick/thin, inward/outward-looking; and bridging/bonding. Not all are equally helpful for democracy. Fukuyama (1995: 27) uses the concept of spontaneous sociability: "...the capacity to form new associations and to co-operate within the terms of reference they establish...[It] refers to that wide range of intermediate communities distinct from the family or those deliberately established by governments".

4. Throughout developed countries, confidence in government has declined over the last few decades (Pharr & Putnam 2000: 147). Putnam (2000) argues that a weakening in social capital has led Americans to become significantly less interested in forming a community, which in turn has weakened civic participation and caused a decline in support for democratic institutions. In Europe, support for public institutions has broadly declined among all segments of population (Putnam 2003). Low levels of participation may well be linked to low levels of social capital, which is particularly the case among the lower classes.

5. Fukuyama (1995) characterises Italy, for example, as a low-trust society with an economy that has not been able to develop the broad trust necessary for the creation of very large non-state corporations.

6. In Galicia, 77% of youth aged 15-29 declared that politics had little or no importance in their lives (Xunta de Galicia 1993: 249).

7. On 14 November 2001, a march against the law regulating the universities in Spain (LOU) attracted 16 000 people in Santiago, and 50 000 in Madrid (*El Pais*, 15 November 2001). A large majority of these protesters were youth and college students.

8. The Nunca Mais platform brought together some 200 000 people on 1 December 2002 in Santiago, and another 130 000 people in Vigo on 12 December 2002 (*El Pais*, 2 December 2002 and 12 December 2002). These demonstrations were to a large extent composed of college students and youth.

9. On 15 February 2003, marches against the Iraq war involved the following numbers of protesters in Galician cities: some 100 000 in Vigo; 50 000 in Coruña; 30 000 in Santiago; and 30 000 in Pontevedra (*El Correo Gallego*, 16 February 2003).

10. Youth aged between 18 and 24 are the most likely to take part in illegal strikes and lock-ins (Orizo 1996: 164).

11. The overall figures for volunteering for the clean-up of the Prestige oil-spill amounted to some 325 000 people (*El Correo Gallego*, 11 July 2003).

12. The sinking of the Prestige oil tanker was considered one of the most important problems for Galicia by 78% of local youth, and a similar percentage agreed that a politician should step down as a consequence, according to the Galician Sociopolitical Barometer of March 2003 by USC (Cabrera & Garcia 2003: 154, 166). In this survey, the average score given to the regional government's performance was 2.5, while Nunca Mais received 7 on a 10-point scale, with higher scores indicating better performance.

13. On 9 November 2003, a conference on volunteering in the Galician capital showed the continuing presence of Nunca Mais, as volunteers used this slogan against the government representatives who were speaking (see *El Correo Gallego*, 11 August 2003).

14. On 25 May 2003, municipal elections were held throughout Spain. There was some expectation of a backlash against the ruling party in Galicia (PP de Galicia) due to the significant protests against this party's support for the Iraq war, their handling of the oil tanker crisis, and the new law on universities. Although the PP party did lose some support in Galicia (4%), it remained the strongest party by far (41.5%), showing that that there had been a very weak reaction against it resulting from the recent crises (*La Voz de Galicia*, 26 May 2003). The other two main parties increased in votes by only 1% and 2% respectively (BNG received 19.5% and PSOE 27%), suggesting a certain popular disenchantment with politics. At 66%, participation in Galicia was hardly any higher than in previous municipal elections.

15. The governing party in Galicia did admit that the youth vote had gone against them, but they also highlighted the low participation of youth in the elections, and so the PP concluded that the punishment vote against it had failed entirely. Still, the PP said it would attempt to get closer to the politically disaffected youth (*El Correo Gallego*, 27 May 2003).

16. In 1994, 20% of Spanish youth aged between 15 and 24 expressed some or much interest in politics, as compared to 27% of those aged between 25 and 64. These figures are much lower than in 1981, when 33% of youth had some or much interest in politics (Orizo 1996: 262).

17. Font and Rico (2003: 18) report decreasing youth turnout between 1986 and 2000. The magnitude of the decrease is considerable – almost 7%. In contrast, among the age cohorts over 55 years old there was actually an increase in voters.

18. Galicia has the lowest overall cumulative participation rate of the Spanish regions (Font & Rico 2003: Table 1).

19. In Italy, interpersonal trust has been increasing over the years, but southern Italy shows much lower scores than the north.

20. See Della Porta in Putnam 2000: 202ff.; Maíz 1996. Clientelism keeps actors on uneven ground, as the patron establishes vertical links with a series of clients that have no relationship among themselves horizontally, and very little recourse to redress problems. They must always negotiate horizontally with the patron.

21. Only 25% of Spanish youth state that they think quite or very differently from their parents, and only 2% say their relationship with their parents is not going well (Injuve 2002).

22. Discourse gathered from focus groups composed of students at the University of Santiago (CIDEFA Research Project on Youth Values 1996-2003).

23. Spain shows an extremely high level of commitment to equality between men and women (84% of men favour reducing the differences between sexes, as compared to 71% in Italy and 58% in France); see Alberdi 1999: 270.

24. See, in this volume, the contributions by Horowitz, Pfaff, and Kovacheva, for mention of parental impact on youth political values and participation in several European countries.

Adolescent ways of political learning: results from eastern Germany

Nicolle Pfaff

The cross-national Civic Education Study (2000), carried out by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), pointed out that young people in Western democracies are less political than their counterparts in most of the post-communist or Third World countries. German adolescents in particular show very limited interest in current politics and political action. Unlike the negative results of the international study carried out by the Organisation for Economie Co-operation and Developpement (OECD) and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), this assessment provoked discussions neither in the German public nor in the sphere of politics. Nevertheless, the political attitudes of teenagers were one of the favourite topics of German youth research during the 1990s. This is mainly due to three alarming findings. Firstly, during the 1990s, German youth research found a decreasing interest in questions of policy making (Oswald 1999). Secondly, relating to images of democracy and trust in democratic institutions, a massive lack of understanding of democratic principles has been noted amongst young people in eastern and western Germany (Pickel 2002; Reinhardt & Tillmann 2002). Lastly, after 1968, following the peace and environmental movements in the 1970s, and into the 1980s and 1990s, a new and violent youth culture linked to the extreme political right developed especially (but not only) in eastern Germany (Annual Report of the Office for the Protection of the German Constitution 1999).

Politics and civil society only took measures to address the third problem and, it appears, only dealt with symptoms and not causes. Is it not necessary to first of all consider what chances young people have for political learning and for participating in decision making?

This paper addresses the conditions of political learning and political participation of young people. Based on a youth survey in eastern Germany in 2000,[1] three questions about adolescents' political orientations and their development will be discussed.[2]

By way of introduction, an overview of the political opinions of young east-Germans will be given, and these will be positioned within a broader context by showing what is special about them, compared to teenagers in western Germany and in other European countries. For this comparison, the findings of the IEA Civic Education Study will be utilised. This also makes it possible to appreciate the general validity of the results presented later.

Following on from that, the paper focuses on learning facilities related to political issues. What are the most important places of civic education? And who are they open to? The main hypothesis is that only a minority of 14- to 18-year-old students benefits from good learning conditions in different fields.

Against the background of these results, the paper will conclude by delineating some ways of political learning by introducing different environments of civic education. The presented typology looks at teenagers with similar conditions of political learning in the areas of life explored. This analysis applies to inequalities and disparities in the processes of political learning.

Youth and politics in eastern Germany and elsewhere

What is special about the relation of east-German teenagers to politics? Ten years after reunification, is their interest in politics, their expected participation in political activities and their trust in political institutions similar to those of their peers in western Germany, or rather more like those in other post-socialist countries? Compared to other post-socialist countries, the developpement of the former East Germany was markedly distinct after 1990. On the one hand, soon after the reunification of the country, the former East Germany received massive support and adopted most of the established structures of the West. Therefore, economic and social hardship has been much more moderate than in other east European countries. On the other hand, many east-Germans felt lost in this process of rapid change and had the impression that they had no influence on the ongoing political, economical and social developments. This led to a rising political disaffection in eastern Germany, not only but especially among young people (Pickel 2002: 105).

Interest in politics

The youth survey underlying this paper was conducted amongst nearly 1 500 east-German students. Of these, only every ninth girl or boy agreed with the statement, "I am interested in politics," that is, 11% of the participants, or a very moderate number in comparison with other countries (Reinhardt & Tillmann 2002). While, in the results of the IEA Civic Education Study, German students (East and West taken together) show an average interest in politics, east-German students' interest was below average (Oesterreich 2002: 184). In a way, this is a typical result for students in most post-socialist countries where interest in politics decreased dramatically after relatively high rates of political interest at the beginning of the 1990s (Oswald 1999; Torney-Purta et al. 2001).

Expected participation in political activities

The expected participation in political activities, such as running for political functions and participating in legal and illegal forms of political protests, amongst students in eastern Germany is nearly equal to figures for western Germany. Only the readiness to vote is significantly lower (Oesterreich 2002: 80). In an international comparison, German students' expected participation in political activities is one of the lowest amongst the countries covered by the IEA Civic Education Study (Torney-Purta et al. 2001: 122). Yet the structure of expected participation is similar everywhere: most students would vote in national elections or collect signatures for an open letter. However, the more time-consuming and non-conventional the types of participation are, the fewer students are interested in participating in them. Here, east-German students differ from those in other post-socialist coun-

tries that show at least average expected participation. Instead, they behave more like students in rich industrialised countries, where the expected participation in political activities is generally below average (Oesterreich 2002: 65).

Trust in government institutions

The general structure of students' trust in political institutions is also similar in nearly all countries. By far the lowest trust amongst teenagers was found for political parties; on average, less than one-third say that they trust parties "most of the time" or "always" (IEA Civic Education Study). One-third of the respondents across countries expressed trust in the national legislature but three-quarters said they would trust police, courts and the army (Torney-Purta et al. 2001: 93). German students show average trust but east-German students' confidence in all political institutions is below average (Oesterreich 2002: 184). Only one-fifth of the young people asked expressed trust in political parties (Reinhardt & Tillmann 2002: 11). Two thirds of east-German teenagers stated that they did not believe in German legislative institutions such as the *Bundestag*. Yet up to two-thirds of them believe in the police, courts and the army, and every second student also expressed trust in social movements such as Greenpeace.

Negative attitudes toward immigrants

The IEA Civic Education study did not differentiate students' attitudes toward immigrants. However, the results make a compelling case that this issue needs to be put on the agenda of German society. One question the study included was the affirmation of the rights of immigrants; for instance, the right to maintain their native tongue, to receive the same education, to have the right to vote, or to keep their customs. Although the majority of German students support equal rights of immigrants, the acceptance of immigrants by German youth is much lower than in most countries. In a detailed analysis of the German answers to the IEA study, nearly every second east-German 14-year-old does not accept the equal rights of immigrants (Oesterreich 2002: 157). In regular studies on attitudes towards immigrants amongst 14- to 15-year-old students in Saxony-Anhalt, the spreading of xenophobic ideas was increasing amongst teenagers during the 1990s. In the year 2000, every third student showed some xenophobic attitudes, but barely 10% of the students called themselves right-wing, and the same number would choose a right-wing party at national elections (Krüger & Pfaff 2004: 80). A total of 5% of the respondents called themselves "skinheads", and a further 9% said that they sympathised with them. This is a problem not only in German society. Right-wing extremist groups of mainly young men and right-wing youth cultures have been identified in nearly all European countries. Yet in eastern Germany, this youth cultural style of the 1990s has become very popular. To a certain extent, the high levels of xenophobia amongst young people can potentially be attributed to that. A new student survey in 2003 measured decreasing levels of xenophobia, right-wing extremism, right-wing party affiliation and sympathy for right-wing youth cultures – for the first time since the beginning of the 1990s (Krüger et al. 2003: 802).

Reasons for the observed political disaffection amongst young people in Germany lie, on the one hand, with youth itself, especially in the fun and action-oriented, highly commercialised youth culture (Roth & Rucht 2000: 30). On the other hand, general social developments such as individualisation, privatisation or segregation are seen as relevant (Beck 1993). The view is widespread today

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that youth levels of social criticism and political action are low in Germany and elsewhere (Wulff 1995). The unfavourable economic situation of the eastern part of the country, especially that relating to general and youth unemployment and a shrinking population, has often been cited as a reason for the much higher levels of disaffection and xenophobia in east-German teenagers. Another reason could lie in the low numbers of immigrants living in eastern Germany, and thus the lack of opportunities for encountering immigrants. No less important is probably the widespread feeling amongst east-Germans of being under-privileged themselves.

Indeed, less attention is paid to the conditions of political learning and political action of young people. Only a few studies have addressed the impact of adolescents' lives and environments. The analysis of political education in German schools, which was carried out in the context of the IEA Civic Education Study, disclosed a considerable lack of interest of schools in the topic and a lack of practical participation opportunities for young people in schools and beyond (Oesterreich 2002: 225). However, most youth studies in Germany focus on the attitudes of young people and leave out questions relating to the processes of political learning altogether.

Where do young people learn about politics?

Which areas of life stimulate the development of interest in politics and readiness for political activity? All-important areas such as family, school, spare-time institutions, peers and media have been seen as determining political socialisation. It appears that, somehow, all aspects of life influence the development of political orientations. Yet a comprehensive model including different processes of political learning is still missing. On the one hand, this is due to inconsistent theoretical approaches in the research on political socialisation. On the other hand, the very subject matter seems to be too complex for straightforward modelling (Claußen 1993: 532).

The present survey of 14- to 18-year-old school students in eastern Germany included questions about political education in schools; participation in social movements; youth cultural styles and scenes; clubs and associations; and communication on politics within family and peers. Empirical findings from that study provide some insights about learning conditions in relation to political issues and political commitment for a number of different areas of life.

Family

Emotional relationships and the distribution of power in the family has an impact on the expected political participation of adolescents; several different studies arrived at this result (Kötters-König 2002b; see also Horowitz in this volume). A youth survey in eastern Germany (Kötters-König 2002b) discovered that the experience of regular communication about politics in a family has a direct impact on the political involvement of teenagers. The most important indicator for this is parental interest in politics. One-third of the respondents in Saxony-Anhalt stated that both parents were interested in politics (Kötters-König 2002b: 193). Girls and children with parents with basic qualifications more rarely than others experience family conversations about political issues. Yet in the end, neither social nor gender inequalities are the most alarming results of this study, but the over-

whelming number of families where there is no talk about politics at all. A total of 60% of the students surveyed stated that political issues play no role in communication at home.

School

Civic education in schools is multifaceted. In addition to the survey, the present study included two case studies at schools, which involved group discussions with teachers and students. Our first question to the groups was always: "where in school life do you experience processes of civic education?" The answer was nearly the same in all groups: "in lessons with politics-related subjects, such as politics, social studies or history" (Schmidt 2002b). This was surprising, since the results of our survey draw a very negative picture of social-science lessons that include political subjects (Kötters-König 2002a). Students described teaching methods as monotonous, overly theorising and irrelevant to their lives. During the group discussions young people expressed different expectations. They expressed a wish for lessons in politics to explain political events and decisions (Schmidt 2002b). Teachers also pointed out that rules, curricula and directions tie their hands, and that they themselves have difficulties understanding current and complex political issues. One result of the secondary analysis of the German sample of the IEA Civic Education Study has been that students and teachers in western Germany discuss political issues more frequently than in east-German schools (Oesterreich 2002: 97). The underlying reason may be that most east-German teachers have been socialised in a completely different political system (Tønnessen 2000).

We expected pupil participation to be another important basis of civic education in schools. In Germany, this has been discussed widely and embedded in the school laws of all 16 *Länder* and at all grades. In this study, and in both the survey and the case studies it included, it became clear that the impact of students' participation in schools is strong. Recognition of students' representatives in school life and their influence on decision making has an effect on students' committees and school boards. This was also evident in the results of quantitative studies (Schmidt 2002a). Especially in school life, students seem to have much influence on decision making, while decisions on lessons are mainly the responsibility of teachers.

Media

When asked where they acquired their knowledge about politics, students mainly pointed to "media"; with news and newspapers being the most common sources of political information. However, compared to other spare-time activities, occupation with and information about politics is very rare. Even though all students agreed that they spent most of their spare time with different media (television, radio, Internet, magazines), less than one-third of the recipients said they would watch or listen to programmes about politics more than once a month. Only 13% do so at least once a week and 70% of the students do so "very infrequently or never." The strongest predictor for regular consumption of politics-related television or radio programmes is individual interest in politics.

Table 1: Research model and some selected findings

Family	School
• the experience of communication about politics in the family leads to political involvement of teenagers • two-thirds of the students call their parents politically interested • almost 60% of the students do not talk about politics at home	• for students and teachers, civic education mainly happens in politics-related lessons • negative evaluation of civic education lessons • high participation in areas of school life, less in relation to lessons • low trust in student committees

Students' political attitudes

• only every 9th student is interested in politics

• low trust in government-related institutions

• low conflict orientation related to political topics

• lack of understanding of principles of democracy

Peers and youth culture	Clubs/Associations
• there is less interest in, and talking about, politics in the peer group than in the family • the frequency of talks about politics depends on the importance of the peer group for the person, youth cultural style, age and own political interrest	• more than half 14 to 18-year olds belong to at least one club or association; 40% of them take classes • sports clubs and hobby associations dominate; social and political associations are very unpopular

Clubs and associations

Youth organisations or youth clubs can also support participation in activities of young people (see Berrefjord in this volume). More than half of the respondents of the survey belong to at least one club or association, and one third of them perform specific functions or offices. Membership in sports clubs and hobby associations are the most common form of participation among adolescents. Only a few students join social or political institutions and associations.

Peers and youth cultural styles

Every sixth student aged between 14 and 18 agreed that their friends had most impact on their political knowledge. Somewhat less common were friends who are interested in politics, while regular discussions about politics with friends were more common (every eighth respondent). That is only half as many as have regular discussions within the family. Altogether, politics does not seem to be a relevant topic among teenagers. Yet for a small group of students, the peer group is the most important social group for discussing political issues and acting politically. This is particularly valid for members of some youth cultural styles with political backgrounds. Such groups are a minority in the German landscape of youth cultures, as most popular are cultural styles related to music such as

techno and hip-hop. Social movements such as peace or environmental groups, lost in popularity among teenagers during the 1990s. In 2000, there were three significant youth milieux in eastern Germany (Krüger & Pfaff 2004). First of all, there were hip-hop fans, who do not see themselves as politically interested but who, on average, have much experience with legal and illegal forms of political participation. Secondly, there is still a large group of members of, and sympathisers with, social movements, who are not interested in politics in general but who have above-average experience with different forms of participation. The last and smallest group are skinheads and other right-wing youth styles, which have a significantly higher interest in politics and more experience in political participation outside school than other students. Most of them would vote for right-wing parties (Reinhardt & Tillmann 2002).

To sum up, this brief overview allows us to conclude that, in different areas of day-to-day life, interest in politics can be found only among a minority of school students.

Five types of learning about politics

Are opportunities for political learning distributed equally? As mentioned above, one could assume that there is close correlation among conditions for political learning. This last part of the chapter puts forward the hypothesis that opportunities for political learning are distributed unevenly and that only a minority of 14- to 18-year-old school students benefits from good learning conditions in many areas, whereas many others grow up with no opportunities for learning about politics.

Different ways of learning about politics exist that lead some students to become interested in, and participate in politics, while failing to do so with others. The study presented here identified five types of learning.[3] These five types have contrasting effects on the interest in politics and the participation in political action. The types are: 1) politicising areas of life; 2) politically unaffected areas of life; 3) student partcipation at school; 4) membership in clubs and associations; 5) right-wing youth cultures. This typology methodically assigns students with similar learning conditions and thus draws distinctions between students with different frameworks for political learning.

Table 2: Five types of political learning

Type	Percentage (n)	Indicators: means (standard deviance)					
		Communication about politics in the family[1] (min.=1, max=4)	Communication about politics in the peer group[2] (min.=1, max=4)	Meaning and effciency of the school council[4] (min.=1, max=4)	Personal participation in the students' committee[5] (min.=0, max=1)	Number of memberships in clubs and associations[6] (min.=0, max=15)	Belonging to right-wing youth culture[3] (min.=0, max=1)
1st type: politicising areas of life	7.8% (88)	2.92 (0.48)	2.71 (0.42)	2.86 (0.39)	0.40 (0.42)	2.74 (2.67)	0.0 (0.0)
2nd type: Unaffected areas of life	31.3% (388)	1.93 (0.61)	1.57 (0.52)	1.83 (0.31)	0.26 (0.36)	0.87 (9.59)	0.0 (0.0)
3rd type: Student participation at school	7.1% (88)	2.07 (0.67)	1.87 (0.68)	3.13 (0.29)	0.74 (0.25)	1.23 (1.38)	0.0 (0.0)
4th type: Members of clubs and associations	7.9% (95)	2.15 (0.78)	1.87 (0.73)	2.29 (0.54)	0.25 (0.36)	3.62 (0.49)	0.0 (0.0)
5th type: Members of right-wing youth styles	6.5% (80)	2.12 (0.73)	2.13 (0.88)	2.17 (0.54)	0.16 (0.31)	1.54 (1.99)	1.0 (0.0)
Others	39.6% (490)	2.20 (0.73)	2.00 (0.75)	2.53 (0.46)	0.20 (0.34)	0.62 (0.74)	0.0 (0.0)
All students	100% (1238)	2.15 (0.72)	1.91 (0.73)	2.34 (0.58)	0.28 (0.78)	1.31 (1.90)	0.06 (0.25)

1. Communication about politics in the family: sum index, question 63 *
2. Communication about politics in the peer group: sum index, question 64 *
3. Belonging to right-wing youth cultures: index, question 66b,h,l *
4. Evaluation of student committees at school: sum index, question 37a, 38b *
5. Personal experiences with student participation: sum index, question 39b, j *
6. Number of memberships in spare-time institutions: sum index, question 68 *
* Student survey "Youth and democracy in Saxony-Anhalt" in Summer 2000, Questionnaire (German): http://www.zsl.uni-halle.de/sachsen-anhalt-studie/material/Fragebogen.pdf

Politicising areas of life

The first group of young people extracted have the best conditions for political learning nearly everywhere. The name given to this group could be "politicising areas of life" (Table 2). These students experience by far the most communication within their family and peer group, participate successfully in their schools and have personal experience on student committees. Furthermore, they belong, on average, to nearly three clubs or associations. As a result, it is not surprising that these teenagers are twice as interested in politics as others, and have twice as much experience of participation in political action (Table 3). There are no gender differences but there are considerable educational differences in the chances of belonging to this group. These young people are fully embedded in different social contexts, all of which offer possibilities for learning about politics.

Politically unaffected areas of life

Unlike the first group (to which only 8% of the respondents belong), nearly one-third of the students in Saxony-Anhalt live a politically unaffected life. These young people do not experience politics as an important topic or a way of having influence. They show crest factors in communication about politics in their families and with their friends as well as of the number of memberships of clubs and associations (Table 2). They view student committees at their schools to be ineffective and inefficient, and they have very little personal experience with those bodies. Who are these teenagers? The alarming result of this analysis is that there are only few demographic characteristics. More girls than boys belong to this group; they are younger, and most of them attain lower levels of education. However, compared to the first group, these effects are not as strong. These students from all social groups have only marginal prospects for developing an interest in politics and for gaining experience of political participation outside of school. In both sectors, they figure lowest (Table 3).

Student participation at school

Another numerically small group of young people (7%) experience political structures and issues mainly in the form of pupil participation at school. More specifically, these students experience efficient student committees at their schools and have been involved in school improvement more than twice as often as other students. Their access to politics is exclusively focused on pupil participation. Experiences in other areas such as family, peers, clubs and associations are below average (Table 2). This means that learning about politics is dependent on their schools, and the outcome of this is astonishingly positive: with an average interest in politics, these students display the second-highest political involvement outside of school. Characteristics of this group are high performance and interest in school. Furthermore, two-thirds of these students are girls, and nearly as many attain higher education. What was surprising in the context of this study was the fact that civic education does not distinguish between these groups. The size of the group of young people whose access to politics is via student participation differs very much between individual schools. For instance, in our sampling of 16 schools, between 2% and 13% of the students of one school belong to this group. Apparently, some schools provide better possibilities for students' political stimulation through successful pupil participation.

Table 3: Political attitudes in the different groups

Types	percentage (n)	Much experiencee with political participation outside of school	Interest in Politics
All students	100% (1274)	25%	11%
1st type: politicising areas of life	7,8% (88)	42%	22%
5th type: Members of right-ring youth styles	6,5% (80)	34%	19%
3rd type: Student participation at school	7,1% (88)	35%	10%
4th type: Members of club and associations	7,9% (95)	31%	8%
2nd type: Unaffected areas of life	31,3% (388)	18%	7%

Membership in clubs and associations

Not only schools but also clubs and associations can provide opportunities for political participation and learning. Around 8% of all respondents belong to more than three spare-time institutions, such as sports clubs, hobby groups or social associations. Even if experience of political communication in the peer group, and perception of and experience in pupil participation, are below average, the students of this group have significantly more experience with participation in political activities outside of school (Table 3). Presumably, clubs and associations, even if not directly related to politics, allow students to learn how to deal with group and individual interests. Yet the political interest of students in this group is below average. Apparently, the individual experience of participating in decision making in a specific local and social setting, such as school or spare-time institutions, does train students to represent their interests and concerns in public, yet this experience does not seem to have a significant impact on these students' general interest in politics. The learning effect is limited to how to act politically, but the contact with politics does not go beyond one's specific local surroundings.

Right-wing youth cultures

The situation is different for members of right-wing youth cultures. At various stages of the analysis, this group was distinct in its high levels of interest in politics, its experience with political action, and in the strength of its right-wing extremist ideology. In two of the explored fields of political learning – family and school – this group shows learning conditions below average. One exception is the high degree of experiencing political communication among peers. Different ethnographic studies about skinhead groups in Germany found that the peer group for these young people is the main social context. A total of 6.5% of our respondents belong to such groups, or only a few percentage points less than the size of the first group. Who are the young people in this group? Two-thirds are boys, mostly of younger age and with lower education. Most of them live in the countryside – in eastern Germany, less than 2% of the population are immigrants, which are largely concentrated in some urban areas. Being a member of the right-wing youth cultural scene is very much determined by social demographic factors. As mentioned above, right-wing youth groups became a common youth cultural style in eastern Germany during the 1990s. Much is being done to deal with this problem in German society. Violent actions of right-wing youth groups against

immigrants have led to the development of strong civic structures aiming to fight racism. However, this group of students demonstrates that there can be ways of political learning that are everything but democratic in nature but nevertheless highly effective, at least among some segments of young people.

The typology presented here, distinguishing channels of political learning between regular communication about politics in family and peer group; reception of and experience with pupil participation; right-wing youth cultures; and clubs and associations captures about two-thirds of the students covered by this study. More than one-third of young people escape this analysis. Accordingly, there must be alternative channels of learning about politics. However, even if incomplete, this perspective makes it possible to identify some important deficits in political education in Germany, and possibly beyond.

Conclusion

Chances of political learning are distributed very unevenly. A majority of young people in eastern Germany today have insufficient conditions for political learning. Civic education reaches only a small and privileged minority of students; a large group of 14- to 18-year-olds have access neither to communication about political issues nor to personal participation in decision making. While the quantitative distribution of the described five different ways of learning about politics might be specific for Saxony-Anhalt and eastern Germany, the quality of this typology is not likely to be confined to this region but can very probably apply to processes of adolescent political learning in the remainder of Germany and in other European countries. In all contemporary democracies, the group of young people enjoying good conditions for political learning is likely to be comparably small, with larger numbers of students experiencing learning conditions not conducive to greater political participation in democracy. Even if schools, clubs and associations show cultural and national characteristics, these institutions represent much of the public sphere in the life of young people. As was demonstrated here, there are effects of adolescent political learning wherever young people are allowed to participate. No less importantly, youth cultures also provide a way into politics. Left to themselves, students can well develop peer-group attitudes towards politics, and as evident in eastern Germany, they may select topics and ideologies that have been sidelined by politics and the public at large.

Who is responsible for the development of the political interest and participation of young people? This paper certainly demonstrates that one single aspect of life cannot guarantee successful political learning, and other chapters in this volume strengthen this observation (see Nur, Horowitz and Berrefjord in this volume). For this reason, a more encompassing framework is necessary, often referred to under the umbrella of "civil society", with politically-aware and active families, media and public institutions that can make politics more relevant for young people, emphasising the basic principles of democracy.

Endnotes

1. The multi-methodical study "Youth and Democracy in Saxony-Anhalt" was carried out at the Centre of School Research and Teacher Education at Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg under the head of Prof. Dr. Sybille Reinhardt and Prof.

Dr. Heinz-Hermann Krüger. More about the study can be found on the German website: http://www.zsl.uni-halle.de/sachsen-anhalt-studie.

2. Parts of this analysis have already been published in the German journal *Gesellschaft Wirtschaft Politik* (Pfaff, 2003).

3. This identification was possible through investigation techniques based on chi-square statistics.

The family and the media in the political socialisation of Polish youth

Edward M. Horowitz

In recent years there has been a resurgence of research in political socialisation focusing on youth both in the United States (Horowitz et al. 2003; McLeod, Eveland & Horowitz 1995) and in the new post-communist, democratic nations in central and eastern Europe, Russia, and the other parts of the former Soviet Union (Farnen et al. 1996; Flanagan & Sherrod 1998; Horowitz 1998; Horowitz 2001). Since the fall of communism, researchers have seen that a natural laboratory has been created in central and eastern Europe, in which political socialisation can be studied.

Political socialisation is the process by which a person acquires the necessary skills to function in the political world. In a normative model, we should each be participating fully in the democratic process on a continual basis. While political socialisation is an ongoing and changing process that occurs over a lifetime (Alwin, Cohen & Newcomb 1991), researchers have primarily focused on how children, teenagers and young adults learn about politics. Of course, how young people learn about politics can take many forms: for example, from parents, such as when a mother takes her children with her to vote; or from the media, for example while watching commercials for presidential candidates on television. Ultimately, political socialisation is seen as a way to inculcate politics in young people. Therefore, if young people can learn about and participate in democratic processes and civic life as children and adolescents, then hopefully they will continue this civic participation throughout their lifetime.

Attention to political socialisation in the post-communist nations of central and eastern Europe can be seen as stemming from general concerns that young people in these post-communist nations may grow up to be unsupportive of democratic institutions or to be citizens who do not participate in politics. One area of concern is a "generation gap" – not so much between young and old, but between those socialised under communism and those socialised under post-communist democracy. The older generation, having grown up under very different socio-political conditions, is often not knowledgeable about democratic processes and institutions, and may not have a strong commitment to democratic values (Chaffee 1997). The traditional agents of political socialisation – family, schools and mass media – may therefore not have the knowledge, resources, or means to instil young people with democratic values. This may make it difficult

for there to be an automatic transmission of democratic values from one generation to the next (Niemi & Hepburn 1995).

Communication plays an essential role in the process of political socialisation. Discussion of politics via interpersonal communication – particularly within the family, but also among friends and at school – is an important way of teaching youth about the political world and their role in it. By following mass media, youth can also stay informed of current events and acquire political knowledge. The role of communication – particularly family communication and mass media – remains an important and underdeveloped area of research in understanding the youth of central and eastern Europe.

Since the post-communist nations of central and eastern Europe are unique, and have each chosen somewhat different paths toward democracy, it would be a mistake to characterise the socialisation experience of all central and east European adolescents as representative of a homogeneous unit of young people across nations. Nevertheless, I will aim to examine political socialisation among central and east European youth using Poland as a case study. As the first nation in central and eastern Europe to throw off its communist rule in 1989, Poland presents an interesting laboratory for observing and measuring the effects of family communication and mass media on youth political socialisation.

Political socialisation within a Polish framework

Over the past fifty years, political socialisation researchers have revised their original understanding of the roles played by the three major agents of socialisation – parents, school, and media. Youth are no longer viewed as simply passive, blank slates ready to have their political values and attitudes imprinted upon them by the various socialisation agents (Niemi 1999). Political socialisation is now conceptualised as a much more active and complex process, as adolescents interact directly and indirectly with parents, teachers, the media, and peers (McLeod 2000). While these changes and re-conceptualisations make a direct application of past findings of political socialisation to post-communist and future Polish youth somewhat problematic, there may be lessons that can be learned and applied to Poland's post-communist democracy.

First, much political socialisation research indicates that children and adolescents do have some basic understanding of the political system around them (Horowitz et al. 2003; McLeod, Eveland & Horowitz 1995). As Poland continues developing as a post-communist democracy, the political landscape is very different for these adolescents than it was for their parents. A generation of young people is growing up without ever knowing communism in their lives. Yet they are also growing up without a long tradition of a stable democracy behind them. Many of their impressions of what democracy is (as well as their parents' impressions) are created on a daily basis through images and information presented in the media. Without a democratic political tradition to rest upon, young people may not feel secure that socio-political problems can be effectively resolved by Polish political institutions and actors. This may cause cynicism toward the political system.

Family as an agent of socialisation

Parents and the family were originally seen to be the primary agent of political socialisation (Greenstein 1965). Early research emphasised a transmission model of socialisation that suggested that children would model the behaviour and atti-

tudes of their parents. Later research found that these initial assertions of direct transmission of political attitudes and beliefs from parent to child needed to be substantially modified (Connell 1972; Hess & Torney 1967; Jennings & Niemi 1981). Niemi and Jennings (1991) found in a longitudinal study that, while parental influence is high in adolescence, substantial erosion occurs over time as parents and children show greater disagreement over specific policies.

Communication patterns within families

As researchers have found that a one-dimensional model does not adequately describe families' communication behaviours, they have begun to look more closely at family communication patterns. A pluralistic home environment, in which parents encourage discussion and value independent thinking about po-litical issues, has been found to be more conducive to political socialisation, as well as having an important influence on political attitudes, efficacy, and knowl-edge (Chaffee, McLeod & Wackman 1973; McLeod & Chaffee 1972). Participation within the family has been shown to be more prevalent in middle-class families and less prevalent in working-class families (Dekker 1996).

Role of the family in Polish socialisation

Economic and socio-cultural factors in Poland may have a considerable influence on the role of parents and the family in political socialisation. Along with certain economic successes, there have also been severe economic problems for major segments of the Polish population. These problems include unemployment, high inflation and lack of economic upturn in the most depressed regions. These con-ditions may affect how parents relate political attitudes to their children. Politics and economics may be seen as interconnected: there may be a lack of parental political efficacy; there may be non-pluralistic home environments where parents do not want to discuss politics at all. In these situations, young people's more direct experiences with politics may occur only via the media or at school. Koklyagina (1995) found a terrible generation gap occurring in Poland and other central and eastern European countries. This has arisen as youth struggle with conditions that their parents never had to face – lack of dependent security, unim-portance of state loyalty, and uncertainty of one's own future regarding everything from housing to food to a job.

Media as an agent of socialisation

Early research in political socialisation focused on the family's primary role and treated the mass media as a peripheral variable, if at all. Chaffee, Ward and Tipton (1970) have suggested that this lack of interest in conceptualising the media as an agent of political socialisation was most likely due to the continued influence of the limited-effects model of mass communication on adult political behaviour (Klapper 1960; Lazarsfeld et al. 1944). However, researchers today understand mass-media variables such as television-news watching and newspaper reading as "important outcomes as well as determinants of political education" (Chaffee 1997: 10). Young people who watch television-news or read the newspaper acquire political knowledge, form political attitudes and orient themselves to the political world around them. Television in particular is a "bridge to politics" for them, bringing to life political concepts learned in school (Chaffee & Yang 1990).

Overall, Atkin (1981) and others conclude that mass media do have an important impact on the political cognitive processes of children. Chaffee et al. (1977) argue

that the media constitute the principal source of political information for young people. Studies have also found that children who pay close attention to news via the media are more likely to discuss public affairs at home (Roberts, Pingree & Hawkins 1975).

Media in Poland

Since the end of communism, there have been great changes in the media environment in Poland (Gross 1996; Gulyas 2003; Paletz et al. 1995; Splichal 1994). Youth now have greater choices than before of what media to read and watch. Since the end of the censorship laws in early 1990, there has been an explosion of newspapers, magazines and other periodicals that cover the wide range of the political spectrum. Currently, there are approximately 5 500 newspapers and magazines published in Poland (Karatnycky, Motyl & Piano 2000).

Since the end of communism, 24 new commercial television stations have started broadcasting in Poland, including nineteen satellite channels, enabling Poland to become Europe's fifth-largest television market. As the leading post-communist television market, Poland has five national free-to-air television channels and over forty cable channels of Polish-language or dubbed channels, which favourably compares with more mature television markets in the West (Richardson 1997). Poles also watch a tremendous amount of television; the average Pole spends sixty-seven more hours a year watching television than the average European viewer (Richardson 1998).

Research question and methods

Due to the unique political, economic and societal conditions in post-communist Poland, it seems prudent to be cautious in forming specific hypotheses grounded in United States' and other Western-based research on political socialisation. The research question therefore becomes: "what is the process by which family and communication influence the political socialisation of Polish youth?" Specifically, political socialisation should be examined as a multidimensional concept. In addition, while certain political behaviours – such as voting – are individualistic acts, fully-realised citizenship must take place within a greater civil society. Therefore, communication – media, family and interpersonal – is a necessary condition for citizenship development.

Sample

Data for the present study are based on surveys conducted in Poland between 15 October and 15 November 2001. Surveys were conducted in Warsaw in Polish in nine different high schools. The final sample consists of 630 students. Although this is not a random sample, this does not limit our ability to determine the relationships between the variables of interest with confidence. Generalisation of descriptive statistics to the general population, however, should be done with some caution.

Measurement of independent and dependent variables

This study used several groups of measures: demographic information of the student (mean age = 17; 62% female); demographic information of the student's parents' education and age (father's mean age = 45.9 years, mother's mean age = 44.1 years); family communication patterns; mass-media use; interpersonal

discussion of government and politics; political knowledge, attitudes, and participation.

Measurement of mass-media use

Newspaper hard-news use is an eight-item index measuring attention and exposure to: international news; national government and politics; local political news; editorials and opinions. Newspaper soft-news use is a six-item index measuring exposure and attention to: news about the arts and entertainment; celebrity news; human-interest stories; computer news.

Television-news use is a ten-item index measuring exposure and attention to: national evening news; early evening national news; youth-oriented afternoon national news; public-affairs programmes; news and cultural magazine programmes. Television-entertainment use is a ten-item index measuring exposure and attention to: comedy programmes; talk shows; science-fiction programmes; daytime and evening soap operas; game shows.

Measurement of family communication

Family communication was measured using eight items based on previous research examining family communication within a political communication context. Analysis of these eight items divides them into two separate dimensions. The first dimension, concept-oriented family communication, is communication in which parents encourage youth to communicate concepts and show youth that their ideas are valued. Concept-oriented communication is measured with three items that ask youth if their parents allow for open and free discussion within the family, encourage the sharing of opinions, and allow youth to have input in family decisions. The second dimension, socio-oriented family communication, is communication in which parents discourage youth from sharing their opinions. Socio-oriented communication is measured with three items that ask youth if their parents encourage youth to get along in society, to avoid challenging authority, and not to "rock the boat."

Measurement of interpersonal communication

Discussion of national, international and local politics was measured as a three-item index in each of the following domains: parents, friends, and school.

Measurement of political attitudes

Political efficacy is assessed through four items that measure normative issues for a democracy, such as the obligation to vote and participate in the political process, and the positive intentions of elected representatives. Political cynicism is assessed through five items that measure cynical attitudes toward politics, such as the ways in which the government wastes money, how politics is too complicated for the average person to understand, and how politicians never keep their promises.

Measurement of political knowledge

The dependent variable of political knowledge is an index of six items that were coded as either correct or incorrect. Three categories of knowledge were measured: Polish political history, current national politics, and current international politics.

Measurement of voting participation

The dependent variable of voting participation is a single item asking respondents to identify on a five-point scale how likely they would be to vote in a hypothetical election – national parliamentary elections that were to be held on the forthcoming Sunday (mean = 3.8).

Results of mass-media use and interpersonal communication

General media use

Results show that older youth read more newspaper hard news and watch more television news. However, gender differences reveal that female youth read more newspaper soft news and watch less television news as compared to males. Parental influence on media use is related to both the age and education of parents. Adolescents of younger parents read more newspaper soft news and watch more television entertainment, while adolescents of older parents read somewhat more newspaper hard news. The influence of parental education is evident for all types of media use. Adolescents of more highly educated parents follow the news closely, reading more newspaper hard news and watching more television news. These adolescents also read less newspaper soft news and watch less television entertainment.

Political discussion

Political discussion with family, friends, and at school is more common among older adolescents, although there is no difference between male and female youth. Adolescents of older, more highly educated parents have more political discussions with their family and their friends, although they do not have political discussions in school. Media use is a strong facilitator of political discussion; this influence on political discussion is the strongest effect of media use for any criteria in the study. Both newspaper hard-news use and television news use are strongly associated with political discussion among family and friends. Television news use is also associated with political discussions at school, although newspaper hard-news use is not.

Family communication

Parental education has an important influence on family discussions. Less educated parents are more likely to have socio-oriented discussions with their adolescents, while more highly educated parents are somewhat more likely to engage in concept-oriented discussion with their adolescents. Heavy newspaper and television news use by youth is associated with adolescents who engage in concept-oriented discussions with their parents. Television entertainment use by youth is associated with both types of discussion, but much more heavily with socio-oriented discussion. Adolescents who engage in political discussion with their parents also engage in concept-oriented discussions with their parents. However, adolescents who discuss politics in school engage in socio-oriented discussions with their parents.

Table 1 – Variables correlated with political socialisation measures

	Political efficacy	*Political cynicism*	*Political knowledge*	*Voting*
Gender (m)[a]	-.10**	-.07*	.11**	.12**
Age	.01	-.15**	.24**	.21**
Parents' education	-.14**	-.25**	.29**	.12**
Parents' age	.03	-.08**	.12**	.11**
Socio-oriented family discussion	.10**	.14**	-.12**	.01
Concept-oriented family discussion	.17**	-.05	.13**	.10**
TV hard news	.16**	-.20**	.32**	.29**
TV entertainment	.10**	.25**	.28**	-.09*
Newspaper hard news	.11**	-.25**	.43**	.34**
Newspaper soft news	.12**	.21**	-.14**	.10**
Political discussion (parents)	.17**	-.21**	.34**	.35**
Political discussion (friends)	.10**	-.21**	.35**	.31**
Political discussion (school)	.15**	.14**	.20**	.18**

*N= 630 * = p‹.05 ** = p‹.01*

a: this statistical mesure includes and compares male and female attitudes, and it displays differences between the genders in regard of the various parameters

Results of political attitudes

Efficacy/Citizen's Duty

Female adolescents have slightly more political efficacy than male adolescents (see Table 1). In general, more politically efficacious adolescents (both males and females) have less educated parents, although the age of their parents does not have a significant influence. Politically efficacious adolescents engage in both concept- and socio-oriented discussions with their parents, although they tend to have more concept-oriented discussions. All types of media use by youth are associated with political efficacy – both news and entertainment. Politically efficacious adolescents also have political discussions with parents, friends, and at school.

Cynicism/Distrust

Somewhat more female adolescents and younger adolescents are more cynical than males and older adolescents (see Table 1). Parental education is an impor-

tant factor for cynical adolescents having less-educated parents and somewhat younger parents. Engaging in socio-oriented discussions with parents is associated with cynicism. Use of newspaper soft news and television entertainment by youth is also associated with cynicism, along with reading less newspaper hard news and watching less television news. Cynical adolescents also have fewer political discussions with parents, friends, or at school.

Results of political knowledge and participation

Political knowledge

Political knowledge is higher among male adolescents (see Table 1). In addition, older youth have more political knowledge than younger youth. Parental education and age are both positively associated with political knowledge. Having socio-oriented family discussions negatively affects political knowledge, but having concept-oriented family discussions is positively associated with political knowledge. Reading newspaper hard news and watching television news by youth contribute to greater political knowledge. However, more entertainment media usage by youth predicts less political knowledge. Political discussion with parents, friends, and at school positively influences political knowledge.

Voting participation

Male adolescents are more likely to vote in an upcoming parliamentary election than female adolescents (see Table 1). Older adolescents are also more likely to vote. Having somewhat older and more educated parents is also associated with the likelihood to vote. Having concept-oriented family discussions is also associated with voting. Reading newspaper hard news and watching television news by youth has a positive impact on voting as well. In parallel with the results for political knowledge, voting participation is significantly influenced by political discussions with parents, friends, and at school.

Conclusions

About citizenship

The evidence shows that these measures of political socialisation – voting intention, political knowledge and political attitudes – should not be considered synonymous criteria of political socialisation. Each of these measures is also affected differently by the independent variables. While political knowledge increases as youth grow older, youth do not at the same time grow more politically efficacious. This raises the question of whether a democracy (particularly such a young, post-communist democracy as Poland) can be supported by a society with low levels of political efficacy. The findings also show that female adolescents are both less politically knowledgeable than their male peers and less inclined to participate in voting. The results also document the importance of examining the effects of different media measures on political socialisation. News use, both television and newspaper, is associated with greater political knowledge and voting. However, greater use of entertainment television and newspaper soft-news use are associated with greater cynicism.

About families

The traditional model of socialisation suggests that the children are a tabula rasa – a blank slate that parents mould to their own image. While this study does not

have a complete set of parental indicators, it is clear from the data that at least one type of modelling occurs due to the heavy influence of parental education. Youth with more highly educated parents are more politically knowledgeable, more inclined to vote, and less cynical.

What is the role of family communication? There are significant differences in the political socialisation of adolescents between those having concept-oriented parents and those having socio-oriented parents. Concept-oriented youth have greater political efficacy, less political cynicism, more political knowledge, and express a greater likelihood to vote.

It remains unclear exactly why there are such stark differences between youth who have concept-oriented family discussions and those who have socio-oriented family discussions. Further research needs to examine such communication behaviour among different sub-groups in Poland to see if there are differences in family communication across levels of socio-economic status, between rural and urban families, and among other sub-groups. The roles of family communication should also be compared across central and eastern Europe to determine if these effects in Poland are comparable in other contexts and nations.

About mass media

Despite the many changes in the media systems of Poland since the fall of communism, both newspapers and television news continue to have considerable influence on political socialisation. Traditional differences between newspaper hard and soft news and television news and entertainment were evident. Greater usage of newspaper soft news and television entertainment predicted higher levels of cynicism. However, greater usage of newspaper hard news had the opposite effect – lower levels of cynicism. Newspaper news use and television news use also had considerable influence on political knowledge and voting behaviour.

The data presented here on Polish adolescents and their political socialisation gives us some reasons to be happy, but at the same time, give cause for concern. First, what is there to be happy about? Clearly, there is evidence that certain aspects of political socialisation are occurring. Political knowledge is high, appears to increase with age, and is influenced by news sources. Intention to vote is similarly high. The role of the media and family communication are both seen to be an important and necessary part of this process.

None the less, the data suggest that there are clearly problems with the current political socialisation, and this is of some concern in two areas. First, political attitudes are problematic. Cynical young people are clearly different from their peers – with low levels of news use and growing up with less educated and socio-oriented parents. Second, there are problems with political efficacy. In Western democracies political efficacy is both an important element of political socialisation and strongly related to political knowledge, voting behaviour, and other political attitudes among adolescents (McLeod, Eveland & Horowitz 1995). Efficacy among Polish adolescents appears to operate much differently. Findings are contrary to expectations, indicating that adolescents with less educated parents are more efficacious. It may be that adolescents of more highly educated parents are more questioning of the new democratic system. Political efficacy may also be a value that is not as easily or quickly developed in a new democracy such as Poland. In addition, the legacy of forty years of communism may continue to be influential in less direct ways, which further research can perhaps discover. While future research will need to examine this more carefully, the future of sustaining a democracy in Poland would seem tenuous without an efficacious electorate.

Opportunities for local youth participation: Flemish experience

Leen Schillemans and Maria Bouverne-De Bie

Youth political participation seems to be particularly promising at local level. Many countries, such as Sweden, Denmark, Germany and Finland, have recently decentralised youth policy (NIZW 2001; Chisholm et al. 1995). For this reason, this paper will examine developments in local youth policy in Flanders. Based on a recent research project, conditions and indicators for local youth participation will be discussed, and some bottlenecks will be identified.

Over the last decade, there has been considerable development with respect to youth policy in Flanders, one of the three communities in Belgium. These developments have brought about much activity at local level. In 1993, a decree on planning policies for local youth work was enacted. It stipulated that local governments should draw up youth work policy plans for a period of three years. Some principles and general guidelines were presented to render the plans of 308 municipalities meaningful and comparable. A definition of youth was provided, defining the target group as children and young people aged from 6 to 25 years. The main principle embodied in this decree was "communicative planning" (Ministry of the Flemish Community 2001).

In 2001, the decree was modified. The new foci are children's rights, a proactive youth policy, integration (with an emphasis on conformity with other policy levels and fields), participation and feedback, and the provision of physical and psychological space for young people. In 2002, further developments at the level of the Flemish community occurred with respect to youth policy: the decree on Flemish youth policy resulted in a corresponding youth policy plan, which also set up a specialised institution to support youth policy (Ministry of the Flemish Community 2001).

All these developments took place under the auspices and guidance of the Flemish Government. Its policy view emphasises efficiency and communication in policy making. Citizens are considered partners in a joint project and are invited to share responsibility and commitment. In addition, there is an extensive network of youth organisations, which is growing stronger in this political context. Youth work in Flanders consists of a diversity of initiatives: youth movements, youth centres, youth workshops, youth groups for amateur artistry, associations for holiday playground activities, youth hostels, and many others (Ministry of the Flemish Community 2000). According to the 1993 decree, youth work is defined

as comprising group-oriented socio-cultural initiatives with young people in their leisure time, under educational guidance and organised by either private youth associations or local public administrations. Participation in youth work is voluntary (Ministry of the Flemish Community 2001).

Critically reviewing local youth policy

In brief, there is much good intention, and many activities have been carried out to improve conditions for youth policy and young people. However, all these activities require critical review. While laws, structures, guidelines and definitions, and some financial resources, may be a good start, they hardly guarantee youth political participation. Hence, what happens during policy making on youth issues and how young people are involved at the local level needs to be studied. To investigate this, Ghent University and the Catholic University of Leuven carried out a study of the processes shaping local youth policy. The research project, entitled Local Youth Policy in Development, was funded by the Flemish Government and was carried out between November 1999 and June 2002. It consisted of a detailed survey comprising four phases, with questionnaires distributed to the youth counsellors of the 308 Flemish municipalities. In addition, in-depth case studies were carried out in four municipalities. The focus of the project was possible indicators to assess the quality of local youth policy. These indicators did not address policy measures themselves but the way in which policy is developed, the communicative nature of the planning process and the participation of young people. Therefore, communicative planning and participation were key concepts in this research project.

The point of departure for communicative planning is that policies concerning young people and youth work should be developed in communication with the different stakeholders concerned, all of whom should be considered experts in the matter: local politicians; public servants; youth workers; parents; teachers; other social workers and young people themselves. This process of communication with various stakeholder/experts is seen as a social learning process (Redig 2000).

While participation is closely linked to the concept of communicative planning, the concept of participation deserves separate consideration. It is a "container" concept, which has different meanings in theory and practice (Bouverne-De Bie 1997). Questions relating to participation in local youth policy and policy planning are often limited to methodical questions such as: "how are young people involved, consulted and asked to prepare the new youth work policy plan in the municipality?" Participation, however, goes beyond that and should be a fundamental condition for the development of any form of policy and an objective of every form of youth work and general social service. Relevant here is the theoretical distinction between "participation as a methodical principle" and "participation as a policy principle" (Bouverne-De Bie 1999).

With participation as a methodical principle, different functions of participation are distinguished: an educational function – participation provides people with skills in participation; a pacifying function – participation makes it easier to accept collective decisions; and an integrating function – participation strengthens the sense of community (Thomassen 1979 in Bouverne-De Bie 1999). From this perspective, youth participation is important in that young people have much creativity, enthusiasm and desire for participation. Similarly important is that active participation can help improve young people's welfare, health and chances for development.

The active participation of young people is considered as a necessary condition (De Winter 1996). In this respect, participation is mainly linked to participation within conventional channels, such as advisory boards.

With participation as a policy principle, participation is the sine qua non condition for policy development. The point of departure is that feasible policy objectives cannot only be formulated in the abstract but have to be realised in practice. Exploring and solving problems is considered as one process, and as a joint undertaking that requires consultation with the various actors. From this angle, it is not only the current debate that needs to be taken into account in the development of policy, but also cultural achievements and insights, as well as the interests of those that do not participate in the debate or are excluded from it (Elchardus et al. 2001; Claeys 2001). In this context, participative policy is linked to the quality of life and consideration of the personal and social impact of policy. Emphasis is put on the continuous search for opportunities for participation for all young people, in such a way that is desired by and suitable for them.

In our research project, participation was conceptually subdivided into three types, which are closely connected: participation in the development and follow-up of the youth work policy plan; participation in the services and provisions of youth-work and in the general social services; and participation in the social debate on fundamental options for the development of our society. This distinction will guide the following discussion.

Political, social and societal participation

Several conditions need to be taken into account with respect to participation in policy-making processes. Attention must be paid to participation in the different phases of policy development and implementation; participation should essentially be about fundamental themes and not about side issues; and participation should involve engagement, with the participation processes having a clear effect on policy. These conditions, which formed the point of departure for developing an appropriate research instrument, deserve more detailed explanation.

Participation cannot be reduced to conducting a number of surveys before developing a policy for youth work. Instead, it should be a continuous concern during all phases of policy preparation and implementation. Four phases can be distinguished during the policy-planning process, for each of which participation is important. Phase one is preparation: a steering committee is set up, a work scheme is drafted, and the previous youth-work policy plan is evaluated. Phase two involves collecting data and formulating observations and objectives. In this phase, data are collected about young people's situation as regards housing, income, employment, learning, health, leisure and quality of life, and about the participation of young people in youth work and general social services. On this basis, conclusions, objectives and concrete actions are formulated.

Phase three involves feedback, advice and approval. In this phase, feedback is sought on the conclusions and objectives from a broader group of people beyond the steering group, that is, other youth workers, young people, etc. Adjustments can still be made during this phase. The result is a draft plan for youth policy, which must be submitted to the authorised advisory board in the municipality, usually the youth council, and to the department of youth and sports of the Flemish Community. Subsequently, the town council is obliged to submit the draft plan for approval at a council meeting. Finally, the competent minister must also

give his consent. Phase four is implementation. Here, it is important that the objectives and action items from the plan are implemented and followed up. Every year, an annual plan and a working report must be elaborated. No less importantly, communication and consultation with the different stakeholders should be a constant concern during this implementation phase.

The continuous search for appropriate ways to receive feedback on objectives and actions from as many young people as possible is one of the most fundamental questions of participation (Thomas & O'Kane 1999). Opportunities for participation are created where the objectives and intentions of the policy and of youth work are made explicit. Providing clear information in an accessible manner gives young people the opportunity to gain insight into the intentions of the policy, to relate these insights to their own experience, and to identify themselves with this policy or to formulate proposals to improve the policy. If there is feedback, it is important to avoid biases or restrictions in favour of specific groups. Instead, opinions and assessments need to be sought from as many young people as possible. This suggests that multiple and different channels of communication be used, such as written, oral and visual channels.

Feedback is of little value if it does not involve engagement. Participation of some target groups is often marginal and has led to characterisation of such sections of youth as "non-reachable" or "non-participatory," as is the case with "migrant girls," "unemployed young people" and others. An inclusion of these groups into the feedback process means that these groups become more visible in the policy, and it becomes clearer how they can specifically benefit from policy measures. An evaluation of policy plans is also advisable in co-operation with young people, as it can help to identify difficulties or bottlenecks encountered by youth work and the policy in question.

It is also important to consider whether or not every child in the municipality is taken into account. The presence of young people in the steering committee of youth-work policy plans is one way of stimulating such reflection, but it is not a necessary condition. More important are the quality of other opportunities for youth participation (such as a youth council that exists in every municipality), and the quality of the collected information and feedback received. Analysis of a wide range of themes of potential or actual importance for young people is necessary, and should be based on different kinds of information. Objective (numerical) data on their living conditions yield important information. Subjective data, in turn, do not necessarily concur with the analysis of objective data, and it is for this reason that different kinds of source data, both objective and subjective, should be utilised.

During the implementation phase, young people should be able to identify with the measures taken and formulate proposals for improvement. To this end, channels of communication and involvement should be provided. These need to be accessible to, and known by, all young people without distinction.

However, participation cannot only be reduced to active political participation, but should encompass elements of social engagement. One example is involvement in social welfare services, such as childcare, school, and social assistance, as an element of social participation. Through participation in social services young people can learn the objectives of youth policy, formulate their experiences and gain insight into the relationship between their personal experiences and those

of others, and link these to policy objectives. Hence, more detailed information on the use of, and experience with, social services is necessary.

Moreover, as welfare services do not equally reach all young people, youth work and policy need to be open to initiatives from young people themselves, and to support these. In this respect, co-operation between youth work and other provisions of social welfare should also be considered.

As youth participation is important for all young people, it is important to map the different groups of young people that can be discerned objectively in the municipality. Such a distinction between groups within youth can be very revealing on the one hand, but can similarly hide existing diversity on the other. It may be very revealing, as it allows an assessment as to whether or not specific sections of youth have been overlooked. In turn, risks remain, as such mapping of groups can never express the personal experiences of young people. These may be shared, distinct or even conflicting, and such distinctions do not necessarily coincide with the boundaries based on age, sex, educational level, etc. Not least, any such distinction needs to be open to correction, ideally based on input from young people themselves.

Youth participation in policy making and social services is linked to welfare (Murray & Hallet 2000). In the present context, welfare is not approached from a problem-defining point of view but is related to culture and the social participation of young people. Youth work and youth policy should offer ways and procedures encouraging societal participation of young people. They should be given opportunities to discover the themes that are important in our society, to interpret these, and to discuss different options for shaping and developing society. From this angle, political and social participation can be considered as an event that creates a social space or forum in which young people experience differences between individual aspirations and social expectations, and – together with adults – learn how to deal with these differences (Vandenbroeck 2001). In this way, participation in youth policy becomes a point of departure for a broader youth and welfare policy, in which all policy sectors pay attention to young people.

Again, there are conditions that have to be met in order to bring about youth participation in the social debate on fundamental options for the development of our society. The starting point should be a proactive approach, with everyone able to contribute, rather than a defensive approach based on preventive or problem-oriented considerations. A mutual process needs to be established, in which all actors (young people and adults) are able to participate as equal partners, taking into account their individual character and the conditions in which they can and wish to participate (Heyting, Lenzen & White 2003).

Strengths and weaknesses in local youth participation

In the previous sections, indicators were distinguished that signal the quality of local youth policy. Research from Flanders reveals that not all of the parameters outlined are equally taken into account in practice. In the following, it will be briefly described how local youth policy works in Flanders and which obstacles commonly prevent greater youth participation. Four questions can help to structure this overview of Flemish experience: when is participation made possible; how does participation function; who participates; and which topics are addressed?

On the timing of participation, the research revealed that in most municipalities, young people are given an opportunity to participate only during the data-collection phase of the policy process. Much less involvement was shown for the phases of preparation, feedback and decision making. Yet the aim of the feedback phase is to enable all people concerned to clarify and, if necessary, adjust the objectives. As a result, important opportunities remain unused.

Where feedback does occur, this takes several forms, including annual reports, consultation, the local or school paper, councils and websites. Among the difficulties pointed out are limitations of time, the complexity of information, representativeness (the relevance of the feedback information gained is not always clear, since the feedback group is not always similar to the group in question), a lack of interest in feedback, and a limited response to feedback that makes it unrewarding. Proposals from respondents to overcome these difficulties include the development of more original and attractive methods, training and exchange, the use of new media, co-operation with schools and intermediaries, and consultation with different youth initiatives.

In the formulation of objectives during the decision-making phase, the link with the expectations and experiences of youth disappears completely. At this stage, very little scope is left for participation. If there is any, it is often restricted to participation through the existing participatory and advisory bodies, such as youth councils.

The research results demonstrated that many local authorities did not clarify the overall objectives of their policy. For some, recreation is the general objective; others mainly wish to offer young people scope to develop; yet others emphasise social involvement. Sometimes, youth work is offered in the light of the right of young people to receive support. Yet usually there is no reasoning and justification as to why the proposed policy is important. By contrast, the youth-work policy plan aims to demonstrate the legitimacy and importance of local youth policy, for young people and for society at large. Participative policy practice is impossible without linking the objectives to the experience of young people.

Participative policy practice means that youth participation in the policy plan, or political participation, includes societal participation. It is here that significant problems remain. Concerning societal participation, respondents rather point to internal debates among young people, and highlight the contact services provided by the local authorities, such as community consultations and youth council meetings. As a result, the youth policy plan can only make a small contribution, since it fails to translate the signals sent by young people into concrete policies. This observation relates to another research finding, that is, the fact that respondents are hardly aware of activities created by young people themselves, and for which they may need support. Nonetheless, youth policy is, at least in part, legitimised by its support function. It owes its existence to the fact that it offers youth a specific value, added to and distinct from the family and the school, among others.

Participation, therefore, only occurs during the phase of data collection. Naturally, nothing is wrong with encouraging young people to express their views, yet there should be energy left for the other phases of the planning process: to reflect on the collected information; to analyse which young people expressed particular concerns and which others did not voice their views at all; and to search for the reasons underlying such biases. All of this relates not only to the demands of

young people but also to existing efforts, initiatives and structures in the community, to what young people know, what they like and what they experience as helpful and supportive. Not surprisingly, then, considerable uncertainty about young people remains, despite efforts to gather information not only on, but also from, them.

How is participation, when this occurs, made possible? Here, Flemish research identified a host of bottlenecks, pertaining to both the nature of the information and its collection mode. Concerning the latter, respondents indicated several problems, including: appropriate methods and instruments for collecting data; the themes selected for surveys; correct and encompassing interviews; and effective and meaningful ways of processing the data. It was pointed out that in the majority of municipalities, data were generated through formal contacts, using written, individual, direct and closed questions. Such methods mainly yield objective data, such as age and address. The problem frequently raised here was that these data are indeed collected, yet hardly anything is done with them, thus rendering valuable information meaningless.

Other, less formal approaches are also employed for collecting information, such as oral and group interviews with indirect and open questions. Typically, however, the insights gathered from such informal contacts with young people are not used in local youth policy. It appears that there is widespread apprehension concerning the incorporation of informal methods of participation into a formal policy plan. Yet these methods yield important empirical information, such as reasons for participating in a given youth activity, which can contribute to understanding diversity amongst young people and, thus, the beneficiaries of youth policy.

Proposals made by respondents themselves to overcome the difficulties mentioned are much in line with this reasoning. What is called for is the use of original and attractive methods; tests; more frequent contacts; training; and exchange of information between the local authorities and those intermediaries collecting the information.

In short, the mode of participation during the phase of collecting information on young people very much resembles approaches taken with adult audiences, largely taking the format of formal contacts, with little regard for their appropriateness for the target group addressed, that is, young people. The widespread belief that such formal contacts are superior to informal ones can be explained by the fact that there is pressure to organise large-scale written questionnaires that, time and again, deal with the entire policy.

Problems also exist with regard to the third question of who participates in collecting data for the policy process. It is apparently not an obvious choice that all actors and stakeholders, from young people to youth workers to youth councillors, for example, are involved. Leaving aside questions of interaction among different actors and focusing on the involvement of young people, a number of observations are striking.

In the first place, it appears that many local authorities are insufficiently aware and knowledgeable about the considerable diversity among young people. It is not clear who is to be addressed by specific policy measures; who is actively involved already; and why some young people participate while others do not. Questions remain as to the background and profile of different groups of young people, the more specific target groups to be reached by local youth policy, and the criteria that can usefully distinguish different sections among youth.

Age is a criterion frequently used for distinction, yet diversity among young people goes further, and needs to include characteristics such as handicaps, poverty and initiatives taken. It needs to be taken into account that some measures only apply to young people with siblings, who live with their parents, or who have a good command of Dutch, for example. Generally, nothing is known about such specific characteristics. Yet if the precise target group of a given policy is unknown, the chances are that the policy will remain guided by standard blueprints of young people, which in turn will marginalise those deviating from the "norm".

None the less, some conclusions about age and the participation of specific youth groups can be drawn. With regard to age, youth political participation is frequently restricted to those aged twelve and above. Concerning specific groups among young people, it became clear that participation is largely incidental. This is hardly surprising, as offers made by local authorities are often general and aimed at youth at large, not least since local authorities have little sense of distinguishing between specific groups. This remains valid, even though there is considerable intention on the part of many youth councillors to encourage previously non-participating youth, such as children from poor families, disabled children, etc. Local authorities almost unanimously declare their openness towards such specific youth groups, as illustrated by examples of collaboration with local social services.

At times, such efforts are aimed at prevention, and the underlying rationale is to reach out to children with problems in order to preclude more severe social problems at a later stage. These efforts are intended to integrate everyone into existing activities; the attempt is to increase the accessibility of those activities by lowering certain, especially financial, thresholds. Other barriers, such as many created by differences regarding lifestyle or information, are given less attention. This emphasis on the prevention of problems refers to a conforming attitude towards youth. Non-participating young people are held individually responsible for the fact that they do not participate. It is said that they do not want to, or that they are difficult to reach. Contrasting with such blunt statements, however, is a widespread and more positive motivation to let everybody join in, and enjoy, youth activities.

While good intentions are not lacking, effective measures resulting from these intentions are rarely developed. This is primarily based on a clear lack of the necessary know-how to provide general opportunities to participate in local youth policy development and implementation.

Finally, the last issue of whether or not participation is consistently achieved for all themes is also characterised by several tendencies and difficulties in the light of Flemish research. What is striking is that the themes selected for local youth policy frequently take their point of departure from problems, or from the expectation that problems will arise, related to social insecurity, drug abuse, environmental consequences, etc. This simply means that youth policy is typically guided by the concerns of adults rather than those of young people.

Thematically, youth participation is mainly of a socio-cultural kind, such as participation in leisure-time activities, sports and culture. In turn, little attention is paid to the concerns of young people in other areas, such as family, learning, their environment, etc. This bias is hardly surprising. After all, local authorities feel most familiar with the themes of sports and culture. Others, such as environ-

mental planning and traffic are also familiar to many local actors, while themes such as poverty and health are perceived as difficult. However, effective participation and policy involves links across policy areas and beyond leisure-time activities, and sensitive and youth-relevant fields, such as housing, family and learning cannot be omitted. Many local actors acknowledge this need for a broader perspective of local youth policy, yet there is concern that this approach may be overly difficult. Here again, there is no lack of willingness and good intention, but hardly anywhere have concrete steps been taken in this direction. Occasional co-operation across policy fields does occur, but does not generally take the form of the continuous consultation or integrated methodical co-operation required to be effective.

In this overview of Flemish experience, different kinds of bottlenecks have been distinguished that characterise local youth policy. In the first place, practical problems are frequently reported, such as insufficient time, money, personnel and know-how. Many local authorities are satisfied if they manage to implement leisure-time policies, even if they are not made part of a broader, local social-policy plan.

A related shortcoming is that that a participative policy also requires effort from other sectors, such as sports. The need for an integrated youth policy across sectors must be acknowledged, which would be the basis for cross-sectoral co-operation in policy making. Only with such a broader approach can the overall situation be assessed and ways sought of meeting the different needs of all young people. What mitigates against this is the fact that different policy plans for different areas and sectors are subject to different requirements. A similar obstacle is the fact that different sectors often know little about each other and their work. A search for interests and approaches across sectors is, as yet, practically non-existent.

There is also a significant need for better, more encompassing and more differentiated information on a growing number of subjects. An ever-expanding range of themes are becoming relevant for discussing and planning participative youth policy, and policy makers find it difficult to incorporate these thematic areas. This range is increasingly growing, as particular subjects often belong to very specific policy areas. Pragmatic choices are thus necessary. Some local authorities may decide to restrict themselves to youth-work policy rather than interfere with other policy areas. Presumably, they also wish to avoid a situation whereby participative policy leads to a "catch-all" function for local youth policy, wishing to retain a key focus on youth work.

Clearly, local actors are concerned about youth participation, not least since it can be seen as an important confirmation or recognition of local youth policy. Whether or not one accepts this objective, it should be beyond doubt that youth participation requires a long-term effort, and the continuous attention, energy, input and resources of all actors involved.

Conclusion: participation as a policy principle

The research and experience from Flanders presented here raise a number of questions on the quality of youth political participation. The obstacles identified relate to who participates when, and how, and on which subjects. The main observation is that opportunities for youth political participation in local contexts are likely to make only a small contribution to improving local youth policy. As

pointed out here, the existence of a number of channels and structures must not be equated with youth participation. No less importantly, the quest for participation frequently hides the more fundamental problem of inequality. Participation can even create new situations of inequality, especially if participation is guided by standard blueprints, or benefits only specific (elite) sections of young people. For this reason, it is equally necessary to analyse which broader tendencies are supported by creating opportunities for youth political participation.

This question also leads us back to the more general issue of why greater participation is desirable and frequently called for. On the one hand, it seems to be obvious that the stronger involvement of people, and young people in particular, can be conducive to thriving political and social communities. On the other hand, and mitigating against this ideal in the youth context, youth policy is often perceived as an administrative issue, with participation permitted primarily in "adult" ways. According to this line of thought, demands for political participation reflect a need to confirm existing political structures. However, the integration of youth into existing structures cannot be the prime objective if youth participation is to be meaningful and if youth policies are to be effective. Instead, demands for greater participation also require the permanent critical assessment and modification of such existing structures and policies.

To conclude, youth political participation cannot be reduced to the development of participation projects and methods, notwithstanding their obvious importance. Youth participation needs to be firmly established as a policy principle. This will make it possible to see participation as a permanent process that begins when the views of all people, groups and institutions involved are known. This view has a fundamental impact on the search for opportunities for youth participation. To consider participation as a policy principle implies that efforts are geared towards continuous consideration of the question of whether or not all those affected have had a chance to express their views and whether these opinions have been duly taken into account. Participation is therefore about more than merely using "the right method." It is a discursive process of social debate, which permanently reflects on, and influences, the conditions for young people in the community, and its outcomes are not predestined but open and uncertain. For youth-work practitioners, policy makers and researchers, such uncertainties may not be entirely comfortable, yet should be a price worth paying for a more meaningful way of developing youth policy.

New contexts for youth participation: integrating youth theory, policy and practice in Norway

Stine Berrefjord

Youth workers in Europe appear to agree on one important problem across the continent: young people lack opportunities for participation and democracy in formal education systems. This identification of a shared problem is a promising point of departure for overcoming the fragmentation that has hitherto characterised efforts in the field of youth work. Sharing this problem also means that there is a common transnational challenge for youth workers, namely to enter into a dialogue with schools and structures of formal education, not blaming them for the situation but suggesting co-operation within the framework of education. Both formal and non-formal education, and local and international contexts are necessary to counter decreasing social integration and youth political participation.

Understanding the dynamics between formal and non-formal education on the one hand, and between local and global dimensions on the other, points to a new role for both youth workers and teachers. Over the last decades, youth work and youth research have come to be disconnected from educational contexts and research. At present, it appears that this lack of connection is about to be overcome, as researchers from both youth and educational fields have begun to discuss questions of young people and their education, democracy and youth political participation in a broader context.

Youth workers and teachers from schools and from youth and community centres need to carefully follow and actively participate in this discourse. Understanding and defining new roles and developing new methodologies in youth-work practice are closely connected to democratic traditions and to schools' ambitions. At a time when grand democratic projects seem to be lacking, and the mantra of individualisation characterises everyday life, a certain pressure for democratisation processes can be detected that may well help to revitalise public agencies serving the socialisation of young people.

These are the issues to be discussed in more detail in this chapter. Two case studies from Norway will be introduced that illustrate the main argument put forward here; namely, that youth participation depends largely on the creation and sustainability of new contexts for participation that are based on interaction

between youth theory, policy and practice. The cases presented describe how the co-operation of non-formal educational structures (youth centres and youth workers) with the formal educational sector (schools and teachers), and with young people themselves, can successfully work towards higher social integration and increased youth political participation regardless of social, economical, ethnic and cultural differences.

Before presenting these case studies, some of the main trends concerning youth and democratisation processes in the Norwegian context will be introduced. Following on from that, youth theory in late-modern conditions will be discussed, with a focus on the dynamics between formal and non-formal education and the local/global dimension. The two cases will then demonstrate how concrete social problems can be addressed while simultaneously providing effective channels for youth participation in democratic processes. The second of these cases will also relate to the link between youth research and educational research, and a brief historical perspective of this often hidden link will be introduced.

Revisiting youth and democracy in Norway

Within the field of public youth work in Norway over the last two decades, three stages can be identified with regard to youth democracy projects. The first stage was the period of expansion of public youth clubs in the 1980s. The second stage was when local youth councils came to be established in the 1990s. The third stage is currently emerging, and relates to the structures of a new European youth policy.

The first stage occured in a period when national cultural policy was characterised by democratisation processes, geared to broader inclusion and participation at local level. Public youth centres, community and cultural facilities were built across the country, and new professions and educational approaches were introduced. Participation was generally the issue of the day, especially participation of young people. It appeared to be the key tool preventing youth crime, social exclusion and drug abuse. The main activities in youth clubs addressed practical education for democracy. Youth leaders and youth itself had broad access to seminars and networks to learn about the workings of democracy, about how to prepare for democracy in youth clubs, and about how to exert influence on local policy.

The second stage emerged when questions of democracy were eventually left behind in the youth clubs. The reason for this trend away from democratic ambitions and activities were multifaceted, but educational backgrounds among those responsible for youth clubs and cultural work at local levels played an important role. The new generation of professional youth workers was academically educated, and focused on young people and their culture mainly from the angles of subcultural expressions in music, style, the arts, films, etc. Their aim was, and still is to some extent, to give birth to authentic artistic and cultural expressions in a youth culture under attack from the commercial interests of a growing entertainment industry.

When the focus of attention in youth centres shifted from democratic ambitions to artistic ones, youth democracy made its re-entry via local youth councils. The 1990s came to be the decade when a number of local youth councils were established with close links to student councils in schools. This period can be characterised by an improved effort to continue youth democracy projects originally

based at youth clubs. A school reform in 1997 also revealed greater ambitions of democratisation processes in schools (KUF 1996: 326).

The cross-national IEA Civic Education Study (2000) – a comparative study of citizenship and education in twenty-eight countries – showed that Norwegian 15-year-olds had high levels of theoretical knowledge about democracy and democratic institutions but low levels of democratic competence, that is, practical experience of participation. Training in how to negotiate and influence decision-making processes, in other words exercise in democratic practice, is absent from Norwegian schools (Vestby 2003; Torney-Purta 2001). "The further development of youth participation and possibilities for influence will be enriched if the dissimilar perspectives from children and youth policy and school policy are integrated to a larger extent; human rights perspectives, democracy learning and the value itself of young peoples contributions here and now are essential dimensions to be included. When more balanced power structures are to be seen in school, and when the possibilities of participation are strengthened in school – where all young people are – some basic change will occur concerning young people's role and status as democratic actors in the different arenas of society" (Vestby 2003: 68).

The third stage appears to be characterised by increased attention to the divided perspectives in youth policy and school policy. No less importantly, a broader understanding of youth and education is about to emerge from European youth policy. In a new and different youth situation, with multi-ethnicity and increased social differences across Europe, it seems to be overdue to pay attention to this changed cultural context, both locally and globally. Given access to the European Commission programmes on formal and non-formal education since 1995, a certain change of attitudes and activities can be observed. New forms of participation and youth democracy are being articulated and implemented in order to face those new challenges. At the outset, broad participation of young people essentially depends on a clearly defined and visible youth policy.

This policy needs to provide young people, youth workers and teachers with broad access:

- to practising democracy in the sense of managing the transfer from "knowing that" to "knowing how" in different contexts;[1]

- to developing a qualified understanding and competence of a new situation for young people, elaborated in late-modern youth theory and European youth policy.

Three major joint tracks are therefore to be followed when discussing youth and democracy: youth theory; youth policy; and youth practice. A short discussion of late-modern youth theory and youth policy illustrates why a modernised youth practice is needed.

Integrating youth theory, policy and practice

Western youth research has discussed young people and their lives, considering a number of dimensions, since the explosion of youth theory in the post-war period. Subsequent generations of youth researchers have studied youth from a range of angles and disciplines that grew out the structures of modern societies. Today, when Western societies are labelled as "post modern", "late-modern",

"post-industrial", "knowledge" or "consumer" societies, youth research, similarly, needs to account for broader studies of social change.

The story of modernity is the story of challenges and changes. Youth is equally affected by these changes – it is no longer merely a social construct but a changing social construct. Viewing youth as a changing social construct within and between different contexts of youth life – not primarily as a transition to adult life but as a long period of learning to cope with transitions within youth life – is the first essential message for contemporary youth theory. A strong educational approach can be added to this perspective. Late-modern youth life is something that has to be learnt, and both formal and non-formal education play an important role in this respect (Mørch 2003).

A new phase of youth research, namely educational youth research, focuses on education – or more precisely, learning – as consisting of three interlinked dimensions: "learning to know," "learning to do" and "learning to be," with the "doing" dimension (practising and competence) as the locomotive. "Competence refers to what people should be able to do in a modern or modernistic world" (Mørch 2003: 67).

Understanding competence – and educational challenges more generally – within modernistic perspectives is the second essential message. In a post modern situation with a high degree of social differentiation, competence is related to managing different and rapidly changing social contexts. Going beyond that, it could also be said that the first challenge for young people is to find out where to participate and for what reason. "Competence involves not only individual qualities, but also contextual experiences and knowledge. Thus, competence has to do with challenges in social contexts" (Mørch 2003: 68).

The third point is a growing tendency in Western societies towards individualisation. As a result, social integration is neglected in favour of individual private interests. In formal education in Norway, individual plans are increasingly shaping a new educational trend. This is not without pitfalls. If a young person fails, this is considered individual failure, with no system or structure other than the individual in question bearing responsibility. For education as a tool for democracy and social integration, this is an increasing loss of territory, as school policies are directed towards a system that designs and delivers "individual parcels of knowledge" rather than acting as an agency for social inclusion.

Hence, the overall challenge for youth research and practice in Western societies is to develop a broad understanding of youth and education as interconnected and changing social constructs, which are under pressure from varied interests in a consumer society. "[T]he new challenge is not to create individuals or to support the individual, but to influence individuals in the making of society and of new forms of social integration [...] Young people should be engaged in the development of trajectories of competence because competence refers to broad aspects of social life and not only to individual or private life perspectives" (Mørch 2003: 71).

Against this backdrop, broad access to participation in both formal and non-formal educational programmes assumes central importance. What is more, educational youth research also provides the knowledge base upon which European youth policy can build. Theory and practice are closely intertwined, and very visibly and concretely so. Policy can provide gateways to a wide spectrum of formal and non-formal educational programmes that can address problems identified by educational youth research in a practical manner. European youth policy needs to

consist of concrete tools to be used at local levels, in order to develop varied learning contexts for managing a wide range of challenges and problems.

Two cases will be described to illustrate the necessary transformation of theory and policy into practice. The examples presented here remain confined to the European context. Obviously, such a limitation may seem paradoxical at a time when young people's rights are regulated globally, not least through the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Yet the discrepancies between the situation in Europe and that found elsewhere in the world also demonstrate the almost historical scale and opportunity represented by the fact that a European youth policy exists and enforces transnational guidelines across member countries, and that national authorities are obliged to follow up with a national youth policy. This provides young people with a solid platform for development, although a range of important questions and problems remains to be solved. Some of these become clear when looking at concrete examples.

Practising broad youth participation — two cases from Norway

The first case is - "Komler & Kebab". This project was established as a new approach in the field of youth street-work in Stavanger, the oil capital of Norway. A larger number of young immigrants and refugees live in the region, compared to other cities of similar size in Norway. Qualified studies of the local youth situation reveal a lack of integration of young immigrants and refugees in organised youth activities, youth centres and modern youth life in general.

The idea was to provide youth information and to generate youth participation beyond social, ethnic and cultural boundaries, through local and international activities, for young people aged between 15 and 25. The project started with several youth exchanges within the framework of the European Union's YOUTH programme for non-formal education, planned by young people themselves in partnership with youth workers.

Prior to the project activities, international networks for youth workers were developed through study visits and international seminars, also within the YOUTH programme. Furthermore, co-operation was established between the Stavanger municipality and Stavanger University College. Seminars providing practitioners with access to up-to-date international youth research were held at local level.

The international youth exchanges were used as tools to encourage young people to participate in the project. Both ethnic Norwegians and young immigrants and refugees showed great interest. Bringing different kinds of youth and youth milieux together for discussing and planning youth exchanges grew into a natural dialogue – and provided fun – despite otherwise significant differences. Over a period of two years, five multicultural groups planned and participated in four multilateral youth exchanges with different European countries. These youth exchanges created numerous experiences, and two of these provide an excellent illustration of the various aspects addressed by youth participation.

Firstly, the name of the project was invented by one of the participants. *Komler* is a traditional Norwegian dish made of flour and potatoes and resembling fuzzy snowballs. The title "Komler & Kebab" contains much humour about ethnic stereotypes, and it prevented the project from becoming "just another boring adult-run community project." This is an important point, as the absence of

political correctness – by labelling immigrants and refugees as "kebabs" and Norwegians as "potatoes" – triggered participation, discussions and project activities. No less important is the place where the name was invented. This happened at an international youth exchange in Northern Ireland, where xenophobia, racism and conflict were on the agenda. Resulting from this exchange, the Norwegian group of multi-ethnic participants developed a peer-education project at local level, reflecting issues such as ethnic stereotypes, realistic conflict scenarios and discussions of strategies for solving conflicts. The peer-education project was offered to schools, and demonstrated that a complex and serious issue could be addressed with both humour and seriousness, and with methods involving everybody in the classroom.

The second story concerns girls from refugee backgrounds, who expressed the problems they had making friends among ethnic Norwegians. They were invited to join a "girl group" with ethnic Norwegian girls, and to plan a youth exchange together. The travel preparations posed the first problem, and serious differences within the group of eight girls became apparent, as three African participants were without citizenship and passports and were subsequently denied the right to travel. Feelings of astonishment, injustice and discrimination appeared within the group of girls. Although, after several months of communication, the group managed to secure passports for at least two of the girls, questions of citizenship became important issues to discuss in the group. Norwegian participants, usually taking their citizenship and rights for granted, were confronted with the unknown situation of others being denied these rights. The African girls, in turn, received a great deal of encouragement from other group members, whose anger and sorrow motivated them to claim their rights, justice and equality. At the youth exchange, this experience was discussed with young people from other countries, and it became apparent that similar situations can be found across Europe.

Besides the fact that this case draws the attention of young people to a broad range of issues, from the integration of refugees and social exclusion to diversity and citizenship rights, it also illustrates the value of a local youth project with an international dimension, without which several of the issues touched upon would have remained undetected for participants. Hence, local youth activities have much to benefit from reaching out beyond the boundaries of the community in question and towards international work.

The second case is – "Within the Framework of Education: A Development Approach in a Youth Club". The second example is about the transformation of a youth club, located in a school. Originally, this club seemed to be inhabited by restless, bored and "forgotten" young people; it was run-down and lacked any aesthetic attraction; it was lacking in positive traditions and youth democracy. The general image was that of a parking place for noisy young people, mostly boys, who seemed to be "allergic" to school.

Although the youth club was located in a school, relationships between teachers and youth workers were essentially absent. This lack of a relationship seemed to be largely due to longstanding views held by teachers and youth workers that "school is school" and "youth work is youth work," with teachers being averse to "laid-back" and "unstructured" youth workers, and with youth workers similarly rejecting "nit-picking" teachers.

In approaching this situation, efforts had to be made in several directions. Within the club, a group of young people was selected. Their common understanding of

a youth worker was that of somebody repairing equipment, resolving conflicts, organising activities, running the café, etc. Interest awakened when another youth-worker role was introduced, namely that of a facilitator of youth democracy. A democratic process was set in motion in the youth club, geared at developing concrete activities, establishing rules, deciding about programmes and activities, purchasing the necessary equipment and furniture, planning excursions and youth exchanges, etc.

External relationships also needed to be changed. Dialogue between the youth club council and the council of school students was renewed. Formal meetings were held with the school and teachers to report concrete and structural changes and to maintain discussion on more encompassing approaches. Here, it is interesting to observe that, apparently, it is easier to communicate a broader understanding of education among teachers than in any other professional group working in the youth field: neither youth workers nor social workers, neither police nor nurses, focus on educational approaches to the same extent.

This observation on communicating theoretical approaches also has a more far-reaching dimension. The social-science history of youth and education reveals that the lack of connection between educational research and youth research, observable here as mutual stereotypes and lack of contact between school teachers and youth workers, is not a natural occurrence that has always existed. During the inter-war period, this distinction and lack of connection did not exist. A rich and broad understanding of education was common, which included perspectives of both formal and non-formal education (Köhler 1936; Stafseng 1996). This lost tradition of a broader, more integrated research perspective seems to have now been overcome, leaving behind the stark distinction between youth research and educational research that dominated in past decades (Stafseng 2001). In the case of the school's youth club, this historical perspective helped teachers and youth workers to find a common ground.

More broadly, the re-integration of these theoretical strands, but also the wider integration of theory with policy and practice, and the establishment of new contexts for education and participation, are crucial for further developing democratic practice and strengthening social inclusion. "Historically, forms or categories of participation changing social practice between the young generation and adults are in their very beginning. The tender experiments and efforts are empowered by a democratisation ongoing in society. Authoritarian positions and traditional norms for obedience are weakening, and attention is increasing for the participation and inclusion of groups traditionally labelled as marginalised. [...] Persons or groups, previously seen as objects or receivers of care, protection, support or help, are increasingly understood as subjects and actors contributing with knowledge and understanding, and therefore as a resource in shaping and changing their own situation" (Vestby 2003: 66).

Two cases — observable trends and effects

These two examples describe situations and processes in which new contexts emerge that integrate more closely youth theory, policy and practice. Several trends and effects can be observed among the young people, youth workers and teachers involved, including the following:

- young people are attracted by participation projects bringing together young people of different ages and backgrounds, and such projects are considered natural tools for the inclusion of young immigrants and marginalised youth;
- young people are attracted by participation projects governed by themselves, but they stress the importance of access to information, support and supervision by youth workers;
- young people see youth participation projects as important for the development of leadership among youth not participating in organised youth activities;
- youth workers trained to understand and practise non-formal education actions within the YOUTH programme developed motivation and approaches for closer co-operation with schools;
- relations between teachers and youth workers improved and intensified through running non-formal education programmes and youth democracy projects. "Education" and "learning" do attract teachers, and youth workers with a concrete, educational approach are of interest for schools;
- co-operation between youth workers and teachers made it possible to reach youth more broadly, especially but not exclusively young people with a lack of prior experience of participation;
- teachers and parents observed increased motivation for school and self-confidence among young people who participated in an international youth exchange;
- girls with immigrant backgrounds often have parents who are sceptical of participation in non-formal education activities. Teachers can play an important role as negotiators with parents;
- youth projects with an international dimension can play an active and important role in highlighting diversity among young people and in drawing attention to their rights.

In conclusion, when young people in Norway are asked about their interest in politics, a typical answer is that this depends on what one understands by "politics". Their interest in social questions leaves one with a picture of "silent societal engagement." Ad-hoc political activities outside traditional structures for political participation are on the rise, and discouraged views of political participation lead observers to talk about "actively rootless youth" (Ødegård 2003). This picture is largely shared by youth researchers from Europe and beyond. It calls for new paths to ensure participation and social inclusion. It requires programmes and activities that are governed by young people and aimed at developing youth leadership. Not least, it demands new and varied contexts for learning, across institutional, professional and geographic borders, across boundaries between the local and the global, and across the distinction between formal and non-formal education.

Endnotes

1. "To find knowledge itself may no longer be the problem; it is the use of knowledge or knowledge contextualisation which becomes important – the translation of 'knowing that' to 'knowing how'" (Mørch 2003: 66).

European youth policies and their effects in the Czech and Slovak republics

Ditta Dolejšiová

The adoption of the White Paper on Youth "opened the European Union decision-making process enabling (young) people of Europe to be involved in the decisions which concern them" (EC 2001). "A debate on youth policy has been launched, and it goes beyond the European Union, and even beyond Europe," emphasised Joao Vale de Almeida of the European Commission.[1] The White Paper also initiated a new approach towards EU candidate countries by considering young people from these countries as part of an overall move towards the recognition of young people as actors in the political realm in Europe. Does this imply that European youth policy will finally address all the young people of Europe?

While a comprehensive treatment of the concept of a European youth policy is beyond the scope of this article, the following definition will be adopted as a basis for the present discussion: European youth policy can be understood as "an integral multi-disciplinary and future-oriented policy reflecting the interests and needs of young people translated into objectives and strategies, where the European dimension is often characterised by impartiality.[2] The effects of European youth policies, however, differ throughout European countries. This article will examine the effects of European youth policy on two different, yet on many accounts very similar, national contexts undergoing regime change to democracy, and it will explore the commonalities and differences between the two countries in the larger European context of youth policy implementation.

Since 1989, young people's lives in the former Czechoslovakia have changed profoundly in the wake of political and economic transformation and as a result of an "exemplary" disintegration process, with the separation of the Czech and Slovak republics starkly, and paradoxically, contrasting with the advancing integration of Europe. Nonetheless, this split must not distract from the fact that the two countries shared a common past and continued to be similar on many social, political and economic accounts. These similarities, on the one hand, and the "impartial" character of European youth policy, on the other, should logically imply that the effects of European youth policy would be very similar, if not the same, in the Czech and Slovak republics. However, different government approaches towards youth policy at national level result in diverse outcomes. What are the factors influencing youth policy in the two, so closely interlinked,

countries? In which ways does the European concept of youth policy and youth participation lead to different results?

In order to grasp the commonalties and differences at the various levels of youth policy, this article examines the different sets of relationships that exist among the stakeholders involved in the formulation and implementation of European youth policy. Despite a certain overlap between these stakeholders and their mutual relationships, which are naturally interlinked, the analysis will consider these relationships in terms of a cascade effect (Figure 1). Thus simplified, the impact of European youth policy will be examined at the level of European institutions; at the level of the two states, and at the level of of the youth organisations acting at national, regional and local levels. While the first section focuses on the relationships between the European institutions and the national governments or representatives of the respective countries, the second section explores the relationships between the nation state or national agencies and youth associative life.

Scheme
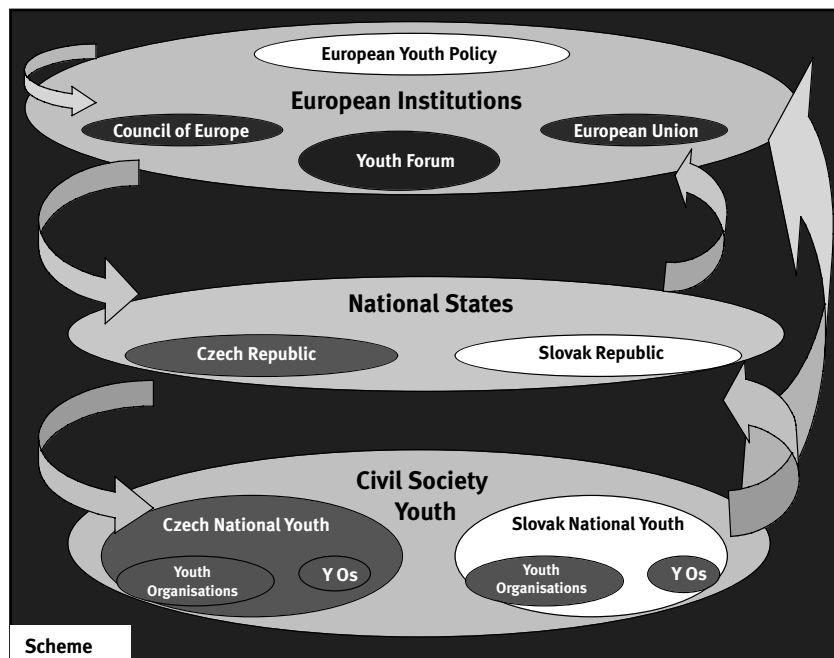
European institutions and the nation state: towards a policy of partnership and a democratic reality

Over the last decade or so, the practice of formulating European youth policy has fundamentally changed. The policy of assistance towards central European countries in transition has been gradually substituted by a policy of partnership, in which both sides contribute to the development and implementation of youth policy on an equal basis. This approach was gradually adopted by European institutions towards the member states. For instance, while the Council of Europe quickly adopted a full partnership programme with most central European countries, the European Youth Forum allowed full participation of central European

partners subject to the functioning of their national youth councils. In relation to the European Union, it was until recently hard to talk about a policy of partnership, because despite nearing enlargement, the EU confined itself to policy of assistance towards all countries in transition.

At the respective state levels, efforts to follow European standards and to develop a "modern" national youth policy were largely pursued. However, these have been determined by the specific and often diverging approach and understanding of the concept of European youth policy by the national governments and their agencies responsible for youth. In the Czech and Slovak republics, in particular, similar problems with political and economic transition and social disintegration have thus not implied identical paths of policy development, but different approaches to youth traditions have given rise to very different national directions in youth policy (Stafseng et al. 1996: 47-48). While the Klaus Government in the Czech Republic decided to straightforwardly follow the British neo-liberal model, largely ignoring the idea of youth as well as that of civil society more broadly, Slovak youth policy, even during the national-populist reign of Mečiarism, emphasised the role of young people in the transformation and "modernisation" of society (Macháček et al. 1997: 91-95).

In order to better understand the effects of European youth policy in these two countries, five main areas need to be considered in more detail. These follow the standards espoused by the Council of Europe's European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ). These are: government policy on youth, both current and planned; the bodies responsible for co-ordinating government youth policy and parliamentary committees on youth; the constitutional and legislative provisions on youth; youth associative life and co-operation; and the criteria and arrangements for recognising, supporting and funding youth organisations and projects.

In line with these European standards, it can be argued that both the Czech and Slovak republics made an effort to draw up coherent cross-sectoral youth policies and proclaimed a commitment to youth policy development, which was expressed in a long-term concept of state youth policy (until 2007). Yet, in both cases these concepts lack clear priorities and specific ways of how to achieve the set objectives, in order for these to be evaluated over time. Furthermore, both national governments expressed a will to update legislation concerning youth and make it more appropriate, but the main uncertainty concerned the continuity and consistency of national youth-policy formation and implementation, which often suffered from conflicting political interests.

Wishful pro-European thinking in the two countries gave rise, to a large extent, to very different situations. While the Slovak concept of youth as a resource was gradually incorporated at all levels, in Czech youth policy this notion has been completely absent until very recently (Dolejšiová 2002: 38). How is that possible? How is it that in the Czech Republic, where democratic governance seemed to establish itself with relative ease in comparison to some of its central European neighbours, the issue of youth policy and youth participation on matters of concern for young people has remained an unknown domain? As Petr Sak observed: "The Czech citizen has entered society with a modern parliamentary system, and its democratic institutions, with the mind and behaviour of a serf. It seems that even today, at the end of the twentieth century, this particular behavioural model is more vital than a behaviour reflecting the values and norms of a free and democratic society" (Sak 2000: 49). In fact, eight years of unwillingness and ignorance in relation to dealing with the public sector; severe budget cuts in the youth field;

and practices of clientelism during the "privatisation" of the property of former communist youth organisations under the Klaus Government resulted in a great stagnation of youth-policy formation as well as youth associative life.

The weakness of a democratic political culture; interrupted youth research; and the lack of legal provisions enabling the healthy transformation of a very centralised and paternalistic tradition of youth work have resulted in polarisation among the emerging youth associations and disturbed the legitimacy of both the governmental and non-governmental sector in the youth field. More than anything else, it was the refusal to recognise youth as a specific group in society which contributed to the image of a modern economically independent and successful young person, without leaving space for youth participation on issues of social concern. This lack of debate on social and youth issues was partly due to the absence of turnover among policy makers and "youth workers," whose average age is 45 years or more. However, this situation was hardly noticed abroad, where Havel's promotion of the values of citizenship and solidarity have always been well regarded but earned mockery at home.

Today, on the doorstep of the European Union, it can be said that some of these debates penetrated Czech governmental structures, and positive initiatives have emerged by applying for the national youth-policy review, with an incentive to revive youth research and to get an independent expert view on the state of youth policy according to European standards. Yet the main challenges in the Czech Republic remain a much needed turnover among "representatives of youth;" the application of the co-management mechanism; and the restructuring of the youth field.

In Slovakia, the context for youth policy implementation was much different. Unlike the Czech Republic, the early pro-youth Slovak Government of 1989-1993 enabled young people to renegotiate their role and space in the political realm, primarily by issuing principles of state youth policy, adopted by the Slovak National Government in 1992. Through the assembly of youth organisations in the Slovak Youth Council, youth representatives were able to participate and influence public administration, for example in questions concerning the property of youth organisations.

There are mainly two factors that strongly influenced youth policy efforts at all levels, and especially at government level. The first of these was the reconciliation of existing traditions in youth research, and the second was the emerging public debate on the role of young people in a democratic society, which was positively influenced by academics.

The country's separation from the Czech Republic resulted in new challenges: already high levels of youth unemployment increased further to 40%, and the change in political direction introduced by the Mečiar Government resulted in the migration of intellectuals and activists to the non-governmental sector (Macháček 2000: 243). Government attempts to control and undermine the rapidly developing civil society (including youth organisations) only contributed to strengthening the civic sector and its independence (for example, its orientation towards alternative sources of financial and other support). With the government establishment of a new, politically aligned and non-representative umbrella youth structure, independent youth organisations and, in particular, the Slovak Youth Council were forced to become politically engaged and to represent the voice and interests of young people (Macháček 1998: 41-44). Thus, the overall impact of the

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Mečiar Government can be characterised by a worsening economic situation and weakening democracy, on the one hand, followed by joint efforts of civic associations and youth movements to increase youth participation and volunteerism, on the other. These democratic efforts by youth organisations culminated in the 1998 electoral campaign "Rock the Vote", which contributed to returning democratic government to Slovakia. This success was due to a new direction of youth work: decentralisation and expansion into rural areas, and a focus on young people as a specific group rather than a "traditional" approach to membership of organisations. The campaign conveyed a strong message of the importance of youth empowerment, participation and citizenship. The victory of the Slovak Democratic Coalition over Mečiar's Government brought about a qualitatively different position of youth, which became one of the political actors responsible for deciding on issues of youth policies, funding, thematic priorities and orientation of youth work. None the less, challenges remain with the implementation of youth policy, and with improving the life of young people, especially in the area of youth employment, housing, prevention of problematic behaviour and education. In order to be effectively addressed, all these social questions require a degree of continuity in youth policy implementation and in the regional and local implementation of youth policy, but above all political stability is required, which is still not an absolute given.

While it appears that much of this also applies to the Czech Republic, Slovakia seems to be a good few steps ahead in the area of youth policy. Nevertheless, the governments of both countries decided to enter a European youth policy review process, and this indicates that both are eager to reflect on and evaluate their youth policy practice, and to build on the attention and recognition they are receiving from the European institutions.

States and youth organisations: towards co-operation and co-management

Macháček describes the post-1989 period in central Europe as a sequence of three phases shaping the development of youth associative life: the decrease in state influence over youth; pluralisation; and transcending social needs to human and civic values of youth associative life (Macháček 2002: 6). The influence of European youth policy in these processes varied from a direct to a very implicit one depending on governmental openness to "advice." Nevertheless, European support contributed to a new understanding of youth work and associative life.

In order to assess the effects of European youth policies at the level of nation states in relation to youth organisations, a historical perspective is necessary, in particular as regards existing and newly emerging forms of youth participation and youth associative life after 1989. In the Czech and Slovak context of the early 1990s, this meant the following: "While the Slovak counterparts in principle considered all current youth work as 'new forms,' the Czech interviewees have chosen to give their description of present forms under previous headings. And at the same time some of them said that 'there are no new forms of youth work in the Czech Republic'." (Stafseng et al. 1996: 63). While this is merely an illustration of a gradually developing approach to youth work, it depicts well the tendency of naming and seeing youth work in a "new perspective," as in Slovakia, or rigidly focusing on the "historical existence and direct continuity," as in the Czech Republic. This different approach to youth work has accompanied youth-policy

formation at the levels of both the state and youth organisations. What are the real differences in the effects in the Czech Republic as compared to Slovakia?

Given the confines of this article, the main focus here shall be with primary observations and trends characteristic of the two countries. Slovak youth organisations found themselves in the new reality of a separate state that espoused an idealistic vision of a better future and celebrated everything new by denouncing everything old. This "new" identity in the making was reflected in a strong orientation towards European youth work, led to a wider understanding of youth participation and pluralisation of youth work, and resulted in a clear turnover of youth structures. Comparable developments in the Czech context were less pronounced; the pluralisation of the youth scene took place without the necessary re-structuring and turnover in the leadership. This led to a dubious and even pessimistic attitude to change, also due to a largely polarised youth organisational scene and the divisive fight for the property of former communist youth organisations. While reconciliation among youth organisations in Slovakia occurred in the early 1990s and was strengthened by the joint opposition to the Mečiar regime, in the Czech Republic it was delayed until much closer to accession to the European Union.

This lack of "turnover" in the Czech Republic contributed to youth research stagnating and the youth debate declining. It resulted in fixation with a traditional understanding of youth work, in terms of forms, orientation and thematic priorities. This led to further disparity between urban and rural areas. In Slovakia, in turn, the continuation of research, together with changing priorities towards citizenship education, human rights and non-formal education, led to a gradual professionalisation of human resources and training. Through decentralised campaigns against the incumbent government and the revival of religious youth organisations, largely rural Slovakia gradually moved towards decentralisation.

Finally, it can be observed that in both countries, the pluralisation process of the youth scene initially resulted in increased competition among youth organisations, which gradually transformed into co-operation, especially in the realm of youth policy and negotiations with the state. This took place in both the Czech and Slovak contexts but followed different time spans. None the less, there is a qualitative difference between the prevalent types of co-operation with the state authorities in the two countries. In Slovakia, where the principle of co-management is commonly applied and an active knowledge of youth policy can be observed at least among youth organisations associated with umbrella structures, the relationship with the state administration is often perceived as "correct." In the Czech Republic, where it is hard to talk about any meaningful representative youth consultation processes and where involvement in youth policy issues is limited to a small number of large organisations (such as the Scouts, Pionýr, and the YMCA) and youth platforms, the perception of the relationship with the state is described without much criticism as "very good," often because of favourable access to financial support (Dolejšiová 2002: 65).

It is unfortunate that most students' organisations are completely disconnected from youth work and, as a result, also from youth policy-making. In both countries, the main reason for this lack of connection is not lack of interest in the issues (even though students do often consider themselves to be adults rather than belonging to the "youth" category, despite their age), but rather a failure on the part of youth platforms and councils to attract them, or to sustain their involvement, offering suitable positions and services. In spite of this general trend, which can also be observed in Western countries, there are a few excep-

tions, such as the Council of University Associations in Slovakia, that takes part in consultation processes on youth policy and in all decisions regarding the distribution of funding.

Over the past decade or so, with regard to the role, co-operation and perception of the state, its administration and agencies responsible for youth, youth organisations have changed from considering the state as an "enemy" to recognising the state as a "partner" at both national and local levels. This is true despite the fact that feelings of resistance or reservation towards the state are still present in some youth organisations (mainly as a residue of the past but also as a result of corruption, clientelism or general disinterest). Generally, and in both countries, the relationship of youth organisations with the state and public administration depends on a given organisation's membership in a youth umbrella organisation or a youth council.

As becomes clear from this discussion, youth umbrella organisations or youth councils play a crucial role in relation to the state, to the youth organisations, and to young people as a whole. In practice, national youth councils representing a great variety of youth organisations have the capacity to become important social actors ensuring a healthy functioning of the youth sector and its contribution to social transformation by building partnerships with governments and international institutions. In Slovakia, it is the Slovak Youth Council that performs the role of a negotiator with the government on issues related to youth. In the Czech Republic, and until the recent collapse of the Circle of Czech Children and Youth Association (KSDM), there were two platforms, with the Czech Children and Youth Council (ČRDM), composed mainly of large membership-based youth and children organisations, holding an influential position. The lack of one unified platform in the Czech Republic had a considerable influence on the possibility of working on issues relevant for European youth policy and its implementation.

Furthermore, the existence of multiple umbrella platforms prevented the Czech Republic from full participation in and contribution to youth policy formation through European structures, especially the European Youth Forum. These differences had a significant impact on four areas relevant to youth policy implementation: the decentralisation process; international co-operation; the negotiating position vis-à-vis the state and other partners (advocacy); and services for youth organisations and young people in general (including information, training and consultancy). While the Slovak Youth Council, as a respected partner of the state, managed to develop a framework for co-operation at all national, regional and local levels, and to provide interesting services for young people, the position of the two competing umbrella platforms in the Czech Republic was much weaker. Even if both the ČRDM and KSDM each had a partial advantage in one area, they lacked the representativeness and capacity to advocate for and improve youth services.

Despite the fact that the situation of the youth councils in the two countries differs substantially, there are also certain parallels: none of the umbrella organisations manages to reach young people outside of their more or less traditional networks of youth organisations. This is especially striking in the case of student associations. Furthermore, and with regard to representativeness of young people's interests, in both cases organisations with larger membership seem to be more satisfied with the work of the Youth Council than smaller organisations. Considering that, on average, less than 10% of young people are involved in member-based youth organisations but rather participate through ad-hoc activities and movements, the current role of youth umbrellas can be called into question.

The effects of European youth policy at the level of youth organisations can also be described through the organisational awareness of European youth policies and its translation into the actual work of youth organisations. Peter Lauritzen of the Directorate of Youth and Sports of the Council of Europe explained: "Our idea of youth policy is seeing youth as a resource and in preparation of the information and knowledge society. This means youth policy is somewhere between participation, non-formal education and civil society development. When people in different countries can focus on that, we can do a good job and help NGOs but also staff and local administrations to find their own interpretations of a particular country and advance."[3]

How are the efforts of European institutions perceived by youth workers in the two countries? To what extent are they familiar with the notion of youth policy? The main observations resulting from a mini-survey (January-February 2002) of the awareness of youth policies among Czech and Slovak youth workers are that in both the Czech and Slovak Republics, awareness of youth policies, the European institutions and their programmes varies according to whether there is affiliation with an umbrella youth organisation or youth council. Again, in both countries none of the non-associated youth organisations (among them most student organisations) were familiar with the programmes of European institutions or with youth policy in their country. It is mainly the role of the youth council to facilitate information on youth policy as well as on current trends at European level, and to reach youth organisations within and outside of its frameworks.

European influence at the level of youth umbrellas is considerable, and despite the complexities and characteristics of each national context and residues of the socialist regime, youth platforms contributed greatly to developing viable youth structures respecting the principles of youth policies at European, national and local levels. Given recent developments in the Czech Republic, it is to be expected that the long-term struggle for a united youth council will be soon over.

Challenges, final observations and conclusions

The main areas of similarity in the effects of European youth policies in the Czech and Slovak republics – at governmental level – can be summarised by the attempts of both countries to develop a coherent cross-sectoral youth policy and by the efforts to recognise the role and upgrade the position of youth by enacting laws on youth (still to be adopted in both countries). Moreover, both countries are involved in the overall debate on European youth policy through the inter-governmental conferences and working groups on issues concerning youth, as well as in consultancy with experts on youth policy at international and national levels.

At the level of youth organisations, one can observe a stabilisation of the relationship between the state and youth organisations, which is today perceived in relatively positive ways. However, this concerns only youth organisations that are members of umbrella structures. Youth organisations outside of formalised umbrellas are much less informed and aware of possible relationships at both the state and international levels. A majority of student organisations remain unrelated to the youth field, which is at the expense of youth work more generally. Only a few student organisations are aware of connections with the youth field but consider them unimportant (Dolejšiová 2002: 88).

At the level of youth associative life since 1989, there has been a strong decrease in youth participation in the traditional understanding of membership-based organisations and activities. None the less, the potential of more conventional youth participation has not been exhausted, as sociologists observe (Macháček 2002: 11-15). The actual capacity of youth organisations to attract new members needs to be re-evaluated and their activities adapted to the changing interests and needs of young people in a transforming society.

Differences between the two countries are no less pronounced. At governmental level, they become apparent in the progress made towards the establishment of a coherent framework for the functioning of the youth field. While the Czech Republic is still very much developing the necessary structures, the youth infrastructure in Slovakia already seems to exist. Furthermore, differences apply to the co-management principle characteristic of both youth-policy formation and implementation. To a large extent, these differences are due to specifics in the youth-work traditions in each country. Yet these differences are relativised by differing prospects of the political continuity necessary for the implementation of youth policy. While the Czech Republic seems to be awakening from its lethargy and has invited a youth policy review, the volatility of the Slovak political leadership can have serious consequences on youth policy and, therefore, the situation of young people in the country.

Dissimilarities at the level of youth organisations are shaped by national characteristics in youth work. While youth workers in Slovakia seem to be more critical towards the youth policy of the state and its administration, Czech youth workers appear to be less judgmental. This is probably due to the average age difference between Czech and Slovak youth workers, which translates into specific relationships of these groups with public administration.

The most significant difference is with the role and position of the youth umbrella organisations, in other words, the youth councils. The lack of unity and integration in the Czech youth scene has had a strong impact on the negotiating position of youth umbrellas vis-à-vis the state but also vis-à-vis the member organisations.

As a result, the key challenge at governmental level in both countries lies in the continuity and sustainability of youth policies spanning the political cycle of elections. This factor is crucial for the long-term implementation of youth policy, and for the presence of values espoused by European youth policy in the Czech and Slovak republics. The integration and implementation of the values and principles of European youth policies within national youth policy represents the second challenge for the future of young people in this part of Europe. At the organisational level, exploring and supporting a diversity of forms of youth participation and co-operation in youth work represents the third challenge in the changing societies of the region and for the living conditions of young people therein.

These key challenges at national and local levels can be translated back into overall challenges (and barriers) of youth policy formation and implementation at the European level. As standards for the assessment of the impact of national youth policies are being developed, it is crucial to take into consideration the differential impacts at the various levels addressed by this analysis. Thus, the main question for such an assessment of youth policy leads back to an understanding of the multi-dimensional and cross-sectoral character of youth policy, in both formulation and delivery.

Endnotes

1. Joao Vale de Almeida in a keynote speech during the symposium entitled "Youth – Actors of Social Change?", European Youth Centre, Strasbourg, 2001.

2. For more information refer to www.coe.int/youth.

3. Interview with Peter Lauritzen, Head of Department for Education, Documentation and Research, Directorate for Youth and Sports (November 2001), Council of Europe, European Youth Centre, Strasbourg.

Political participation and European citizenship identity

Lynn Jamieson and Sue Grundy

There has been a great deal of recent discussion about "identity" in social-science literature. Many authors argue that people's sense of self has become much more fluid than was possible earlier in the twentieth century when more people's lives were bound by traditional ways of doing things. Indeed it seems plausible now to describe people as having many identities rather than a single identity. Much of this talk about the fluidity of identity or identities is of some relevance to the issue of political participation. For example, if people experience themselves very individualistically rather than as rooted in local traditions and shared conditions then they are unlikely to become politically mobilised by such common causes as "locals together" or "us workers/employers". From this perspective, energies concentrated on being individual or being different are seen as creating barriers against any sense of "common cause".

However, it is important not to exaggerate these trends and underestimate the potential for political participation among young people. Most people, including young people, are located in social networks of family and friendship relationships and have commitments to specific people and places. It is also the case that trends in making personal statements about the self (for example through body adornment, fashion and style) are public statements that can create similarities with others and engagement between people as well as differentiation. Political scientists have pointed to new forms of "identity politics" in which people sharing personal and lifestyle choices create new political alliances.

Discussion of "European identity" occupies a relatively small part of the wider literature on identity. Nevertheless, many social commentators and academic authors clearly hope for a future in which people will be active European citizens participating in the social and political project of creating a more integrated Europe. But can it be presumed that "European identity" and a sense of democratic participation in the European Union will go hand-in-hand with a tolerant, caring Europe, and not a racist or chauvinistic "fortress" Europe?

Prina Werbner and Nira Yuval-Davis (1999) suggest that many people experience a blurring of "citizenship identity" and national identity. For them, how people think about citizenship can potentially become as implicated in everyday invid-

ious processes of categorising similarity and difference between people as nationality and nationalism. They note a constant potential for "othering" implicated in citizenship. If people become self-conscious of their European citizenship in this "othering" way, then they seek to define and guard a particular version of "European" through rules of citizenship that keep those designated as "non-European" out. Werbner and Yuval-Davis also emphasise the parallel existence of a more positive possible future in which people embrace an alternative conceptualisation of citizenship; this is a more inclusive democratic citizenship, which expands notions of rights beyond the narrow territoriality of nation states. In this version of citizenship, fully participating in democratic citizenship means being a conscious active subject in at least local dialogue with other citizens about matters of wider human concern (Werbner & Yuval-Davis 1999: 3). A European citizenship identity would then simply be a stepping-stone to a more global identity. Both the totalitarian state and the pursuit of human rights without frontiers are ever-present theoretical possibilities for the future of national states and for Europe in their conceptualisation of citizenship. Gerard Delanty also suggests two possible futures in terms of European citizenship: an exclusionary Europe in which non-Europeans are "othered", or "constitutional patriotism", which is "an identification with democratic or constitutional norms, and not with the state, territory, national or cultural traditions" (Delanty 2000: 115).

Surveys such as Eurobarometer (1997) suggest that young people are particularly enthusiastic about the right to travel and work across Europe. Although these rights are bestowed on citizens of EU member states as aspects of citizenship of the European Union, the same surveys show that this does not necessarily ensure a heightened awareness and appreciation of European citizenship among young people. The extent of EU citizens' blindness to their citizenship varies across Europe and is arguably most profound in Britain. The process of developing the European Commission's White Paper on A New Impetus for European Youth" involved consultation exercises with young people in all of the member states. In the United Kingdom, this resulted in the National Youth Survey of young people aged between 15 and 25 (Epps 2001) and the Young Citizens Survey of 9- to 14-year-olds (Olle 2002). The Young Citizens Survey concludes that "Young people in Britain are growing up as European citizens – even if they hardly seem to know it. The findings of the YCS suggest that, although 9- to 14-year-olds do care about a range of social issues and would like to have more say on matters that affect them, Europe has, as yet, made little impact on them" (Olle 2002: 27).

The issue becomes more complicated if citizenship is conceptualised not just as a status that can be given and taken away by a government or state but also as social practices around engagement with authorities and with civil society. To understand citizenship defined in this way, it is necessary to focus on the types of social engagement that young people have with their society, the extent to which they consciously participate in attempting to shape immediate environments for themselves and others. Indeed, this is the line of empirical investigation of citizenship pursued by British researchers under the Youth, Citizenship and Social Change programme funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).[1] Among thinkers like Werbner, Yuval-Davis and Delanty, a form of "active citizenship" at local level is likely to be a necessary precursor to positive engagement with the project of creating a more integrated but also a more open and tolerant Europe.

This paper draws on a surveys of 18- to 24-year-old men and women living in ten European cities or towns, in six different European states: Vienna and the Bregenz area of Vorarlberg, in Austria; Chemnitz and Bielefeld in Germany; Madrid and Bilbao in Spain; Manchester and Edinburgh in the United Kingdom; Prague in the Czech Republic; and Bratislava in Slovakia. Random samples were sought of young people who had lived in these localities for at least five years in order to have a sample from each locality with a common experience of the place. The survey questions enabled exploration of the relationship between young people's sense of European citizenship, their willingness to identify with Europe and their political participation.[2]

Awareness of European identity and citizenship

There are considerable differences between our study sites, in terms of the proportion of young adults who have accessed knowledge and experience of Europe beyond their national boundaries. Connections to elsewhere in Europe through languages spoken and/or visits were weakest among interviewees from Madrid, Manchester and Edinburgh. High proportions of interviewees from Bregenz, Vienna and Bielefeld reported having friends from other nationalities, exposure to and facility with other European languages and visits to other European countries. Substantial proportions of interviewees in Bratislava, Prague and Chemnitz also reported facility with other languages and high levels of visiting other countries. Those who had visited at least one European country since the age of 16 and speak at least one other European language ranged from 90% of respondents in Vienna to just 16% of respondents in Manchester. Over 60% of our respondents from Madrid, Manchester and Edinburgh could only converse in their mother tongue, while the majority of respondents from other sites could speak one or more additional languages. While in most of the study cites around 10% (between 7% and 11%) of young people had not visited another European country since the age of 16, this rose to 32% in Edinburgh and Bilbao, 44% in Manchester and 62% in Madrid. Our respondents in Edinburgh and Manchester were also the least likely to report anything other than "very little" formal teaching about the European Union at school.

When a composite measure of "exposure to Europe" was cross-tabulated with the extent to which people see themselves as European citizens or otherwise identify with Europe, we found that while low exposure to Europe typically coincides with low European identity, high exposure does not necessarily mean high European identity.

The significance for respondents of being European, or having a sense of citizenship of Europe, was explored through four separate sets of questions, and responses are shown in Table 1. These include questions about Europe and being European that were embedded in a series of questions about attachment to place and strength of feeling about nationalities. They also include an item about the importance of being (or about to become, in the case of Bratislava and Prague) a citizen of the European Union. This is drawn from a set of questions concerning "how you feel or think about yourself as a person." A sequence of items was presented and respondents were asked to rate how important each was to how they feel or think about themselves on a five-point scale from "not at all important" to "very important." Finally, the personal relevance of being a European citizen was also explored by the question "Can you tell me how frequently you think of yourself as a European citizen

(scale shown was never/rarely/sometimes/often/always). The proportion choosing "often" and "always" are shown in the final column of the table.

Table 1 – Sense of European identity and European citizenship

	Strong attachment to Europe	*Strong feeling of being European*	*Being/becoming a citizen of the EU is important to how I feel about myself*	*Often or always think of self as a European citizen*
Bregenz	Not asked	52%	41%	Not asked
Vienna	Not asked	59%	33%	Not asked
Prague	42%	65%	44%	9%
Bratislava	44%	59%	60%	11%
Chemnitz	43%	63%	31%	45%
Bielefeld	47%	64%	32%	49%
Bilbao	39%	28%	17%	32%
Madrid	53%	38%	37%	37%
Edinburgh	32%	23%	15%	4%
Manchester	39%	30%	26%	10%

These different questions result in a somewhat different pattern of answers across sites, although the lowest levels of identification with Europe are fairly consistently found in Manchester and Edinburgh, with Bilbao and Madrid also among the bottom four on three out of four items.

Among the EU member states it is more common to report "feeling European" than awareness of EU or European citizenship. In many of the sites, more people reported moderate or strong feelings of national identity than of European identity, and sense of national identity was much stronger than awareness of European citizenship. There were important exceptions, however. These include the fact that in Bratislava the majority of interviewees were equally likely to identify (anticipated) EU citizenship and national identity as "important to how I feel or think about myself" (60% and 60%, respectively). There is a large difference between Prague and Bratislava in the proportion placing importance on European citizenship (44% and 60% respectively). The Slovak research team emphasise that this be understood in the context of the different histories of the two republics since the end of the Czechoslovakian Federation. The greater economic difficulties and a sense of political isolation experienced in the new Slovakia fostered a sense of loss of place in the world. They suggest that

for some Slovaks many hopes centre on EU membership, including the hope of improved international standing and social status.

Respondents in Bielefeld also gave rather different answers from the typical pattern. Not only did a relatively large majority express feelings of "being European", but also almost equal proportions chose European citizenship and national identity as "important to how I feel or think about myself" (32% and 38%). More interviewees in Bielefeld and Chemnitz than in any of the other study cities said that they frequently thought of themselves as European citizens. It is a legacy of the Second World War that national identity and nationalism are viewed with particular suspicion in Germany. "Being European" and, particularly, a citizen of the European Union may be a safer way of "being German" for some respondents. It is possible that citizenship of the European Union was an aspect of "being German" for some respondents.

Despite the high number of Slovaks who saw (anticipated) citizenship of the European Union as important in how they feel or think about themselves, very few actually think of themselves as European citizens. This could be because the term "citizen" is reserved for the formal state citizenship that will only follow when membership of the EU is achieved. However, the low frequency of thinking in terms of European citizenship among respondents in the Czech and Slovak republics is also repeated in Britain, an EU member state. This could either tell us something about how people see "citizenship" or about their insularity. It could designate unfamiliarity with applying the term "citizen" to oneself or unwillingness to use the concept as a way of connecting with the world beyond national boundaries. Both are possible. Despite having a much longer history as a state than the Czech and Slovak republics, the United Kingdom lacks a written constitution clarifying the nature of citizenship.

Views of citizenship and ethnic diversity

One of the aims of our project was to explore what people understand by "citizenship." In particular, we wanted to ask about the extent to which our respondents see citizenship in terms of ethnic rights or civic virtues. "Ethnic citizenship" is citizenship bestowed by birth onto an ethnic group or people seen as connected by blood or kinship. "Civic citizenship" emphasises entitlement achieved through participation in the life of a society, for example through obedience of its laws, participation in paid employment and payment of taxes. There are variations between countries in the extent to which legal systems acknowledge "ethnic rights" versus "civic participation" when defining or bestowing citizenship. For example, the preservation of the entitlement of "ethnic Germans" to citizenship in Germany (at least until the new nationality law of 2001 limited the ethnic elements of *ius sanguinis*) is an explicit acknowledgement of ethnic rights absent from many legal systems. However, people's everyday understanding of citizenship need not reflect the legal situation. Overall, we found less variation between countries in what our respondents saw as important in terms of bestowing citizenship than might be predicted from historical differences in legal-political situations. We explored the issue by asking interviewees about their views of appropriate requirements for somebody seeking citizenship in their country, offering a list of possible requirements to rate in importance from not at all important to very important.

Table 2 – Percentage of respondents choosing items as important requirements of people seeking citizenship [3]

	Austria		Czech Republic	Slovakia	Germany		Spain		Britain	
	Bregenz	Vienna	Prague	Bratislava	Chemnitz	Bielefeld	Bilbao	Madrid	Edinburgh	Manchester
Abide by laws and institutions	91%	87%	93%	95%	88%	89%	52%	72%	85%	87%
Working in the country	68%	63%	66%	65%	60%	59%	39%	77%	60%	66%
Feel that they belong in the country	51%	39%	55%	58%	51%	58%	35%	43%	63%	66%
Speak the main language	76%	71%	67%	82%	75%	82%	32%	56%	50%	62%
Born in the country	32%	20%	20%	26%	27%	28%	43%	55%	50%	59%
Living in the country for at least 5 years	57%	50%	62%	65%	38%	39%	36%	68%	56%	58%
A parent from the country	24%	16%	20%	30%	31%	27%	17%	39%	47%	51%
Oath of allegiance to the country	18%	13%	15%	25%	14%	15%	10%	30%	24%	48%
National ancestors	14%	9%	15%	17%	16%	20%	14%	31%	25%	39%
Pass a test about the country	23%	20%	18%	25%	28%	25%	5%	12%	19%	37%

We cannot claim that all items are clear indicators of either "civic citizenship", or "ethnic citizenship", as items are open to interpretation in a number of ways. For example, an interviewee might think it is important that somebody speaks their national language because they want an ethnically and culturally homogenous society, consistent with "ethnic citizenship", or because they see language as important for enabling civic participation in their society, and hence "civic citizenship". However, the items that are the most unambiguously "civic" are: "to abide by the laws and institutions of the country"; "working in the country"; and "living in the country for at least five years". The items that are most unambiguously "ethnic" refer to parentage and ancestry.[4]

The only item endorsed as important by a large majority of respondents from all sites, with one exception, is that those seeking citizenship "abide by the laws and institutions of the country". The exception is among interviewees from Bilbao, perhaps because forms of civil disobedience and resistance to the authority of the Spanish state have been a persistent feature of the political landscape. In Bilbao, only 52% of respondents see this item as important in comparison to 91% in the Bregenz region of Vorarlberg in Austria.

Given the history of *ius sanguinis*, in Germany, it is particularly interesting to see that slightly fewer interviewees in Chemnitz and Bielefeld identify the importance of "national ancestors" or "a parent from the country" than interviewees from Madrid, Edinburgh and Manchester. Nowhere did "national ancestors" get majority support and only in Manchester did "a parent from the country" achieve endorsement as important by 50% of respondents. Higher proportions of respondents in Britain, and particularly in Manchester, opted for many of the items that only attracted very small proportions of support elsewhere. We suggest that this reflects the rhetoric associated with the negative media coverage given to asylum seekers and illegal immigrants in Britain at the time of the study combined with particular local circumstances in the area around Manchester. A number of candidates for the extreme-right British National Party have recently been elected to local councils in the Manchester area. This party has made its reputation through anti-immigrant statements. Their election reflects local circumstances fostering a relatively high degree of racism.

It is often assumed that those who emphasise civic virtues will reject the significance of ethnic entitlements to citizenship based on ancestry or parentage. It was possible to test out this assumption by cross-tabulating respondents' choices with respect to civic and ethnic items. This was done for each study site. The expected association between emphasising the importance of civic items and denying the importance of ethnic items was shown in Bregenz, Vienna, Prague and Bratislava, but not in all study sites. In Madrid, Manchester and Edinburgh, those who identified the importance of civic items were more likely than not to also identify ethnic items as important.

As the introductory discussion illustrated, some commentators hope that a European identity will flourish from having a strong civic sense of European citizenship, for example, emphasising the importance of commitment to a common legal framework and equal rights. In some of our study sites, there is an association between European identification and an emphasis on civic aspects of national citizenship, although the relationship was only statistically significant (chi-squared at .01 level) in Bratislava, Bielefeld and Madrid. However, the fact

that some respondents who emphasise civic entitlements to citizenship also emphasise ethnic entitlements to citizenship undermines the possibility of assuming that identification with Europe will mean openness to cultural and ethnic diversity within a common constitution. This was further demonstrated by more direct attitude questions about immigration and the value of cultural and ethnic diversity. Claims about feeling or being European are not always associated with a positive view of cultural, ethnic and national diversity within the respondent's own homeland.

Active citizenship and European identity

A number of theorists have suggested that those who are actively engaged as local or national citizens are more likely to develop an interest in or engagement with European citizenship. The study explored respondents' participation in voting, their sense of affinity with political parties, their participation in civic organisations, and their interest in a number of social and political issues. While there is some support in the data of an association between indicators of active engagement as local and national citizens and engagement with European citizenship, again the picture is rather complicated. This is discussed here with reference to the interest taken by our respondents in a range of political and social issues. Interviewers worked through a list of issues with respondents and asked about the extent to which each item was of interest to them personally. The unification of Europe was one of these issues.

Table 3 demonstrates that, in many localities, the majority of our respondents expressed interest in a wide range of issues. The last row shows the proportion interested in at least eight out of the ten issues. The issues that commanded the interest of the largest majorities were "job and training opportunities" and the "quality and content of education". Large majorities were also interested in the issue of equality between men and women in all localities except Prague and Bratislava.

Table 3 – Percentage of respondents interested or very interested in issues

	Bregenz	Vienna	Prague	Bratislava	Chemnitz	Bielefeld	Bilbao	Madrid	Edinburgh	Manchester
Job and training opportunities	92%	90%	70%	78%	92%	90%	90%	93%	85%	88%
Quality and content of education	88%	84%	60%	68%	87%	84%	72%	87%	82%	82%
Equality between men and women	82%	74%	48%	46%	70%	72%	80%	86%	80%	80%
Public services or facilities (transport, leisure)	76%	70%	53%	44%	54%	54%	79%	76%	80%	79%
Terrorism	62%	52%	51%	48%	66%	72%	83%	92%	71%	79%
Poverty	77%	76%	42%	42%	68%	70%	77%	84%	71%	70%
Discrimination against immigrants or other minority groups	72%	70%	50%	32%	62%	74%	70%	76%	61%	70%
Animal rights	72%	58%	41%	39%	53%	50%	57%	56%	58%	70%
Enviromental issues	81%	75%	63%	49%	61%	66%	70%	78%	62%	59%
Unification of Europe	55%	53%	50%	52%	47%	53%	28%	52%	30%	39%
Interested in at least 8 of these 10 issues	56%	49%	17%	17%	38%	44%	47%	64%	42%	49%

Political participation and European citizenship identity

Few of the issues attracted the interest of more than 50% of respondents in Prague and Bratislava, where only 17% of respondents were interested in at least eight of the ten issues. The lower levels of interest for Slovakian, and to a lesser extent Czech respondents, in the social and political issues listed, may reflect the fact that non-governmental single-issue campaigns, such as the women's movement, animal rights, environmental campaigns or campaigns for racial equality, could not flourish under the communist period and have not emerged as visible or significant parts of the political landscape during the period of post-communist reconstruction. The issue of the unification of Europe, on the other hand was highly visible for our respondents in Prague and Bratislava, as discussions regarding the future membership of the Czech and Slovak republics in the European Union were under way at the time of the survey.

In the majority of localities, fewer respondents were interested in the issue of European unification than most of the other issues that were put to them, but, nevertheless, in most cases about half of the respondents expressed some interest in the issue. The exceptions were young adults in Madrid, Edinburgh and Manchester, where only minorities (28%, 30% and 39%) expressed interest in the issue. In all localities, higher proportions of women than men were interested in eight or more of the ten issues and more women than men were interested in gender equality. Differences between men and women on this issue were typically larger than on any other. However, women were not significantly more likely to be interested in the unification of Europe.

Those whose interest in social and political issues was high – in other words those who were interested in at least eight out of the ten issues – were more likely to identify themselves as European than those who were only interested in a small number of issues. There was a statistically significant association between these two measures in most of the study localities. This provides some support to those theorists who have suggested that active engagement as local or national citizens is likely to foster an interest in or engagement with European citizenship.

Conclusion

Survey data has been presented from random samples of 18- to 24-year-old men and women who are settled residents of ten locations across six European countries. It is important to acknowledge that only a rather limited snapshot can be gathered through this form of data collection. It is necessary to talk in more depth with respondents to get a deeper understanding of their views. However, the data are sufficient to reaffirm the view that there is a long way to go before "citizenship of Europe" is of significance to the sense of self for the overwhelming majority of young people living in Europe. Most young people say they have stronger feelings for either their local region or their nation than they have for Europe. Only in Bratislava, where high hopes are riding on joining the European Union, were the majority of young people identifying European citizenship as important to their sense of self, and doing so in equal proportion to the importance of their Slovak national identity. While in all the localities some young people express strong feelings of being European and place importance on European citizenship, this was particularly rare in Bilbao, Edinburgh, Manchester and Madrid. Respondents in these cities had less experience of Europe beyond their own state, having made fewer visits to other European countries. Low exposure to Europe typically coincides with low European identity.

Literature discussing the possible futures of Europe place hope for an open and inclusive Europe on citizens creating versions of European citizenship that stress human rights (Werbner & Yuval-Davis 1999) or pride in equality through the law and constitution (Delanty 2000). This suggests that the seeds of such European citizenship will be found in contexts fostering civic rather than ethnic understandings of national citizenship. The former understanding of citizenship emphasises rights as a reward for contribution to society rather than rights being ethnic privileges of birth. Questions about entitlements to national citizenship showed that more young people across all of the locations emphasised civic rather than ethnic aspects of national citizenship. However, in exploring respondents' understanding of citizenship, the assumption was tested that those who emphasise civic virtues, like obeying the law and working in the country, will also reject the significance of ethnic entitlement to citizenship based on ancestry or parentage. This assumed inverse relationship between support for civic and ethnic citizenship was not found in all study sites. For respondents in Madrid, Edinburgh and Manchester in particular, both civic virtues and blood connections were seen as important entitlements to citizenship. Moreover, those who identify themselves as European were not necessarily more tolerant of cultural, national and ethnic diversity. It clearly cannot be presumed that fostering European identity will necessarily also foster a tolerant, caring Europe, and not a racist or chauvinistic "fortress" Europe.

The same debates about the future of Europe suggest that the people most likely to develop commitment to a European citizenship as participants in an open democratic project are those who are active citizens engaging with civic society in their own nation state. The extent to which respondents might be described as active citizens was explored, for example, through their willingness to vote in local and national, as well as European elections, and – the issue focused on in this paper – through taking an interest in a range of political and social issues. The majority of respondents were found to be interested in many social and political issues. Those who were active citizens in this sense were also more likely to identify themselves as European. While there is variation across sites, it is clear that active citizenship at local or national level and identification with Europe can be mutually supporting.

While there is not a consistent statistical relationship between experience of Europe, engagement as active citizens and tolerance of national and cultural diversity, it should be noted that Madrid and Manchester – places in which young people had relatively high rates of intolerance and rejection of immigrants – are also places where young people had travelled least. In the case of Manchester and Edinburgh there is also almost no education about the European Union and Europe. Other British studies have also shown a high degree of lack of knowledge about citizenship rights at European, national and local level among young people in Britain (Epps 2001; Olle 2002). The suggested remedies in the British context – more education in politics and decision making; a proper debate about lowering the voting age; greater efforts to make information about the EU available to young people (Epps 2001; Olle 2002) – may have wider relevance.

Endnotes

1. See in particular the studies Negotiating Transitions to Citizenship, headed by Professor Ruth Lister (see Noel Smith et al. (2002)) and A longitudinal study of

young people's involvement in social action headed by Dr Debi Roker (Eden & Roker (2002b)).

2. The data are drawn from a European Commission funded study entitled "Orientations of Young Men and Women to Citizenship and European Identity". The age group 18 to 24 is chosen as representing the youngest group of citizens. The localities are chosen as towns and cities representing contrasting parts of Europe; five sets of paired localities. In four cases, the pairs of localities are two autonomous parts of the same nation state (Vienna in contrast to Vorarlberg in Austria; East Germany in contrast to West Germany; Madrid in contrast to the Basque Country in Spain; England in contrast to Scotland in the UK). Our final paired localities are two nation state that were previously one state, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The study cites are Prague and Bratislava. In each case, these regions or nations have interlinked but contrasting histories of connection to the rest of Europe and the European Union.

All of those conducting the study have contributed to this paper, although it has been written by the named authors. They are: Professor Lynn Jamieson and Dr Sue Grundy, University of Edinburgh; Professor Claire Wallace and Reingard Spannring, Institute for Advanced Studies, Vienna, Austria; Dr Susan Condor, Lancaster University, England; Professor Klaus Boehnke and Daniel Fuss, International University Bremen, Germany; Professor Ladislav Macháček, Dr Gabriel Bianchi and Barbara Lasticova, Slovak Academy of Sciences, Slovakia; Professor Maria Ros and Miryam Rodriguez Monter, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain, and Dr Hector Grad, Gema Garcia Albacete and Javier Rodriguez, Universidad Autonoma de Madrid, Spain.

This paper reports the findings in particular of our random sample surveys and is drawn from our integrated State of the Art report and a series of State of the Art papers and working papers published on the project website (http://www.sociol.ed.ac.uk/ youth).

3. The question asked was "in your opinion, how important should the following be as requirements for somebody seeking [the appropriate term was inserted from the following list: Austrian, Czech, Slovakian, German, Spanish, British] citizenship?" (prompt if necessary, "that is, full entitlement to any state-provided benefits, voting rights, a passport, etc."). The scale used was 0=not at all important to 4=very important. The table shows the proportion choosing 3 or 4.

4. Even these items have alternative readings. For example, when administering the survey it became clear in discussion with one Edinburgh-based respondent that they did not choose "working in the country" because they did not want to discriminate against unemployed people.

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Young people and alter-globalisation: from disillusionment to a new culture of political participation

Geoffrey Pleyers

Often accused of being part of the generation of individualism and apathy, numerous young people are now turning again towards political and social commitment thanks to the alter-globalisation movement.[1] This new activist generation has been profoundly marked by our era and cannot be understood without being situated in a wider process of social transformation.[2] Mobilised in the public arena, these young people have renounced neither their individualism nor their deep disillusionment with the traditional structures, institutions, and actors of social and political life. On the contrary, they show us that these essential traits of the contemporary population are not necessarily leading to apathy or to a retreat to the private sphere. They can also be the basis for new forms of commitment, and for new cultures of political participation.[3] In order to understand the significance of the ideas of young alter-globalisation activists, we will have to first analyse their disillusionment in four areas: politics; institutions; traditional social movements; and the more institutionalised aspects of the alter-globalisation movement. Then we will investigate their capacity to overcome their disillusionment by creating a new culture of participation and commitment. As a preface, however, some methodological comments are necessary.

Since 1999, this investigation based on qualitative methods has been conducted primarily in France, Belgium, Mexico and the first three World Social Forums, as well as, to a lesser extent, in Argentina, Spain and Nicaragua. Without taking it as a strict limit, this paper will concentrate on activists under 25 years of age who have not yet developed professional attachments or started a family. Students form the large majority of the young alter-globalisation activist population, while the participation of children of immigrants has been very low. Indeed, social origin and background are important variables in the type of involvement, and influence young people's visions of politics (Galland 2000; Muxel 2001: 46).

From sympathisers of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to libertarians and other "Black Blocks", young alter-globalisation activists are not a homogenous entity but constitute an extremely diverse group. In fact, fluidity and informality are so common in this field that even the use of the term "young alter-globalisation activists" can only be justified by the need to make life easy for the reader. In addition to political sources of diversity, the movement also contains a great

wealth of cultural diversity, as the demands of commitment and the nature of the movement itself vary from one country, or even one city, to another. But, beyond their diversity, young alter-globalisation activists from Mexico or Argentina and their European counterparts share common references such as the events of Seattle or Genoa, characterised by opposition to neo-liberal globalisation and the will to develop new ways of commitment and participation. Hence, the creation of their movements and their meetings and debates are often surprisingly similar. For these reasons, it seems interesting to combine the study of these diverse groups into a single chapter.

Disillusionment

Disillusionment with politics

One of the most widespread world trends relating to political participation is clearly young citizens' disappointment and disillusionment with political institutions and traditional parties. In all regions of the world, abstentions and protest votes are increasing. Thus a European Commission report (EC 2003a) notices a "decline in the numbers voting, with a below-average turnout among young people by around ten points, and a growing division in the participation rate between young people and other age groups." All over the world, young people are becoming increasingly removed from democratic institutions and traditional forms of political life (Norris 2003; Muxel 2001).[4]

Beneath their diversity on the surface, young people today share the burden of being children of modernity, crisis and disillusionment. Part of the generation who grew up during the economic turmoil and the advent of neo-liberal economics, they are also the orphans of the great twentieth century ideologies that promised brighter tomorrows. Once in power, former protest movements failed to fulfil the expectations of their adherents (Hobsbawm 1995, Wallerstein 1998, Holloway 2002). Hence, young protestors nowadays question the legitimacy of existing power and many of them "have reached the conclusion that the key point was not politics or politicians, but the centralised power system itself."[5] They believe that "the true question is one of counter-power, not of power."[6] Hence, young people's commitment to traditional social movements or political parties is now rare and infrequent (see Hooghe in this volume; Muxel 2001). For these young people, who can no longer see much difference between left- and right-wing platforms, traditional political divisions fail to resonate and they sometimes see the attraction of extremes.

This massive disappointment is reinforced by some structural weaknesses of our representative democracies. The loss of governability, already postulated a few decades ago (Crozier et al. 1975), has grown with globalisation, which has led to a loss of political power over international markets and globalised issues and results in an ever-widening gap between political institutions and young citizens (Beck 1997; Touraine 1999). As shown by the multiple counter-summits and demonstrations on all continents, international political institutions have become the main targets of young alter-globalisation activists' discontentment.

Criticism of social actors

The disillusionment of young people concerns not only institutions and political parties but also traditional social actors. Hence adhesion to trade unions is low among many Europeans under the age of 25 and decreases more rapidly than

other categories (Serrano & Waddington 2000; EC 2003a). Moreover, young activists are very critical of the main trade-union confederations, which they blame for their lack of support for smaller social struggles and their rapprochement with neo-liberalism.[7] Likewise, in Quebec, the main characteristic of students' committees was the rejection of bureaucratised student centres and of all partisan structures (Gauthier & Piché 2001). Rejecting traditional commitment, young people call themselves "citizens" or "activists" rather than "militants."

Recently, a similar phenomenon has also affected current alter-globalisation associations with higher levels of media coverage and institutionalisation. Despite their repeated efforts, these associations do not really achieve their goal of integrating young activists, as illustrated by ATTAC-France.[8] As a result, spaces for young people at international meetings are often proclaimed "No Logo – that means no hanging up of organisations', banners, no leaflet distribution, no organisations', posters."[9] The complaint of branding once made against commercial trademarks is now targeted at the organisations of social movements. A huge majority of young activists are very critical of the bureaucratisation of the main actors in the movement as well as of their of relationship with political parties or public authorities. They accuse NGOs and professional militants of "travelling all around the world following in the forums' wake, getting far away from what happens locally."[10]

Young activists' integration in the alter-globalisation movement is problematic in most countries to the same degree as it is at international level. Various explanations have to be distinguished. Among them are young peoples' lack of experience and difficulties in terms of their ability to address an assembly of well-known and experienced activists, and the apprehensive attitude towards "young activists' violence" and their more radical positions. But the main reason is probably to be found in the characteristics of these young activists' commitment, which rejects old customs and distrusts any institutionalisation of the movement and is instead based on individuation, fluid networks and affinity groups. For example, young activists show little interest in participating in long negotiations that lead to movements' declarations or platforms.

Two kinds of attitudes towards World or Continental Social Forums are distinguishable. The first one allows for a unique participation in these events, where young activists keep "one foot inside, one foot outside."[11] Young activists maintain a critical attitude towards the event and its more institutionalised leaders: "Usually these forums restrict themselves to discussion but do little or nothing in practice."[12] Hence, young alter-globalisation activists organise their own alternative meetings, discussion and action spaces in Porto Alegre, Florence or Paris. The other attitude consists in a more radical criticism and rejection of participation in these "very bureaucratically organised events." These positions are taken by libertarians or by activists working on an entirely local scale. They wonder "what might finally be the outcome of these meetings at the other side of the world?"[13]

If the situation varies from one region to another, one commonality is that the importance of young peoples' contributions to the movement is not reflected in the general alter-globalisation meetings nor in the national and international networks through which social action is organised and prepared. Nevertheless, some progress has been made in youth integration at some events, as exemplified by the successive World Social Forums or the first European Social Forum in Florence. Despite the difficulties and tensions that can be generated by the transition from one generation to another, young and not-so-young activists often collaborate

successfully in alter-globalisation movements, combining the dynamism of youth with the experience of long-time militants.

A different participation

Young alter-globalisation activists thus experience a profound disappointment with traditional political forms of involvement, institutions and actors. Nevertheless, rather than fostering disinterest in politics, recent acts of mobilisation encourage us to think about rejection of today's social actors and political life, combined with a renewal of interest in the res publica and a desire to "do politics differently." If young people vote less than they did before and have partially lost confidence in traditional democratic institutions, they have filled the streets during alter-globalisation and anti-war protests. Unlike those who claim to have no future, young alter-globalisation activists once again think that they could have an influence on the political and social development of the societies they live in. On the basis of the two dimensions of disappointment (political and social) examined in the previous section, young alter-globalisation activists develop new visions of politics and of commitment.

A new vision of politics

As illustrated by their daily practices and world view, as well as by some recent and key books (Klein 2000; Collectivo Situaciones 2001; Holloway 2002), at the dawn of the twenty-first century young protesters believe time should no longer be spent plotting the takeover of the Winter Palace, but rather in developing counter-power logic and concrete alternatives to mainstream politics. Their forms of commitment are based on short-term projects and on ideas that seem incompatible with mass ideologies and an entirely established society project. Rather than messianic visions, young activists focus on day-to-day practices: "We are feeling our way, seeking out concrete and emancipatory paths toward the transformation of social relations."[14] Rather than seeking another conquest of political power or a major institutional change, they believe world transformation could happen through a plethora of paths centred on participation, active citizenship, the local level and daily life. As regards disappointment in "policies from above," they call for a renewal of politics from below based on practice: "Politics is everywhere. It is the sum of your analysis of the situation and your practices."[15] The practical action and empowerment logic of the alter-globalisation movement allows the single citizen to recover some power and to be able to contribute to social change in a concrete way. Many young alter-globalisation activists believe changing the world will occur "first by a battle in our minds against the capitalist logic with which we are deeply impregnated."[16]

Although they are interested in global issues, young alter-globalisation activists are not disconnected from local and national realities. On the contrary, the Italian case shows us that, where it is powerful, the movement was able to conserve strong local roots. The struggle for a better world begins by initiatives in daily life, in local and micro-spaces ranging from a community squat to action against advertising, or to support for the homeless and for illegal migrants. The local level allows young alter-globalisation activists to go further than merely making speeches at big meetings, and act more concretely.

For young activists, the "other world" proposed by Porto Alegre begins here and now. Movements and meetings represent for them spheres of autonomy that must reflect some of the characteristics of the other world they want to build: "We

don't separate our practices and our aims. We choose a horizontal, anti-sexist, self- and eco-managed functioning."[17] Hence, all around the world young alter-globalisation activists' camps are emerging.[18] Far from being restricted to opposition to neo-liberalism, these meetings create places of socialisation; opportunities for exchange and for celebration; a mix of the private and public; friendship and political commitment; entertainment and resistance; happiness and the struggle for a better world. They represent opportunities to experiment with different forms of participation, organisation, and learning based on exchanging experience and practice amongst peers. But reality is often different. Young activists are confronted with concrete problems such as the democratisation of decision making, the indispensability of delegation, assignation of leadership, challenges posed by political divisions or the varying degrees of involvement among participants.[19] Nevertheless, and despite their ephemeral aspect, young alter-globalisation activists' camps represent a key moment where individual life-experiences intersect with collective history and deeply mark each young participant. They durably reinforce a propensity towards political involvement and commitment to the alter-globalisation movement.

New participation patterns

Beyond denouncing traditional actors, young alter-globalisation activists develop alternative patterns of commitment and participation that are less institutionalised and more individualised. In the youth movement, there are neither membership cards nor defined obligations for adherents. It is a model of commitment by project; everyone commits in a precise way only to a limited project, such as the organisation of a conference or an event. Young alter-globalisation activists favour direct action on limited targets. Co-ordination committees are formed only with a particular issue or problem in mind, and dissolve once the situation has changed. This fluidity and the lack of demand for long-term commitment suit many aspects of young peoples' lives.

As in libertarian organisations, delegation and institutionalisation of the movement is strongly rejected by young alter-globalisation activists, even if in practice it is not always possible to avoid these things. Each young activist affirms above all his or her individuality: "I am an individual person and I don't want a card!"[20] Hence, they prefer to participate in actions and even in their preparation as "free electrons,"[21] in other words, as free individual people, maintaining their distance from all kinds of associations but retaining the right to interact as they want with groups and organisations that seem to best correspond to their current ideas and preferences. Thus, young alter-globalisation activists' commitment is based on affinity groups.[22] This concept refers for example to a team of friends, to militants of the same local association, or to a group ready for direct action. Sociability and friendship are essential factors for young alter-globalisation activists' commitment.

Young alter-globalisation activists are deeply affected by certain global trends related to the information society in which we are living (Castells 1996-1998). Flexibility, the co-ordination of disparate groups and informality all characterise the youth protest movement. They care about their personal autonomy and "assert a kind of individualism that remains compatible with collective action and solidarity" (Wieviorka 1998: 40): "Individualism is not a bad thing. It doesn't mean egoism but the respect of each single person, and this is fundamental."[23] Hence, in the networks of movements, everyone finds a way to commit that is

adapted to his or her specificity and that expresses individual characteristics (Ion 1997). But these patterns of participation prized by students demand numerous individual resources and the capacity for a high level of individual analysis, criticism and personal initiative.

Young activists' meetings are characterised by the organisation of spaces allowing anybody to speak, where the lecturer is no longer placed on a pedestal. Most of their gatherings are dedicated to experiencing exchanges, action preparations, internal democracy or organisation and to linking local struggles with global struggles. Hence, these young people demonstrate a great deal of critical reflection about their own movement, by which they "exert themselves to build their experience and to give it sense" (Dubet et Wieviorka 1995: 120). However, more than reflection, action is at the heart of young activists' commitment. Present in mass quantities during street demonstrations at alter-globalisation events, young people are also the first volunteers to quit a social forum conference day in order to occupy a building or to carry out active protests.

The festive side of acts of mobilisation is especially important for these young alter-globalisation activists, who focus on the creative and artistic potential inherent in the movement, as "to resist is to create" (Aubenas & Benasayag 2002). This individual and collective creativity aims to make the issue more interesting to the audience or to the media, to help generate reflection on its significance or simply to have fun during the demonstration. The old logic of sacrificing for a laudable cause is an anachronism: today's activists have fun resisting and many demonstrations turn into parties. Aside from the wish for a different society, large demonstrations are marked by the euphoria of being together where "things are happening." Thus, neo-Zapatism was "the opportunity for many young people to gather and mobilise with the aim not only of supporting the Zapatistas but also of being part of this adventure, of participating in the celebration."[24] If young alter-globalisation activists' movements and preparations for mobilisation are based on a project-by-project logic, the events themselves are lived moment-by-moment as collective adventures, responding to the deep thirst for lived experience and the cult of instantaneity.

Active non-violence is a difficult method of protest valued by many young activists who label themselves as "disobedients." Without using violence, demonstrators often try to penetrate forbidden areas during international summits. Another small segment of young alter-globalisation activists, one of the diverse "Black Block" components, carry out more violent actions creating "autonomous and anticapitalist areas" where they destroy all symbols of capitalism and consumption. While journalists and some social movement leaders have focused on this, violence has remained a secondary issue for most young activists.[25] Indeed, since Genoa there has been a notable decrease in violence in alter-globalisation protests.

The young activists distinguish themselves by a particularly international and cross-cultural way of tackling problems; thus, they mobilise in favour of more international solidarity, against war, racism, the extreme-right and the closed migration policy, carrying out actions at various levels simultaneously. "Europe is for young people a community of values among which they live, study, work, travel" (EC 2003a)... and protest! They use mobilisation events around European Union summits as opportunities to meet, network, exchange knowledge and build a young European activist network.

Young activist movements

Deeply influenced by the logic of ephemeral organisation, alter-globalisation movements among the young tend to be heterogeneous and to contain the fluidity and informality that characterise network structures. Activists find themselves implicated in multiple and criss-crossed groups that assemble and disassemble according to circumstances. Some activists integrate small groups with precise aims, while some others choose to join an "adult association," but the majority of young people supporting alter-globalisation will never commit to any movement. Indeed, the project-commitment logic does not facilitate the emergence of long-term youth movements. Between two actions, activists return to their usual activities, waiting for another concrete goal around which to mobilise. Many enthusiastic initiatives rapidly fall apart. But active and ephemeral participation in a collective mobilisation increases the chance of future participation and durably fixes the inclination towards such types of action. (Muxel 2001). Nevertheless, the fact that more durable associations seldom exist at national level, and are virtually non-existent at international level, causes some problems in terms of the representation of young activists in the alter-globalisation movement.

In spite of the difficulties, some young alter-globalisation activists' associations are emerging. They are often more fluid than adult ones, and encourage self-organisation, the participation of all and militant autonomy. "Simple individual" and associational representatives mix together in ordinary meetings where decisions are taken by consensus. While live meetings still form the base of their organisation, new technologies may facilitate it and help such organisations to get in touch with foreign networks. The way young activists' associations emerge is strongly related to their forms of commitment. Hence, many groups were born through projects they were not expected to survive. In Barcelona, Paris or Mexico, the emergence of the main young alter-globalisation associations has followed a surprisingly similar pattern. All were created to set up transportation to demonstrations, and have afterwards progressively diversified their activities and organised the anti-war protests.

Rejecting the institutionalisation of more traditional movements, protesting youth usually distinguish themselves by different forms of organisation and participation. But one pure, distinguishable form of organisation does not exist. Old and new ways of operating are mixed together in different measures by each group. The long strike of the National University in Mexico exemplifies this mixture. It is a case where old practices progressively became dominant.[26] Likewise, a group of young activists regularly tries to infiltrate various Parisian movements using old procedures. Elsewhere, some associations with archaic practices attract young people by their clear and radical purposes, simplified visions of the world and of the movement's aims as well as by dubious pedagogic strategies and well-established political infiltration techniques. But these associations are often the only ones that really address young people.

The impact of these forms of commitment

As is the case for most social movements, the real impact of alter-globalisation has to be evaluated in the long term. It is about the promotion of deep changes in the way of life of the young and not so young, of interest in public debates and of questioning the dominant ideas of our day. Among young people, this movement helps to face the challenges of developing citizenship and managing

information. Indeed, participation is a complex learning process for which scholarly institutions cannot always provide appropriate preparation. For those who are apprehensive towards traditional social actors, involvement in the alter-globalisation movement provides an opportunity to learn by experience and practice, and allows them to develop essential skills for active citizenship, such as the capacity to formulate and present ideas, participate in debates, listen and negotiate, as well as the ability to take the initiative and implement projects or to use new technologies. As an "essential precondition for young peoples' participation" (EC 2003a), information has been made a major theme by young alter-globalisation activists. Their desire for knowledge, information and analysis leads them to organise conferences but also to develop alternative media. The main such outlet, Indymedia, is now present in over forty countries. But thousands of smaller information networks, pirate radios, university magazines or mailing lists are also working and often distinguish themselves by their creativity. This active and critical use of media also helps young people acquire important skills that allow them to become autonomous, critical and emancipated users of information.

All European countries agree that "becoming involved, young people will bring with them their dynamism, enthusiasm and sense of initiative, enriching and giving a fresh impetus to future action" (EC 2003a). But if they seem particularly adapted to the information age, young alter-globalisation activists' new ways of participation have trouble impacting political and social actors. On the one hand, the lack of representation, the rejection of delegation and the unwillingness to build more structured movements has resulted in a lack of interlocutors for those who want to address young alter-globalisation activists. On the other hand, despite the high numbers mobilised, these young people have failed to really reach the powers that be, and to have an important effect on the way they function. Moreover, they assume this is not their primary aim. For them "governments are no longer considered as interlocutors to get things done in another way."[27] But without hope of dialogue, there is little hope of influence or change.

This avoidance and rejection of debate with traditional political actors could be a sign of the desire to develop the potential to "do politics another way," but it reflects above all the characteristics of a nascent, immature movement, which is not yet able to confront the key issues facing other social actors. Do young people really choose a more effective solution by avoiding difficult debates and by instead enacting counter-power logic or small-scale changes centred on the local level? Are not political relays an indispensable way of achieving real social transformations?

Conclusions

The massive decline in young peoples' traditional political participation does not necessarily indicate a rejection of politics per se. It can also illustrate a transformation of forms of participation, which become less institutionalised and more flexible. Indeed, a new militant generation could acquire its first political experiences in the alter-globalisation mobilisation events. Responding to contemporary world issues, alter-globalisation acivists have created a new culture of commitment, which is fundamentally located in common experience and shared reactions to institutional life. Outside of mainstream ideologies, this culture of commitment is based on concrete projects, affinity groups and network-oriented civil associations, as well as a festive and creative activism. But this less structured and more individualistic form of commitment favours the emergence of fluid networks

rather than the construction of a monolithic organisation. Based on indecision, everyday life and fluidity, young activists' enthusiasm seems to run in all directions, united only by the common wish to disengage from old forms of commitment. Hence, these new ways of commitment also have their limits, especially when it comes to political impact.

Young activists' attitudes can be related to life-cycle, generational and period-related effects. Indeed, it seems hard to distinguish the impact of the particular context in which this generation, well adapted to the information society, grew up from the impact of the particular period of life called "post-adolescence" (Castells 1996, 1997, 1998). Indeed, forms of commitment are usually deeply transformed when students enter the job market or start a family. Other factors are clearly related to the specific characteristics of the alter-globalisation movement, but also to the developmental stage of this still-immature social actor. All these elements must be taken into account in providing a full and coherent picture of the young alter-globalisation movement.

The decline of institutions; growing individualisation; cultural diversity; the globalisation of the economy and of major problems; and the calling into question of contemporary democracy are problems that face not only young alter-globalisation activists but also the population in general. As a result, the way this new militant generation acts and organises itself contains lessons for society as a whole. These young people demonstrate that consideration of world issues cannot be disconnected from local, national and continental realities, that a concern for autonomy and individualisation can be compatible with showing solidarity and with a renewed interest in the res publica. In a rapidly transforming world, these young militants have been able to create forms of commitment that integrate the structures and potential of today's society: the development of networks, new technologies, fluidity, reflexivity, and individualisation.

Their concept of democracy, based on participation and distance from the political parties and their individualisation, brings about a detachment from and a calling into question of institutions, resulting in a mindset the first victims of which are traditional social movements and political participation.[28] Hence, the political participation of young alter-globalisation activists is often perceived as a problem by political authority. Nevertheless, it can also represent a source of new energy for the public space, of reinforcement of civil society and of the promotion of more active citizenship. Above all, these young alter-globalisation activists lead us to think about political participation and social interaction in new and different ways.

Endnotes

1. Instead of "anti-globalisation," the term "alter-globalisation" aims to emphasise that this movement is not against globalisation per se but against neo-liberal globalisation and in favour of another kind of globalisation. The proclaimed objective of the movement is to "elaborate alternatives to neo-liberal policies."

2. "The generation can be considered as the link that unites biographies, structures and a history. The notion refers to the identity of an age group socialised during a same historical period" (Feixa 1998 :62).

3. "Culture" is taken to mean "a set of ways of life and values, of practical behaviour and cosmovisions elaborated by groups of young people of the same generation responding to their life conditions" (Nateras 2002: 336).

4. Recent surveys show a decrease in young people's confidence toward institutions like administration, parliament or the European Union (Galland & Roudet 2001).

5. Naomi Klein, *La Jornada*, 17 February 2002.

6. A young Belgian activist.

7. Surveys on youth values illustrate that youth general opinion among trade unions is rather bad (Galland & Roudet 2001: 158, 217; ESYN 1999).

8. In ATTAC France, activists aged under 25 are scarce and feel they are seldom heard. They are very critical towards the Parisian hierarchy of ATTAC.

9. Abstract of a young activist's e-mail during the preparation of the second European Social Forum.

10. A young Belgian activist.

11. Intervention during a working meeting of the Parisian intergalactics.

12. A young Mexican activist. He refers to the first Americas Social Forum held in Quito in November 2002.

13. A young Spanish alter-globalisation activist.

14. Passage of a leaflet presenting a youth space at the second European Social Forum.

15. A young Spanish activist.

16. A young Argentine *piquetero*.

17. Passage of a leaflet presenting a French young activists' movement.

18. Around the G8 summit in Evian, these villages gathered over 6 000 participants.

19. "It really upsets me that at least 60% of those who came with our buses [to the Cancún protests] knew almost nothing about the WTO. Most came to go to parties and to the beach" (A young Mexican).

20. A young Parisian activist.

21. For example, in a Parisian young activists' bus on road to the European demonstration in Seville, a majority of the young militants did not formally belong to any association.

22. Personal relations constitute a determinant factor in the shifting from sympathy for some cause to commitment. (Passy 1998; Poncelet & Stangherlin 2003).

23. A young Belgian activist.

24. Abstract of an interview with Y. Le Bot. A similar phenomenon was observed in Porto Alegre (Brand & Görg, 2003).

25. A young Italian disobedient explained: "We are not political commissioners able to judge what everyone has the right to do or not" (Aubenas & Benasayag 2002: 68).

26. "During a meeting, some leaders spoke about 'a necessary second wave of purge in the group,'" (A Mexican student).

27. A young demonstrator at the Laeken European Summit.

28. This idea of "commitment without real commitment", and of "free electrons" is also described in other areas of young people's lives. Regarding religion, Lambert (2001) and Davies (1994) expose similar phenomena.

Challenging assumptions about youth political participation: critical insights from Great Britain

Christine Griffin

There has been widespread concern amongst academic researchers, policy makers, youth workers, educators and elected politicians over the levels of apparent political disaffection and apathy amongst young people, which are frequently presented as even greater than levels of political disaffection amongst adults. Academic research on youth political participation has frequently employed questionnaire methods in large-scale studies, giving a broad picture of the ways in which different groups of young people relate to the political process in a range of countries. Whilst such research has undeniable value, smaller-scale studies involving qualitative methods such as informal interviews, focus groups and ethnographic observation have presented a more complex, detailed and in-depth picture of youth political participation. Some of this latter work has challenged key assumptions in the mainstream literature and in popular "common sense" about young people and their relationship to the political domain. This chapter reviews a number of studies from the United Kingdom that challenge pervasive assumptions about the apparent crisis in youth political participation. I argue that those with an interest in young people's political participation need both a critical perspective on the changing forms of political participation amongst different groups of young people, and an appreciation of the wider social, cultural, political and economic context in which young people are living (see also Griffin 1993). Finally, I consider the implications of these arguments for understanding the full complexity of youth political participation in the European context.

Young people under "New Labour": policies, practices and contradictions

When Prime Minister Tony Blair's "New Labour" Government came to power in May 1997, they began to develop a number of policy initiatives aimed at young people. Blair quickly launched the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) at Cabinet Office level. In 2000, the report of the Policy Action Team on Young People (PAT 12) considered how the British Government could improve the co-ordination of policies affecting children and young people in order to improve services (for example education, health and social services) and prevent "social exclusion". The latter

term referred to children and young people's exclusion and marginalisation from society in terms of their relationship to family life, education and the labour market, as well as considering the areas of political participation and citizenship. The PAT 12 report recommended setting up a youth unit to co-ordinate national government policies affecting young people and to prevent social exclusion. This eventually led to the establishment of a Children and Young People's Unit (CYPU), based in the government's Department for Education and Skills, covering the full 5- to 19-year-old age range. Unfortunately, the CYPU had scarcely been in existence for more than a couple of years before it was summarily merged into the Department for Education and Skills' "Children, Young People and Families" directorate, and it remains unclear what will happen next.

The main policy thrusts of the CYPU (and of the Blair Government) currently include a greater focus on young people's participation and "active citizenship", which incorporates political participation in its widest sense. Increasing young people's participation in the political process and therefore their sense of active citizenship is presumed to reduce their levels of social exclusion and marginality. It is widely acknowledged that social exclusion is closely related to poverty and to the continuing economic and social inequalities in British society, and critics of these policies have questioned how the effects of poverty and disadvantage can be overcome by increasing young people's sense of active citizenship. In addition, MacDonald (1997) has argued that young people living in impoverished areas of the United Kingdom that are commonly designated as "socially excluded" do not necessarily perceive themselves to be "socially excluded" or "marginal" to society.

One of the most significant changes to affect policies relating to young people in the United Kingdom in recent years has been the partial devolution of key powers and responsibilities such as education and health from central government (based at Westminster in London) to the Welsh Assembly and the Scottish Executive (located in Cardiff and Edinburgh, respectively). For many years Scotland has had its own distinctive education and criminal justice systems, separate from those in England and Wales, and from the North of Ireland. The controversial "Connexions" service does not operate in Scotland, for example, and nor would the proposed move towards variable tuition fees for university students.[1] The approach of the Scottish Executive and the Welsh Assembly to involving young people in the political process has been notably more active and progressive than the activities of the government at Westminster or the Northern Ireland Office. Although there is a UK Youth Parliament, it is less visible than the "Funky Dragon", the Children and Young People's Assembly for Wales, which meets Ministers for Education, Health and Social Services twice a year. The Scottish Youth Parliament has links to the Scottish Executive and the Westminster Parliament, and Youthlink Scotland, Young Scot and Dialogue Youth are all Scottish organisations that aim to involve young people in the democratic process and encourage civic and political participation.

Many New Labour youth policies are intended to encourage young people towards social inclusion and active citizenship, but within a normative model that leaves little space for those who are prevented by circumstances, or who do not wish to engage with society in those terms. It is very much a "top-down" model. A number of commentators have argued that policies and research on citizenship education and political participation need to deploy more "bottom-up" approaches to these concepts that reflect recent social, economic and cultural

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changes in different societies, and that consider the question of political engage-ment (Haste 2002; O'Toole et al. 2003; see Jamieson and Grundy in this volume).

Young people and political participation: research questions and some key assumptions

There is widespread assumption in the British media, and amongst politicians, educators and policy makers, that young people are becoming increasingly dis-engaged from politics and the democratic system, and from British society as a whole. This appears to be confirmed by evidence from a number of studies employing traditional survey-based quantitative methods. In terms of voting at recent general elections, proportionately fewer young people have voted com-pared to their older contemporaries. This was especially evident in the 2001 gen-eral election, when 59% of all those eligible to vote and on the Electoral Register voted, compared to only 39% of 18- to 24-year-olds (Electoral Commission 2001). In the 1997 general election, these figures had been 71% and 68%, respectively (British Election Survey 1997). It is also worth noting that approximately 14% of 18- to 24-year-olds in the United Kingdom are not registered to vote (in other words they are not on the Electoral Register), compared to 2% of those aged 50 or above (British Election Survey, 1997). Richard Kimberlee (2002) has pointed out that such official statistics must be treated with a degree of caution, since reli-able figures on the voting behaviour of young people in England, Wales, Scotland and the North of Ireland are not available, given the lack of accurate time series data on which to base reliable comparisons. The potential impact of devolution must also be considered.

If we take formal politics to mean that which is concerned with the formal insti-tutions of government (national, sub-national and supra-national); conventional political actors (especially the political parties); and traditional forms of political behaviour (for example voting in elections, attending political meetings, mem-bership of overtly political organisations), then young people are less interested in formal politics than older age groups (Henn et al. 2002; O'Toole et al. 2003). Britain has seen a gradual drop in involvement in formal politics across all age groups since 1997, and membership of the three main political parties at national level (Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrats) has fallen dramatically in recent years.

Tony Blair's New Labour Government displayed its concern over this situation well before the 2001 general election. When they first came to power, the government commissioned the Crick Report, which set out to examine the question of declining political and civic participation amongst young people (Crick 1998). Shortly afterwards, the main funding body for social science in the United Kingdom, the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), established a £3.5 million research programme on Democracy and Participation to investigate the apparent decline in political participation in the country. In practice, however, these developments have been somewhat diluted. Whilst the Crick Report recom-mended that citizenship education should be compulsory for secondary-school students, it envisaged citizenship as a form of critical agency, comprising social and moral responsibility, community involvement and political literacy (Crick 1998). The actual school curriculum on citizenship for England and Wales insti-tuted in 2002 emphasises the admirable but rather more anodyne qualities of "helplessness" and "consideration for others" (Haste 2002).

In reviews of the research literature on political participation in the United Kingdom, many researchers have argued that the theoretical and methodological constraints of quantitative survey-based research approaches have limited their capacity to explain the declining electoral turnout and levels of interest in formal politics amongst young people (Henn et al. 2002; O'Toole et al. 2003). The restricted "top-down" definition of political participation employed in such studies needs to be broadened and replaced by a concept of political participation that reflects the diverse perspectives of young people. This, they argue, will challenge the simplistic equation of non-participation (defined in the restrictive sense) with political apathy. A shift towards a broader and more "bottom-up" definition of political participation implies, firstly, a broader conceptualisation of politics per se; and secondly, the notion that political non-participation in the traditional sense (in other words not voting, and non-involvement in political parties) can reflect a conscious choice which may be viewed as a form of political engagement, or a form of political apathy, or a broader sense of disaffection with the formal political process. Such behaviour can also reflect a preference for political engagement in activities that are not sanctioned by the state, such as anti-capitalist demonstrations at recent World Trade Organisation (WTO) and G8 meetings.

Qualitative researchers have questioned the concepts and methods employed in traditional studies of political participation, arguing that many young people are in fact concerned about matters that are fundamentally political in nature, but that such issues frequently fall outside of the boundaries of how politics is conventionally defined. Such issues include domestic violence, racism, animal rights and other environmental issues (O'Toole et al. 2003; Henn et al. 2002). Once young people in Britain are invited to discuss politics in their own terms (thereby widening the definition of politics and political participation), then there is evidence of much higher levels of political interest and activity. As Helen Haste (2002) has argued, issues with a moral connotation, often associated with personal or social identity (for example: gender; ethnicity; religion; local, regional or national identities) are especially likely to engage young people (and adults) in this way.

The picture from research and youth-work practice is one of considerable scepticism on the part of many young people in Britain regarding the formal political process. This phenomenon has been noted since the 1970s, as part of a general sense of dissatisfaction with the functioning of democracy in Britain that appears to be more pronounced amongst young people. What some researchers and most politicians and journalists have characterised as a problem of youthful apathy and disaffection with politics, others have presented as a crisis of legitimacy for the formal political process that is shared by older age groups (Henn et al. 2002). According to conventional political-science indicators, and drawing on predominantly quantitative studies, such research appears to indicate that young people in Britain are set apart to some degree from the rest of the population as far as their involvement and interest in traditional politics are concerned. The two main theoretical explanations proposed for this apparent difference are life-cycle and generational effects. Evidence from key studies in the 1990s does not offer conclusive support for either explanation. In their recent quantitative (panel survey) and qualitative (focus group) study of young people's relationship to politics (defined in the widest sense), Henn and colleagues (2002) found that many young people state that they are in fact interested in political affairs. Their panel survey involved responses from 425 young people aged 18 and 19 (in other words

first-time voting age, on the Electoral Register) in 1998 and 1999, and six focus groups. Key issues for these young people included militarism, education and Europe; they were highly sceptical of politicians, had a marked lack of trust and confidence in politicians; but they did have faith in the democratic process.

Henn et al. (2002) argue that young people are living in a world that is markedly different from that experienced by previous youth cohorts: a so-called "period effect". Their lives are characterised by higher levels of risk and uncertainty, they have less time for politics than previous youth generations and the nature of politics is changing to a more consumerist model. Young people have a different conceptualisation of what constitutes politics, are relatively uninterested in formal traditional political activism, and more in participative, localised, immediate issues.

Of course, many of these arguments about trust (or lack of trust), political disaffection and an apparent crisis of legitimacy in politics and politicians have been widely discussed in recent years (Weltman & Billig 2001). However, these perspectives are not always reflected in current debates on youth political participation in any depth. It is particularly important to develop our understanding of the meanings of political participation for young people in twenty-first-century societies around Europe in the current social, political, economic and cultural context.

Young people and the changing political process: the case of the "third way"

It is now commonplace in social-scientific circles to refer to a series of profound shifts in the structures and institutions of advanced industrial societies over the past fifty years that have resulted in an erosion of traditional anchors for social and personal identities. In particular, theorists point to the decline in large-scale manufacturing industries in recent years, changes to traditional family forms, and the growth of consumption as a basis for the construction of identities. Different social theorists have characterised such phenomena as reflections of "late modernity", "reflexive modernity" or "neo-liberalism" (Beck 1992; Giddens 1991; Rose 1989), and these changes are argued to have produced substantial shifts in forms of social and civic participation across many contemporary societies that have profound implications for citizenship. It is argued that young people have been at the forefront of these changes, since those born during and after the 1980s have experienced nothing other than such "late-modern" societies (Furlong & Cartmel 1997).

The past ten to fifteen years have also seen some dramatic changes to the political process in many (post-) industrialised countries. The British New Labour Government is viewed as a paradigm case of the recent shift to what has been termed "neo-liberalism", also known as the "third way" (Kantola 2003). This has been defined in terms of increasingly market-based politics, a blurring of ideological differences between parties, the growth of consensual political discourse and managerialism. Under this system "the basic mechanism of representative democracy is weakened, since who one votes for would appear to be irrelevant" (Kantola 2003: 206). It is therefore important to understand young people's political engagement (or lack of it) in the context of these changes.

One of the main arguments made by theorists of late-modern societies is that people are growing up in social and cultural conditions that encourage them to view their individual selves as the only stable element in their lives, since jobs,

home, family and personal relationships all become increasingly "flexible" and unstable (Sennett 1998). This process has driven many young people to search for more individualised, short-lived, "do-it-yourself" and self-created types of civic and political projects. Such changes, it is argued, may well be playing an important role in shaping young people's relationship to the political process in many European countries (see Lüküslü, in this volume). This "biographisation" of the life course implies that for young people, participation in public life has increasingly become a matter of personal reflection, although this does not mean that everything has become a matter of free and open personal choice. Dimensions of class, gender and race remain important, and Furlong and Cartmel (1997) have cautioned against focusing too heavily on the individualising aspects of contemporary societies at the expense of recognising the continuing role of collective group identifications.

In addition, any discussion of youth political participation needs to acknowledge some of the fundamental ways in which traditional discourses of political participation are now employed on a regular basis in the field of consumption, especially in global advertising and branding. Many of the discourses and practices of mainstream politics (for example voting) and alternative forms of political engagement (for example grassroots campaigning) are employed in a range of popular cultural forms that are well outside the realm of traditional politics. This includes the widespread use of phones, email and texting in votes for contestants on reality TV programmes in the United Kingdom (such as "Big Brother") and talent shows (such as "Pop Idol") aimed at young people. An example with a more global reach can be found on the website of McCann Erickson, "one of the world's leading integrated brand communications organisations", an international advertising agency dealing with some of the world's major multinational companies (www.mccann.com/aboutus/index). In 2002, McCann Erickson launched the "1 000 voices global celebration" to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the company, funding a series of "public service campaigns [which] tackled locally-relevant social problems, from overwhelming public pessimism in Brazil to the acid-burning of young women in Bangladesh". These campaigns were branded using a special logo designed by McCann Erickson World Group's "FutureBrand" in order to "build public awareness and change consumer mindsets" (www.mccann.com/aboutus/index). It is important to understand young people's engagement with civic and political life in this context.

Young people's participation in civic and political life

Despite evidence that young people's engagement with formal political processes is declining, their active involvement in the recent protests against the war in Iraq indicates that young people in Britain are in fact interested in global political events. In the United Kingdom, the broad range of political and religious groups known as the "Stop the War Coalition" includes a substantial proportion of young people (aged between 13 and 25), who have taken an active part in campaigns against the war in Iraq at all levels. This includes youth-only groups such as School Students against the War, and young people's involvement in: the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB); Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND); Greenpeace, the Palestine Solidarity Campaign; trade unions; as well as youth wings of the Labour Party, the Liberal Democrats, the Scottish National Party, Plaid Cymru and various socialist groups. Young people from all sections of

society have been involved, across a range of age, gender, sexuality, ethnic, social class and religious groups.

After the war started, school students around the country (aged between 13 and 18) staged walkouts from their lessons, and attended and organised rallies around the United Kingdom. In Birmingham (Britain's second largest city), over 4 000 young people attempted to enter the City Council building during one demonstration in March 2003. Young people displayed a detailed knowledge of the issues involved, taking an active part in speeches and debates. This posed a profound challenge to prevailing assumptions that young people in Britain are largely apathetic and disaffected from political involvement, and uninterested in global political events, and similar events took place in many other parts of the Europe and around the world.

Recent research concerning young people's involvement in social and political action at a local level indicates that many young people are involved in groups that are trying to bring about social or economic change. In one study, Karen Eden and Debi Roker (2002) contacted eighteen youth groups involved in "social action" of various kinds, reviewing the range of such youth groups across the United Kingdom. All of these groups represent examples of young people's political participation and "active citizenship", defined in the broadest sense. Eden and Roker noted the diversity of issues and types of groups in which young people were involved, including youth wings of larger organisations; youth councils; support and campaign groups; and community-based groups.

One of Eden and Roker's more surprising findings was that of the eighteen youth groups they contacted, only four (out of 106) young people mentioned using the Internet or email in their campaigning work. For many of the young people, this was because they did not have the money or the facilities to use such new technologies, but also, many did not feel that information technology (IT) was necessary or useful in their activities. The tendency of some adult researchers and politicians to hail the Internet as a tool for promoting new forms of political participation amongst young people needs to be tempered by an awareness of these young people's perceptions of IT. It was not simply that young people did not have access to this "modern" form of political and social participation: many did not see it as relevant, preferring more traditional forms of political engagement. There is also a common perception that most young people involved in such "social action" groups are white and middle-class, from the most affluent sectors of society. Eden and Roker's study challenges this view, since the young people they contacted were from a broad range of social, geographical and ethnic backgrounds, with slightly more females than males. Some of these youth groups were unstable, lacking support or funding, and overlooked by researchers, politicians, funders and the media as a result of negative assumptions about young people or narrow definitions of political activity.

The young people interviewed by Eden and Roker (2002) supported the introduction of "citizenship education" in British schools, providing that it was relevant to young people's lives and informed them about their local communities. Topics they felt should be included were national politics and voting, racism, sex education and local issues. Most of these young people were not committed to any political party, and distrusted politicians, although they did think that young people should vote, reflecting a commitment to the formal political process, and it is also notable that many of the young people interviewed by Eden and Roker did not view their activities as political. Eden and Roker (2002) advocate the use

of a broad definition of what they term "youth social action" and we might call "youth political participation": "groups of young people, who meet on a regular basis, with the aim of raising awareness, or changing policies and/or practices, at a local, national or international level" (Eden & Roker 2002: 56).

Young people and "new" forms of political participation

In the late 1990s, a number of researchers identified new forms of "expressive communities" amongst young people. Maffesoli (1996) referred to "neo-tribal lifestyles", and Hetherington (1998) to "new social movements". In part, these observations were responding to the various social/youth groups associated with "rave" culture in the United Kingdom, and also "new-age travellers", anti-road protestors and other groups active during the 1990s. Although mixed, many of these groups involved a substantial proportion of white middle-class young people and their wandering lifestyles were severely affected by changes to welfare policies, unemployment benefit entitlement and the Criminal Justice Act of 1991. Such youth cultural groups are less visible and arguably less widespread in British society of the twenty-first century.

A major focus for young people's social, cultural and political participation in Britain has always been the production and consumption of music, dance and the arts in the widest sense of the term (Thornton 1995). Another crucial arena has been sport, in particular the involvement of young, white, working-class men in football. The dividing lines between art, culture, politics and sport have always been blurred, but in Britain, these lines have been more blurred than in many other societies. The youth music scene in the United Kingdom is now largely dominated by so-called "superclubs", which evolved from DJ culture and the independent rave scene in the 1980s. The live independent music scene, based in small clubs and pubs remains more marginal. The dominance of multinational music and entertainment corporations has led to a reduction in small independent music shops, venues, studios and bands compared to the 1980s. More radical and politically engaged music and activities would generally have emerged from this sector (Thornton 1995). Sections of all these activities have a political dimension, including the increased visibility of young women.

Britain's youth population is also changing, especially in some of the major cities such as London, Birmingham, Manchester and Glasgow, as an increasing proportion of young people of minority ethnic backgrounds are born in the United Kingdom and grow up alongside white young people. Birmingham is expected to become Britain's first city with a majority of its population from ethnic-minority backgrounds by 2020. These changes have produced some novel cultural and political developments, such as the combinations of musical and cultural styles drawing on South Asian, African and Anglo-American, African Caribbean and white British forms (Sharma, Hutnyk and Sharma 1996).

The final event at the London "Stop the War" demonstration in February 2003, attended by over 2 million people, was young African Caribbean British singer Ms Dynamite singing alongside veteran African American civil-rights leader Jesse Jackson. They were not singing conventional protest songs, but the top-ten hit "Ms Dynamite", the artist's signature tune, a celebratory and self-referential piece of music. Young people involved in the Stop the War protests did not operate in the same ways as older participants. Some had made their own banners that bore no apparent relationship to politics (for example a large home-made bee on a

stick), or humorous slogans (such as "Down with this sort of thing"). Whilst they clearly took the issues extremely seriously, young people involved in these events did not necessarily feel that they had to be serious. Their determination to have fun sometimes met with disapproval from older participants, especially on the left, in a clash between old and new models of political participation.

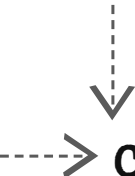## Developing a critical perspective on youth political participation across Europe

Many of the examples cited above pose challenges for understanding youth political participation in all its diversity and complexity. Siurala (2000) has discussed the difficulties involved in distinguishing between "old" and "new" forms of political participation, preferring to use the terms "modern" and "post-modern". Siurala defines "modern" forms of participation as "representative participation and direct participation with all their variants, such as NGO-based structures, co-management, youth parliaments, school councils, youth hearings, demonstrations, etc." (Siurala 2000: 1). He defines "post-modern" or "emergent and future" forms of participation as "the various types of expressive, emotional, aesthetic, casual, virtual and digital participation" (Siurala 2000: 1). Siurala argues that it is important to value both emergent and more established forms of participation. As an example, De Leseleuc et al. (2002) have carried out an interesting study on the practice of sport (in this case rock climbing in France) as a form of political expression. This is one example of an approach that focuses on "new" forms of political participation amongst young people, using broader definitions of terms such as political engagement. What we need here is to link such projects more clearly and firmly into "older" debates and conceptualisations about political involvement, whilst reflecting the social, political and economic changes that are taking place in contemporary European societies.

In most European countries, as well as in many societies outside Europe, political interest, voter turnout, membership of and volunteering for political and civic associations, is much lower among young people than among older cohorts and has been in decline for about at least three decades. The debate in social science and policy circles about this decline, these decreasing voter turnouts and the crumbling of membership and volunteering inclinations has entered a phase in which it is common to foresee a serious endangering of participatory society, of social cohesion, and of representative democracy. What we find in most cross-cultural analyses, and what is seriously underestimated in the pessimistically framed debate, is that young people are very interested in and much involved in specific public issues, issues that researchers generally define as profoundly political and public in nature. In European and other societies young people stress issues such as domestic violence; integration of immigrants; racism; animal rights; environmental issues in general; safety; war; crime; terrorism; and discrimination.

Endnotes

1. The "Connexions" service allocates a personal advisor to steer young people through after full-time compulsory education ends at age 16. It has been criticised as an unnecessary replacement for the existing Careers and Youth Services that brings an increasing degree of surveillance and competition to young people's lives.

Conclusions:
translating research results into policy

Bryony Hoskins

The chapters in this book have drawn together research findings from across Europe on the topic of young people's political participation. The contributors have used a variety of social-science techniques such as empirical studies of young people within regional (Blanch) and national (Kuhar) contexts; empirical comparative research across different national contexts (Jamieson and Grundy); study of structures (Hooghe and Stolle); historical research (Lüküslü and Nur); and a review of the theoretical concepts of political participation (Kovacheva). This provided a panorama of the European situation regarding youth political participation today. As Kovacheva's chapter stated at the start of the book, young people's interest in traditional forms of politics and political parties is said to be declining, which can be seen from the declining levels of voting and membership in youth sections of political parties and youth organisations as a whole. Consequently, she then poses the question "is this a trend towards lasting disengagement or a replacement of traditional forms by new forms of civic engagement?" This book provides a set of responses to this question that would suggest that Europe is moving towards new forms of civic engagement. The contributions critically examine the notion of youth apathy by exploring new forms of political participation (Griffin), the rise of one-off issue politics (Blanch and Pleyers) and the lack of political will and structured recruitment of young people into political parties (Hooghe and Stolle). The contributions do not obscure the reality of some political apathy amongst the young, for example in the European context, where small numbers of young people vote in European Parliament elections, and Jamieson and Grundy noted that in some European cities in the United Kingdom and Spain young people had little experience or knowledge of Europe or European languages and felt little connection, as citizens, to Europe. Instead this book has emphasised the complexity and variety of political engagement.

One source of this complexity is found in the different factors that contribute to developing young people's political participation. Knowledge of politics was described in Pfaff's chapter as being insufficient to promote youth political participation, and both Pfaff and Berrefjord's research studies have shown that young people need to learn through active political participation and through being involved in democratic processes at home, at school, in non-formal education and across third-sector activities in order to become active citizens. Striking conclusions from the research in this book are the central role of the family, and how it

communicates, as the key factor of education for democratic engagement (Horowitz), and the role of peers as socialising agents into politics (Pfaff). Where knowledge gained through experience of democratic processes in everyday life are lacking, political apathy is found with few differences across eastern and western Europe.

Apathy has been attributed to young people's increasing individualism and retreat into their private sphere of friends and family, combined with increasing levels of distrust of politicians (Kuhar). When young people do participate, elements of the private sphere, such as domestic violence, animal rights and the environment, tend to form the basis for their political involvement. As Griffin points out in her research, the personal and private sphere of people's everyday lives are where political interest is high. She argues that evidence suggests much higher levels of engagement when young people are asked to discuss the topic of political par ticipation in their own words. An example of young people's political participation today is given in Blanch's chapter, in which young people from Spain were engaged in protest and voluntary clean-up activities after the catastrophic oil-spill from the Prestige oil tanker. Participation in these events does not necessarily lead to greater involvement in traditional politics: this protest, for example, along with the Spanish protest against university reforms and the war in Iraq, did not alter government policies, lead to higher levels of voting or affect the government's re-election in 2003. Consistent with this example, research has more generally shown that many young people do not feel that they are listened to or that they can impact on government policy in any way. One could hypothesise that young people involved in protest movements may become involved later in life in more traditional politics, and that this could be part of a life-cycle of political engagement. This hypothesis requires more research to confirm its validity, however.

An important point to note from the research discussed in this book is that not all young people are apathetic and that many young people engage in new forms of political participation (Pleyers) or in traditional forms of participation such as youth NGOs or youth councils (Dolejšiová). However, what is equally evident is the need to direct policy and education towards those who are disengaged, and to try to develop links between the new forms of political participation and the more traditional forms of party politics and policy making, as these links will provide the long-term maintenance of democracy. Rightly, in my opinion, what Kovacheva argues for is a new youth research agenda, in which researchers focus on new forms of political participation and young people's own understanding of political participation, in order to develop a better understanding of how and when young people participate. The contributions in this book form a starting point for this new agenda. Using these new definitions, comparative and longitudinal studies should be implemented to develop a more rigorous picture over time and across the whole of Europe. In this final chapter the focus is on policy, and how to use the research to improve policy making in the area of political participation. The rest of this chapter will be devoted to examining how to translate the results of the research discussed in the chapters of this book into policy and educational practice, in order to increase young people's political engagement across Europe.

The recent policy developments in the area of political participation are associated with the European Commission's creation of the common objectives for participation by young people (2003). Each member state of the European Union will be working towards implementing these objectives and reviewing progress in 2005. The process of implementing objectives on participation provides

momentum for the creation of new policies and an opportunity to input research into this process. Thus, when considering the policy implications of the research, I have tried to synthesise the research analysis in the context of the needs of member states for each of the objectives. The three objectives concerning participation are as follows:

- increase participation by young people in the civic life of their community;
- increase participation by young people in the system of representative democracy;
- greater support for various forms of learning to participate.

As we are considering not only European Union member states but also the forty-six states of the Council of Europe, when relevant, examples are used from the Council of Europe's Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life (2003). This is a valid and useful approach, as this text is both consistent with the Commission objectives and expands further the details of how these objectives can be applied. For each of the three objectives there will be an outline paragraph describing it, followed by concrete examples of policy implications of the research. After these examples of policy implications, a more detailed explanation will be given, linking the policy to the research contributions.

Increase participation by young people in the civic life of their community

This objective sets out to promote the involvement of young people in structures, NGOs, voluntary services, associations and local youth councils; encourage the development of projects by young people at local level; give recognition to those who facilitate this work (such as youth workers and parents); and identify what prevents young people from being able to participate in their local community. One of the benefits of implementing this objective and arriving at greater levels of participation at local level can be seen when linking this to a European context. Those young people who were active locally were more likely to have a sense of European citizenship and European identity (Jamieson and Grundy). Recommendations for implementing objectives derived from the research include:

- funding for national, regional and local-level youth councils and youth organisations;
- encouraging membership in youth councils and youth organisations of under-represented groups in the political arena, such as women and minorities;
- facilitating and/or encouraging political parties to open up dialogue with young people involved in "one-off issue" politics and to try to build on their creativity;
- creating opportunities for young people to learn democratic skills and citizenship wherever they spend their leisure time, such as in sports clubs.

The research contributions have shown that youth organisations attached to political parties have provided an important opportunity for young people to learn whilst simultaneously engaging in political participation. Thus young people are acquiring the skills and culture of politics and at the same time learning the party ideology. The careers of many politicians across Europe have their origins in political youth organisations and the research suggests that it has been an important building block in their careers. Hooghe and Stolle's research showed that

over 40% of local politicians in Flanders, Belgium, had been involved in youth political parties. They demonstrated that membership of a youth organisation had on average given a person a career advantage of eight years over their peers throughout their political careers. The implication for policy is that those groups who are less represented in politics, such as women and ethnic minorities, may well benefit from strategic early recruitment into youth organisations. What also needs to be considered is that, with the large reduction in Europe of members of youth organisations, there is a decreasing number of skilled young people as a resource for recruitment. As parties become smaller and professionalised they become increasingly distant from their public. The Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life states, in paragraph 56, that: "Local and regional authorities, in partnership with political parties and in a non-partisan manner, should promote the involvement of young people in the party political system in general, and support specific actions, such as training."

Other places where a similar learning process can take place are youth councils. The above-mentioned charter suggests that the effective participation of young people requires the development of permanent youth councils. Dolejšiová's research has shown that in countries such as Slovakia, where a single youth council exists, it has become the recognised partner in the creation and implementation of national youth policy and involved in the creation and implementation of European youth policy through the umbrella organisation of the European Youth Forum. When youth councils are actively involved in building government programmes the benefits can be seen for young people and can contribute to social change (Dolejšiová).

Membership of youth organisations as a whole is decreasing, and as a result there is a danger that young people are not practising democracy anywhere. Therefore, in order to teach political participation, democratic processes should be developed and encouraged where young people are and can be reached. If young people spend more time in sports clubs and other leisure activities then the promotion of democratic methods and citizenship in these organisations or activities should be encouraged. There needs to be a greater emphasis on the public sphere as a space for learning citizenship skills. The definition of political participation needs to be widened to encompass political activities in this sector to include the creativity of youth politics, such as the way young people dress and shop (Jamieson and Grundy), and their mix of musical styles and culture (Griffin). The Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life suggests organised local and regional support of socio-cultural activities in the "fields of sport, culture, crafts and trade, artistic and other forms of creation and expression, as well as in the field of social action". The charter also emphasises the need to support young people if they wish to create new youth organisations.

The alter-globalisation and "issue politics" movements were proposed in Pleyers' research as areas where young people can learn about political participation and citizenship. He demonstrates how the young people involved in these activities are interested in politics, learning through carrying out the skills required to be successful politicians, and suggests that they could form a new resource for traditional political engagement in the future. Young people in the alter-globalisation movement are shown to be learning from their experiences how to be active citizens; how "to formulate and present ideas, participate in debates, listen and negotiate, as well as [learn] the ability to take the initiative and implement proj-

ects or to use new technologies". They are disseminating information by themselves to other young people through modern technologies. As Griffin mentions, young people have a desire to do politics differently, using creative forms. Their rejection of the political system at this age may be part of a life-cycle of other methods of political participation in democracy. This possibility could be enhanced through creating and opening a dialogue with young people involved in "one-off issue" politics and political parties. Young people could represent a resource of new energy and creativity in the political arena, which could reinvigorate traditional democracy and politics. Focusing politics on the issues that interest young people, such as the effects of globalisation, environment and equality, could equally be productive.

Increase participation by young people in the system of representative democracy

This objective states the need to encourage structured and regular dialogue between public and/or government authorities and young people and their representative structures in order to involve young people more in public life. It emphasises the need to include all young people, not just those within structures and organisations, and to find out what prevents young people from participating in this way. From the contributions in this publication the following suggestions to implement these objectives can be identified:

• making political parties aware of the need for young people's political participation and of the benefit to their parties of youth membership;

• understanding that participation is not an end in itself: where young people are asked to participate, evaluation should take place to demonstrate how their involvement has influenced the process.

A key point raised by the research of Hooghe and Stolle is that the demand for young people's political participation in traditional politics has considerably decreased. The blame for lack of participation has been frequently placed on young people, without examining the structures involved. Hooghe and Stolle have described that parties as a whole no longer require mass membership and work through a select elite, so that there is less funding and emphasis on recruitment of young people into youth wings of the political parties. Parties make much more use of the mass media than volunteers to spread the message. A pertinent question that they asked was "do young people refrain from joining parties because they are no longer interested, or because nobody bothers any more to ask them?" This is a particularly important question because "youth" constitutes an ever-smaller proportion of the electorate. The policy implication is the need to demonstrate to all political parties the importance of young people's participation in order to ensure the continuation of their party and the validity of democracy in their country.

Participation per se has been shown by the research to be not necessarily "good", useful for institutions or effective for young people. The chapter by Schillemans and Bouverne-De Bie called into question the notion that young people doing something must be inherently "good". What has been suggested is that participation in policy making needs evaluation research involving the creation of indicators of quality. Participation needs to be examined in terms of the following questions. Which young people participate? How can groups who are not participating be involved? What methods of youth participation are proving successful?

In the development of what policies are young people being asked to participate? The conclusion was that young people's political participation should be considered as a wider issue than simply involving some young people in a number of projects, and that young people should be involved in all forms of decision making in policies that affect their lives and that interest them. Quality forms of participation were considered to be systems like the Council of Europe co-management system, in which youth organisations are considered to be full partners. The Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life gives some useful suggestions on participation methodology: it should create the conditions for genuine dialogue and partnership between young people and local and regional authorities and should enable young people and their representatives to be full actors in the policies affecting them. Such structures should normally be representative and permanent, dealing with all matters in which young people express an interest. In addition it can be envisaged that an ad-hoc structure can be made to debate or act upon a specific issue. On occasion it may be appropriate to combine different forms.

Greater support for various forms of learning to participate

This objective focuses on extending training on this topic in the formal education system; encouraging participation activities in the non-formal education field; and developing interaction between these different forms of education on participation. It states the need for recognition of those people who work to promote active citizenship and training in this field, and the need to recognise young people who do participate, whilst at the same time combating the prejudice that prevents some young people from participating. It also emphasises the development of experiences of participation in all forms of life including in the family, in school, in youth organisations, at university, at other places of education, at work, and in sporting and leisure contexts. Many of the results in this publication have focused on this objective, and the following recommendations for how to implement it have been suggested:

- democratic methods and processes used in the structures of formal education;
- innovative methods used to teach political participation in the classroom;
- politics of the day discussed in schools;
- more education needed on citizenship, rights and responsibilities;
- training of teachers and parents on how to implement democratic methods;
- greater use of youth workers in formal education environment;
- creating a dialogue between formal and non-formal educators;
- creating a dialogue between youth sector non-formal educators and youth researchers;
- providing youth sector non-formal educators with training on research and social analysis so that they can translate results into practice;
- promoting youth workers' support of peer education projects.

Formal education across Europe on participation and citizenship has been limited in its success. According to Pfaff's research in eastern Germany, often the only discussion of citizenship in schools takes place in specific social-science lessons on politics, which the students describe as mundane. Pfaff's empirical research found that young people wanted lessons in which they could discuss the politics of the

day, using active methods, and have a greater say in how the school is run. Schools that implemented democratic and participation methods, such as having successful school councils that included young people in decision-making processes, were shown to teach young people active citizenship and give them a greater interest in politics as a whole. It can be seen throughout the papers that young people generally lack the ability to implement their knowledge of their rights and responsibilities as citizens of their nation or Europe. Berrefjord's research demonstrated that youth workers could be used to facilitate school councils and to demonstrate the pedagogical element behind democratic methods in formal and non-formal environments. The Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life is also useful in looking at how to implement the objectives in formal education. It states, in paragraph 43, the need "in the school environment, [for] support and training in youth participation, human rights education and non-formal learning in schools. [Local and regional authorities] should also provide training and support for the participation of young people in associative life and in their local community by promoting:

- vocational training for teachers and youth workers in the practice of youth participation;
- all forms of participation of pupils in schools;
- civic education programmes in schools;
- peer-group education, by providing the necessary space and means and by supporting the exchange of good practice.

Non-formal education

The role of youth workers and trainers in helping young people learn active citizenship has been demonstrated through research such as Berrefjord's to be of vital importance. Youth workers and trainers can provide value-based education that discusses the issues of the day. Berrefjord's research demonstrated that youth work teaches young people to understand and, above all, practice active citizenship and inclusion. Youth researchers have been shown to play a role in non-formal education, acting as witnesses to demonstrate the benefits of this form of youth educational practice.

One of the methods of youth work and educational practice is peer education. As discussed in Pfaff's chapter, peers form a network of trust from which young people learn, and the evidence provided by her research showed that young people were more likely to listen to information given to them by their peers. Youth workers and trainers have developed the skills to support young people to teach others of a similar age about active citizenship and political competencies. Without the support of youth workers, peer education can negatively affect young people's political engagement, which was also noted in Pfaff's paper on the socialisation of far-right-wing youth groups.

Titley (2004) highlighted that one of the competencies that trainers and youth workers are less proficient in is being able to work from research findings. Youth trainers/youth workers lacked the competence to create their own social analysis in order to create programmes based on the needs of young people rather than the convictions of the person creating the programme. The emphasis lies here on the discussion of the complexity of youth and on the acquisition of the competencies to work with these complexities, a discussion mirrored in the work of

Hendrik Otten (2002). According to Titley (2004: 3), there is a need for the training of trainers and youth workers as "knowledge brokers" in how to understand and translate research results into practice. One method would be to train researchers, youth workers and trainers together. Improving trainers' and youth workers' competence in this field could assist in providing better quality youth work. Training researchers with youth workers could also result in a greater understanding of youth, as it would provide researchers with first-hand experience of analyses performed by people who have more direct experience with young people.

Interaction between non-formal and formal education

Berrefjord's research in Norway has clearly demonstrated that it is beneficial for young people's active engagement in politics when youth workers and schools/schoolteachers work together. In this example a dialogue between a school and youth club helped increase social integration and active citizenship across economic and ethnic differences. This involved resolving the difficulties related to the stereotypical images that youth workers and teachers had of each other. This example of successful co-operation led to a change in the methods used to increase democracy and participation in both the formal and non-formal sector. The project resulted in the more active engagement of young people in the area; greater inclusion of minorities; and all young people becoming generally more interested in their community.

The family

The role of the family has been found to have the greatest influence on teaching young people about active engagement (Pfaff and Horowitz). The family home was seen as the centre of development of independent thinking, and a place where young people learned about democracy, through discussions and practical examples in the home. Horowitz's research has shown that when parents value young people's development of their own political concepts their political interest is the highest, and it is most likely that these young people will vote and engage as citizens. This can be compared with the results of Pfaff's research in eastern Germany, where 60% of participants experienced no learning of democracy and politics at home. Consideration should be given as to what family policies could be developed to bring together the concepts of youth, citizenship and the home, in order to improve how young people learn to participate.

Conclusion

It can be argued that the research contributions in this book have developed a multifaceted picture of youth political participation in Europe, depicting recent research results on how and when young people participate today and the reasons for non-participation. The start of this chapter focused on concluding observations from the research. In particular it was emphasised that the previously used indicators of voting and participation in political parties are no longer fully adequate for measuring political engagement in Europe. Instead, what is needed is a new understanding of political participation, drawing on young people's own definitions of political engagement, and the gathering of new research results using these categorisations throughout Europe.

The focus for this final chapter has been on how to interpret the research results in terms of policy. Thus, it has highlighted many different ways in which policy making can help increase young peoples' political participation, with an emphasis

on policy for the education of those young people who are most disaffected with regard to politics. At the time when this book was written, the momentum for changes and development in policy making on political participation in the European context was being generated by the European Commission common objectives for participation by young people, so it is in these terms that the research results have been presented. By linking the research chapters to concrete policy examples in the context of the participation objectives, it is hoped to facilitate policy makers', and in particular youth-policy makers', use of the research results.

This chapter has shown how research can be used to develop new ideas for policy making, and has demonstrated the impact of current policies in the field. The practical usefulness of the research demonstrates the need for researchers throughout Europe to get together and consolidate their results, in order to provide policy makers with evidence on which to base youth policy. This is very much in the spirit of the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe on youth research, which gave rise to this publication and the seminar "What About Youth Political Participation?" on which it is based.

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