Youth participation, agency and social change

Thematic report

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Introduction: Youth Participation in Europe – between social and political challenges and youth policies

1.1 Objectives and overview

"No democracy without participation" is the title of the European Commission's paper on Youth in 2001 (p. 23). Since then, the issue of young people's participation has been on the top of European youth policy agenda which has also been evidenced by the Council of Europe's European Charter "On the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life", revised by the Council of Europe in 2003 (Council of Europe, 2003a).

In as much as participation was and is referred to in terms of influence, involvement and active citizenship it can be interpreted as a key concept for an understanding of social integration in modern and late modern societies in which the actions and choices of the individuals – in their role as citizens – play an essential role. It continues:

> *"Young people want the right to give their opinion on all aspects of their daily lives, such as family, school, work, group activities, their local area, etc. However, in doing so, they are also involved in broader economic, social and political issues" (p. 24).*

This quotation reflects the awareness of a change in the way social integration has been politically institutionalised in terms of a citizenship status of members of society from formally assigned and rights and responsibilities based towards a diversification of possibilities of involvement and influence in late modern societies. Consequently, participation in the White Paper is defined as

> *"Ensuring young people are consulted and more involved in the decisions which concern them and, in general, the life of their communities" (p. 8).*

This report is aimed at investigating to what extent and under what conditions participation means that young people are treated and subjectively feel active as citizens. This means to seek for different definitions and their implications, different forms and expressions and – especially – for the experiences of young people themselves.

Referring to different perspectives on participation means to analyse social relationships between different societal actors on their – and especially young people's – identities as societal actors. This becomes more important as even on the European policy level we find not only different but contradicting statements on the relevance and meaning of participation. On the one hand, the 2001 White Paper to some extent accepts that participation means to accept social change towards new and unknown forms of society – which implies accepting uncertainty:

> *"We are expecting them [young people] to create new forms of social relations, different ways of expressing solidarity or of coping with differences and finding enrichment in them, while new uncertainties appear" (ibid., p. 4).*

On the other hand, in the follow-up process of the White Paper and especially in the framework of the European Youth Pact, participation is much more related to the existing societal structures and institutions:

> *"Empowering young people and creating favourable conditions for them to develop their skills, to work and to participate actively in society is essential for the sound economic and social development of the European Union, particularly in the context of globalisation, knowledge-based economies and ageing societies where it is crucial that every young person is given the possibility to fulfil his or her potential ... Youth participation in democratic institutions and in a continuous dialogue with policy makers is essential to the sound functioning of our democracies and the sustainability of policies which impact on young people's lives". (European Commission, 2007, p. 2-9)*

The question of participation represents indeed a great challenge – in particular on the regional and the European level. If young people do not behave as active citizens in these areas, it damages the political legitimacy of these institutions (Giddens, 1994). This question is all the more pressing because young people belong to the main users of public services (not only educational institutions but also public transport, libraries, public spaces, city centres etc.). It follows that their opinions about of these services are important and must not be neglected by local and national politicians.

A concurrent theme in the discourse on youth participation is the distinction between 'real' participation and superficial or token action such as consultations without a transparent follow-up and decision-making process. This aspect was clearly underlined in the European Commission's White Paper (2001, p. 27): "helping young people to participate has to be not restricted to asking their opinions". It appears that this concern crosses many official documents and declaration about young people. As an example, the Declaration of the youth event under the Austria EU-presidency can be quoted (2006, p. 5-6):

> *"Young people want a two way process, consultation alone is not enough. We want to create a real dialogue. Therefore a structured dialogue needs to be established on an equal basis between youth representatives and decision-makers. This should be implemented from a local to a European level through all political structures. Furthermore, young people should be involved in every aspects of the decision-making process from the beginning to the end. This is only possible if the structure allow for participation in a democratic and transparent way. (...) Following on, we also strongly suggest implementing and developing in all Member States a youth proofing article, this avoids tokenism and ensures young people's voices are heard".*

The following assertion of Jean-Claude Richez (2005, p. 9-12) may enlighten our approach:

> *"There is a true paradox in the discourse that our society develops on young people's involvement. On the one hand, a discourse about young people who do not want to militate any more, who are no longer involved, who refuse to take responsibilities in associations, and on the other hand, large mobilisations of young people on numerous subjects and occasions. (...) Today, young people are involved but in a new way. This new deal is quite difficult to understand, in particular because we are still largely prisoners of an involvement conception that is reduced to political involvement and – in a minor way- to union and associative involvement, to the detriment of other forms of involvement. (...) Formerly, the socialisation process led the individual to a predetermined place. (...) Today, there is no more traditional transmission by legacy. This legacy does no longer go without saying; on the contrary it is debated, discussed and experimented. The acquisition of a capacity to deliberate, to assess, to choose, to negotiate becomes crucial".*

The analysis of the relationship and tension between participation within societal institutions as they are and new forms of participation and relating to co-citizens in the public is the core objective of this report. Which forms and conditions of participation (both initiated by public actors and emerging from young people's own activities) are attractive for young people?

Which forms and conditions contribute to their recognition and position as co-citizens and are likely to increase their influence on their own lives in the context of their communities?

Particular attention is paid to the issues of learning and culture: Are young people expected to participate in society according to existing (and institutionalised) practices and meanings or are they seen as innovators of participation. Do young people have to learn how to participate in – and thereby to adapt to – the existing institutions or are they the pathfinders of society that needs to develop – and thereby to learn – new practices of participation: reactive learning or learning for change (cf. Manninen, 1998)? The rationale of the formal policy approach which starts from existing forms and structures values more participation as better. A perspective starting from young people as actors of social change asks for the relevance and adequacy of forms of participation for the individual citizens with regard to changing challenges of social integration.

This report has an international and partly comparative perspective inasmuch as it results from the joint work of researchers from Austria, France, Ireland, Italy and Slovakia. It is only partly comparative as – in sharp contrast to public rhetoric – there is little in-depth research available on this issue, especially on a comparative level (except the EUYOUPART study on young people's political participation (see Spannring et al., 2008) and the YOYO study on young people's motivation and active participation possibilities in transitions to the labour market; Walther et al., 2006). We therefore commence from a public discourse – and a highly normative one – rather than from phenomena which have been elaborated on the basis of empirical findings and analysis. Inasmuch as this report does not rely on primary empirical research but on secondary analysis it is mainly an attempt to firstly critically analyse the discourse on youth participation under the perspective of young people's agency, and secondly, to generate questions and perspectives for future research.

The report is divided into six parts including this introductory chapter which in the following will explain the methodological process and procedure from which this report has resulted. And it includes a discussion of different definitions of participation which results in the working definition of participation adopted by the thematic working group and which is underlying this report.

In Part II, the contexts of the five countries involved are presented including the national structures of transitions from school to work and their relation to the comparative model of transition regime, the structures of youth policy on the local and national level and the national particularities of the discourse on youth participation.

Part III analyses participation in its relation to social change in terms of individualisation. It starts with assessing the changes in young people's political participation in the five countries as political participation often is associated with the traditional and formal way of participation. It further analyses the changes of notions and discourses both internationally and nationally and it analyses the relationship between such discourses and theoretical concepts of agency under contexts of late modern, individualised societies.

Part IV deals with the relationship of participation and learning, especially with regard to school. It investigates how citizenship education is being interpreted and practised in the involved countries; it also compares different structures and forms of pupils' and students' participation; and it contrasts formal education in school with non-formal education in youth work. In a more theoretical perspective it also questions the one-way direction in which participation and learning normally are related in terms of learning of/for participation.

Part V introduces the dimension of culture by case studies on forms and practices of participation which actually are initiated by young people. While the focus lies on counter

cultures which accept dominant definitions of what is 'political', the chapter also includes some examples in which 'the political' in young people's activities is less clear or even contested, such as skaters and rioters.

Part VI concludes with regard to three dimensions: the first is to reflect on assets of policies which can be regarded as attracting young people and thereby being open for participatory involvement in contrast to policies making young people feel alienated; the second extends this distinction to a cross-national comparative dimension asking for key pre-requisites of attractive policies in the countries involved; the third is to summarise the findings by reformulating them into requirements and questions for future research.

1.2 Methodology: Process and procedure

This report has been produced in the framework of the UP2YOUTH project's thematic working group on youth participation. The other working groups are concerned with (i) young parenthood and (ii) the transitions to work of ethnic minority youth. Inasmuch as UP2YOUTH is funded as a coordinated action, the research consists mainly in integrating research from different contexts in terms of secondary analysis. No primary empirical research has been undertaken. While it has been an explicit aim to identify research gaps and blind spots, at times this objective made the process difficult; not only due to the lack of data but also due to the different nature of the available data.

In the first phase of the working group, the national teams produced country reports structured along the four transversal dimensions of the UP2YOUTH project which in a joint process were broken down into theme-specific questions:

- Individualisation:
- Is there a tangible relation between forms of participation and the degree to which young people from different backgrounds are actively involved and do exercise their civic rights?
- Does the implementation level of experiences influence the understanding of young people's processes of social integration (in terms of needs, access to autonomy, public care)?
- Learning:
- Are training sessions available to young people who are involved in experiences of participation?
- If yes, are these training sessions based on formal or informal learning? Do these training sessions encourage peer to peer learning?
- Culture:
- What policy objectives and forms of engagement correspond to young people's subjective interests and preferences?
- To what extent are experiences of participation taking into account the question of young people life-styles? Do they promote youth culture? Do they lead to a better understanding of young people expectations?
- Policy level:

- What means of promoting youth participation exist in Europe at different levels of decision making? To what extent do these attempts consider young people as experts and actors?

- What are the perspectives to integrate 'soft' and 'hard' policies for young people in a participatory perspective and thereby promote civic participation of young people in Europe?

These country reports were based on a review of available research literature on youth participation – whether it was theoretical or empirical, quantitative or qualitative, related to the national or local level.

For instance, Austria and Slovakia uncovered little data on participation linked to territorial backgrounds and on informal gathering and non formal participation but they did have detailed surveys on political participation and institutional forms of participation (youth councils, schools councils). On the other hand, in France, the material on participation learning and training was fairly weak.

Despite of the heterogeneity of the reports and the underlying material, a draft synthesis report was produced and discussed with policy makers, practitioners and other researchers working on issues related to youth participation during two thematic workshops. These discussions had on the one hand the function of making certain that the UP2YOUTH research process was relevant in relation to ongoing research, policy and practice, whilst on the other hand it provided the working group with complementary research findings.

In the second group phase, the shortcomings resulting from the heterogeneity of the available material in the countries involved was addressed by a twofold strategy: The first implied that partner produced two local case studies on youth policies and participation in medium-sized cities applying to a joint framework from differing socio-economic contexts and political legacies. Table 1 displays the local contexts chosen for case studies which are summarised in Part II whilst the case studies in their entirety can be found in Annex.

Table 1: List of case studies per country

Country	Cities
Austria	Innsbrück and Vienna
France	Metz and Rennes
Ireland	Cork and Limerick
Italy	Bologna and Palermo
Slovakia	Prievidza and Zvolen

The second approach was to select a series of emerging issues which were identified as innovative, significant and under-researched during the first group phase and to concentrate on these in the search for additional information

- the definition of participation;

- youth counter cultures;

- participation in the Internet;

- attractive versus unattractive youth policies;

> – local dimensions of youth policy;
>
> – participation in school

Each member of the group was responsible for coordinating the work on one issue. He or she had to formulate questions addressed to the other partners and to collect their answers. The material of the emerging issues was principally based on secondary analysis and on the case studies. The analysis of this material partly underlies the different chapters of this report (see above).

1.3 Definitions of (youth) participation

Participation originates form the Latin word 'participare' which means both to take part in and to take part of something, being involved in as well as sharing something. The Latin origin opens a broad range of different meanings which is reflected by discourses of participation which have evolved since and which relate to a variety of phenomena.

Participation of young people takes place on all levels from the local to the global, from informal settings such as groups, networks and communities to formal structures such as youth organisations, municipal youth councils, school councils, elections. Different forms of participation can be distinguished with respect to a multitude of dimensions:

> – voluntary (e.g. youth event, demonstration) versus non-voluntary (e.g. unemployment scheme);
>
> – bottom up, top down or in a cooperative form;
>
> – active (e.g. charity work) versus passive (citizenship, membership in voluntary organisation);
>
> – conscious or unconscious;
>
> – socially or institutionally sanctioned, conforming (voting, charity work) versus non-sanctioned, challenging, "bad" participation (riots; resistance; political extremism);
>
> – collective (institutionalised: e.g. activity in a trade union; non-institutionalised: e.g. local pressure group) versus individual (e.g. talking to school teacher to *"sort out things by myself"*) as highlighted by Biggart et al. (2006, p. 12):
>
> *"Participation is complementary to citizenship, as in democratic societies individuals' rights are connected with their citizenship status. Participation implies an at least partial correspondence between the individual and the collective, in other words the active negotiation between personal interest and the demands of society and therefore processes of identification".*

With regard to participation of young people Walther et al. (2006) have also distinguished participation as a principle of societal practice with regard to young people from participation as an objective which points to an understanding according to which young people first have to be prepared for participation (cf. European Commission, 2001; 2007).

Defining participation implies distinguishing degrees of participation. Most prominent with regard of the participation of children and young people is the ladder of participation, first introduced by Sherry Arnstein (1969) and further developed by Roger Hart (1992). It classifies models of participation according to whether children and young people are only consulted or involved in decision-making and according to who initiates participatory processes, adults or young people themselves.

1.3.1 Meaning of participation in different societal contexts

Different meanings and forms of participation are related to different societal contexts and arenas which will be briefly presented in the following: political participation, social or associative participation, civic participation, user or consumer participation, participation in and through education, participation in employment. Already, this list – which is by no means complete, exhaustive or representative – reveals that the appeal of the word participation has lead to an inflation in its use in both directions: on the one hand any involvement in socially institutionalised contexts such as being part of the workforce or being enrolled in education is referred to as *"participation in society"* (European Commission, 2007, p.1); on the other hand, social change has lead to an increasing differentiation of forms of participation which will be further elaborated in Chapter 3 (see pp. 47-63).

Political participation

Mainstream research on political participation, by comparison, tends to focus on citizens' engagement in institutionalised political processes within nation-states and the relationship between citizens and the political system.

Political participation can be inspected from at least two different approaches in democratic theory. The realist approach is based on notions of representativity and democratic elite rule which see democracy not as the rule of the people but as the rule of politicians with the consent of the people. Accordingly, voting is the crucial form of citizens' participation and serves to install a functioning government. Political participation is restricted to legal activities of citizens which *"are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or the actions they take"* (Verba et al., 1978, p. 46). The role of the citizens is more like that of spectators and consumers of politics. The normative approach to democracy, by contrast, sees the aim of participation not so much in safeguarding the functioning of institutions but in keeping a check on the political elite and the prevention of a hiving-off of elected politicians. Active participation that involves public discussion, common decision-making and political action (Barber, 1984) as well as direct forms of democracy are preferable since they ensure that the people's needs and interests remain the basis and focus of policy making. Beyond its immediate role within a democratic system political participation is seen as a value in itself increasing citizens' self-confidence, social and political skills as well as their social and political integration. Indeed, active participation in a lively democracy is often seen as a counterweight to processes of social disintegration and fragmentation (Schultze, 1995 cited in Hoecker, 2006). With this approach goes the normative expectation that the more participation the better.

Social and civic participation

Since the 1960s participation has become a political tool to address decreasing legitimacy of political institutions. A primary area in this regard has been urban planning. It is this strand of participation to which programmes of youth participation (e.g. White Paper; European Commission, 2001; 2005; cf. Williamson 2002; Council of Europe, 2003a; 2003b) have the biggest affinity. Recently, it has also become a major issue in the politics of international development (e.g. the World Bank; cf. Cooke & Kothari, 2001).

While political participation refers to the relationship between individual and society in terms of citizen and state, social or civic participation refer to the relationship between the individual self and a group or community. The political term of participation has both

individual and collective aspects; terms such as civil society and civic participation primarily refer to collective action: membership, especially active membership, in associations and organisations. It is especially in this regard that (new) social movements deserve mentioning (although overlapping with political participation). Referendums, initiatives and demonstrations related to political issues into political participation are other forms of which some refer to issues of the official policy agenda while others refer to issues which apparently are non-political. Youth councils and forums might also be listed here inasmuch as they are located somewhere between contributing to community life and the official political agenda (Barber, 1984; Matthews, 2001).

Terms such as social and civic participation reveal the limitation of an understanding of participation which coincides with democratic politics. Although membership in a sports club will only in exceptional cases be intended and perceived as a political act, it still represents a practice whereby individual needs and interests are connected and transformed into collective action in a more or less public way. Nit is not only the link to individual needs but also the public nature of belonging to something makes membership an issue of social identity.

Due to the blurring boundaries of political participation the notion of civic participation has become attractive at European level. Here, participation is connected to democracy without being restricted to elections (partly also because of the limited scope of elections) and the need of legitimation and a sense of shared identity without disposing of clear-cut assets of organisational membership or national citizenship (Williamson, 2002; Siurala, 2005).

User participation

Due to the fact that modern states not only organise membership in terms of rights and responsibilities but provide also services to their citizens, it has become common to refer to citizenship in terms of user participation. Such a perspective has been especially developed with regard to social services and social work although reference to participation is ambivalent as social work is always characterised by the simultaneity of help and control; including individuals into the normal life course while at the same time accepting and depending on subjective aims, orientations and resources. In theories of social work this has been reflected by concepts like everyday life or life world orientation, by social work as client-oriented service, participation as user involvement or, more recently, empowerment (Thiersch, 1992; Askheim, 2003; Payne, 2005; Seckinger, 2006). On the one hand, social work acts upon a mandate of the welfare state (inclusion as normalisation), on the other it depends on the active co-production of the client (who has actively to normalise). Therefore, concepts of and reference to participation are wide spread – but always questioned and contradictory. In the 1980s self-help was promoted as a balance against paternalistic welfare and social work undermining and disabling individuals' resources. The contradiction reveals especially in youth welfare, e.g. young people in public care. According to professional principles they should be assigned participation rights. At the same time, professionals (and parents) fear loss of their authority (Hodgson, 1995; Pluto, 2007).

The overlap between user participation and civic participation in the case of community development had its hightide in the 1960s/1970s in the context of social (urban) planning: citizens' involvement whilst balancing individualising with structure-related approaches against disadvantage are the most important issues in this regard (Powell & Geoghegan, 2004; Herrmann, 2004). A community work perspective includes the necessity to open spaces for societal conflicts rather than seizing on them or cooling them out. Especially under conditions of late modern individualisation divergence of individuals' and groups' interests seems

inevitable. If democracy is to be the main way of societal integration arenas are required in which struggles and conflicts can be acted out – and negotiated (Stevens et al., 1999).

The control aspect inherent to user participation has been reinforced under conditions of activating welfare policies in which citizens are primarily conceptualised as consumers or users of public services whereby questions of adequacy and legitimacy are transformed from public political issue into a question of market competition (Clarke, 2006; Barnes et al., 2007).

Participation through education and employment

In modern societies paid (and unpaid) work and education are fundamental mechanisms of social integration and social reproduction; it is therefore worthwhile to briefly reflect on their relationship to participation. Modern capitalism conceives of the market as the primary societal area in which individuals build relationships by means of exchange. Most notably in the Fordist period, social democracy and trade unions achieved a qualification of this weak form of participation through work by endowing individuals with social rights (cf. Marshall, 1950) including participation at the work place. In the Post-Fordist world however, this concept of participation is apparently is being re-installed. Not only has the increase of atypical work arrangements and globalisation contributed to the curtailing of workers' participation rights within companies; the introduction of group work type practices have increased the responsibilities of individual workers. Similarly, activation in labour market policies implies that individuals are expected to increase their job search activities – including the willingness to reduce aspirations – while benefit entitlements are more and more being made conditional upon active job search (Van Berkel & Hornemann Moeller, 2002; López Blasco et al., 2003).

With regard to education, activation is reflected by the trend towards lifelong learning which implies individualised responsibility for the own learning biography but also the potential freedom to organise learning according to one's own needs and interests and to integrate it with other obligations (Field, 2000). The notion of participation is also included in the concept of non-formal learning which describes all learning that does not follow a clear curriculum and does not subsume learning processes to external measurement. It relies on the assumption that learning is an activity of individual subjects which however can be facilitated within specific contexts and arrangements (Du Bois-Reymond, 2005). However, in educational policy and administration participation it is largely restricted to mere attendance – at least as long as predefined qualifications are being achieved.

1.3.2 *Meanings of participation in different countries*

Austria

In Austria participation is most often discussed in the context of the differentiation between organised youth and non-organised youth. Primarily, the problem is seen in the decline in membership rates of youth organisations which under the umbrella organisation of the Austrian Federal Youth Council has the responsibility to represent young people's interests in politics. Although Austrian youth is highly organised compared to most other European countries, the decline in membership gives rise to the concern of how to represent young people's interests politically. Another approach to participation is found in the communities who are increasingly aware of the importance of integrating young people in community affairs. However, participation models do not always turn out as a success for the young

participants, and in the least desirable cases turns them off of participation altogether. Many communities express their loss at how to integrate their young in a meaningful and effective way. Here, more help is needed in order to support the communities' efforts. Yet another way to apply participation is found in social work, where the approach is to provide young people with the opportunities to get active themselves. As became clear in the Austrian case study of a youth centre in Innsbruck, one of the problems is that youth centres tend to be isolated in relation to the rest of society and politics: here the young people are respected and their participation is welcomed and supported while in society more generally, young people tend to be seen as a nuisance that must be controlled.

France

In France, whereas participation is an ancient term in the world of politics (to refer to political participation), it represents a recent use in scientific fields (where it concerns the deliberative process). In the field of civil society, participation is seen as a positive tool that intends to sustain the public debate. In the teaching and learning professions, it is usually considered more as a pedagogical method than as a tool to enhance pupils voice/power. In the field of social work, it very often designates social workers' involvement to the decision making process. When it concerns users' participation, it generally has a negative meaning. More generally, the term participative democracy is used to refer to alternative forms of participation mobilised to overcome the crisis of classical tools of elective democracy.

Italy

The notion of participation has developed intensively in the dimensions of the scientific discourse in Italy in political studies, public administration discourse and community psychology.

In the Italian field of political studies since the 1970's the debate over active citizenship has represented an interesting approach to the question of participation at the public level, in the sense of a network of organisations sharing an autonomous and participative approach to social issues. The traditional concept of citizenship based upon a representative democracy reducing political participation to assertion of the rights to vote and to delegate was consequently brought into question. Participation in this sense is connected with awareness of being protagonist in one's own territory.

The second field in which an intense debate over participation in Italy has been promoted is that of public administration discourse: here we can find several proposals on how involve citizens in the implementation of public policies: through better and more transparent information, improved consideration of the opinions and proposals of the different stakeholders of the territory, involvement in the decision making and in the realisation and evaluation of concrete measures (i.e. participative budget).

The third field is that of community psychology and its recent developments. In the context of 'community' participation is seen as the result of a network of single and group forces, due to individuals and groups' direct involvement in the exchange relationship with the community they belong to (Lavanco (ed.), 2001, p. 21). The goal of participation is attained by promoting personal and social resources and through civil initiative for a better environmental balance. In Italy, single experiences have been realised by means of empowerment strategies, for example in the world of labour, schools, local communities, areas of civic and environmental decay. This is made possible by the transformation of "beneficiaries" into co-protagonists in initiatives, while all other members of the network benefit from the competences acquired

through participation in the projects. By designing and realising interventions in their own communities, people acquire those technical and emancipatory skills necessary for them to gain more power and consequently become capable of learning how to find resources and develop them, in short they affect the reality in which they live. Through this process, the competences of both individuals and organisations increase (Francescato et al., 1997, p. 251). This approach has been put into practice over the past few years through experiences of joint social planning in projects for environmental and social recovery of decayed peripheral areas. The efforts of young people are significant above all others in this regard.

Ireland

The term participation is used in a multitude of social settings in Ireland. Participation is viewed in a positive manner without a clear meaning being attached to the term. At a base level participation in Irish social and civic society equates to membership and attendance rather than any more meaningful engagement. In this respect it takes a passive rather than an active form.

The consumerist development of Irish society over the last two decades represents one element of this passivity as people increasingly construct themselves as customers receiving a service and not as citizens whose active participation at various levels in society is a prerequisite for social action (Keohane and Kuhling, 2004). A consensus model of politics has further exacerbated matters by reducing parliamentary debate to a managerial rather than ideological discourse reflected in voter apathy towards politics. Political participation is in the main limited to exercising the vote franchise during elections and referenda; although the main political parties have been actively recruiting membership remains low.

A variety of alternative mechanisms have emerged that implicitly attempt to foster participation in Irish society, principally a system of local and national partnerships. At local level these partnerships bring together various actors such as state agents, NGOs, business interests and local people and are primarily concerned with the development of local economy, services and infrastructure. At national level this arrangement (which has existed since the late 'eighties) involves trades unions, business, farmer's organisations, the voluntary sector and the Government. The goals of this partnership include social and economic stability (especially in relation to organised labour) and economic prosperity. National partnership has been attacked from both left wing and right wing sources; the left claims that a minority of the population has benefitted disproportionally from partnership and that it actively reduces involvement in trades unions whilst the right believes that the system gives too much power to organised labour (especially the public service unions) and represents an abrogation of policy making by the Government in favour of unelected lobby groups with vested interests.

Within the context of community work and development (especially in marginalised areas) participation is widely cited as a key aim or objective of any particular programme or project. This can lead to the term being devalued insofar as that tokenism through attendance or membership is the public experience of participation.

The participation of young people in organised youth activities, education and civic society are consistently advanced as a priority issue for the various actors interacting with young people. Both the 2001 Youth Work Act and the National Development Plan 2003-2007 explicitly mention youth participation as an aim whilst the National Children's Strategy 2000 commits the state to giving children as voice in matters that concern them. Whilst attendance remains the primary indicator of participation it does appear that the various NGOs take the

issue seriously; Youth Work Ireland for example have firmly located participation with the context of quality standards in youth work practice (Griffin, 2004, p. 12).

Slovakia

Since the political changes in November 1989 the conditions for youth participation have altered radically. In contemporary Slovakia participation is often associated with social, political and civic dimension (Marshall, 1950). Civic participation is a term, which started to be used in Slovakia more frequently in the early 1990s. The concept of civic participation was quickly adopted, because it transformed the perception of the role of the citizens from passive recipients to active initiators of change. It is often understood in Slovakia as membership in civic associations or participation in elections and political life. Others envisage its realisation through the organisation of petitions or participation of young people on decision-making processes or public discussions, but also more generally as the process of the creation of an active citizen with an active role in the formation of the social environment at local, national and European level.

1.3.3 Towards a working definition

Initially, the objective of the UP2YOUTH project was to focus on civic participation following the assumption that the concept of political participation was too close to the established institutions and thereby increasingly meaningless for young people. According to our initial definition(s) civic participation was conceptualised in a twofold way: it concerns all formal and informal experiences that are implemented in favour of young people to collect their advice and reactions on any field of public action and at all levels of the policy-making process; it also concerns all young people's auto-organised experiences that permit their expression on public action (referring to socially recognised forms as well as ones classified as deviant like demonstration and violence).

During the first debates in the thematic working group, however, it revealed that boundaries between different forms of participation are blurred while dropping political participation implies denying the latent or manifest political aspects of young people's participatory acts.

At the same time, it also proved a rather negative definition of participation proved difficult: what is not participation if one agrees that also actions need to be taken into consideration which take different forms and refer to different issues than those formally accepted as participation?

In terms of a working definition, it was decided to refer to young people's actions as potentially participatory if they are carried out in or directed to the public. The restriction to being 'potentially participatory' relates to the dimension of consciousness (see above) in order to understand whether a public action is meant as a communicative act towards the public, i.e. the claim for space and/or visibility. It therefore interprets the White Paper definition *"decisions which concern them and, in general, the life of their communities"* in wide sense with a focus on decisions *"which concern them"* as potential links to the *"life of their communities"*. These are decisions which may or may not be visible to them – or to external observers.

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Chapter 2

Contexts of youth participation

The objective of this chapter is to present and to analyse societal contexts in which different constellations of youth participation are embedded, especially youth policy structures.

To answer to this question, one needs to contextualise youth policies. The traditional weaknesses of youth policy throughout modern societies (Mc Neish and Loncle, 2003; Loncle, 2003) leads to many thoughts, ideas and recommendations on the ways to foster and strengthen these public interventions (United Way Toronto, 2008; Siurala, 2005; Williamson, 2002) in a global context of modernisation, transversalisation and territorialisation of public action (Lascoumes and Le Galès, 2007).

Nevertheless, throughout European countries, there is a persistent gap between on the one hand the discourses about youth and its importance for modern societies and on the other hand the implementation of policy measures addressed to this population. One approach is to distinguish according to areas of public intervention and according to 'hard' and 'soft' youth policies (Walther and al, 2006).

This distinction could be symbolised as a three level pyramid. The basic level consists of the formal system which addresses young people, especially with regard to their transitions through education in the labour market. All represented countries feature a heavy state investment in these formal educational and training systems that purport to cater for all young people.

Above these fundamental structures comes an interim layer providing second chance, informal and non-formal opportunities where growing up in general and transitions to work in particular is 'at risk' or actually fails. Here, we find complex mixtures of 'hard' policies concerned with providing qualifications, jobs or subsidies and 'soft' approaches resulting from the need to take the life situations and biographies of so-called 'disadvantaged youth' into account. Within this layer both state and voluntary agencies implement policy and the state provides a certain degree of resources to allow this layer to function. An addition to this layer is the area of measures responding to manifest forms of deviance that can range from hard (custody type responses) to soft depending on the relationship between punitive and educative approaches in national youth justice systems. Hard policies appear to be politically attractive as a response to perceived problematic young people. Policies that target various social ills such as unemployment and crime are prioritised over the softer leisure, recreational and cultural orientated programmes which are traditionally the preserve of voluntary organisations.

The upper layer of this hypothetical pyramid is the 'soft' sector consisting of the social and recreational arena which again aims to serve all young people, especially through youth work. This particular layer is most at risk of under-resourcing and cost-cutting measures. Conversely, it is also the layer that allows for meaningful participation, social and cultural development, personal development and active citizenship as it is focused on the integration of socially valued norms and behaviours.

This trend is all the more preoccupying to the extent that Williamson (2007) points out that:

> *"All countries have a youth policy- by intent, default or neglect. In other words, young people continue to have to live their lives, whatever the policy context".*

The field of youth is perhaps unique insofar as that it remains an area that is deeply invested in by voluntary organisations of every religious, ideological and political shade; from the international actors such as the YMCA to local micro agencies that serve the needs of a neighbourhood. These organisations can hold influence in the policy making field and are usually strongly pro youth. In this regard they may act as a counterweight to the sometimes delirious moral panics that seem to erupt periodically in relation to young people across Europe. In the main youth policies tend to focus on the soft sector issues that affect young people in society and generally aim to improve access to leisure and recreational opportunities such as national and international exchanges, non-formal and in-formal educational systems, and civic citizenship type programmes. These policies thereafter develop into a form of youth work practice characterised as 'personal development' or social education' (see Young, 1999; Hurley & Treacy, 1993, Jeffs & Smith, 1988; 1999).

As a set of aspirations in this area the European Commission's White Paper on Youth of 2001 represents a concentrated effort on behalf of the Union to devise a:

> *"New framework for cooperation amongst the various actors in the youth field in order to involve young people more in decisions affecting them" (White Paper on Youth, 2001).*

The furtherance of young people's participation in decision making has become a key driver of policy in the youth field in recent years; alongside participation cooperation (particularly in relation to integrating young people), promoting initiative, enterprise and creativity, and the promotion of voluntary activity and citizenship form the core objectives of the white paper.

Additionally the 'problematisation' issue of youth and young people's issues represents a major challenge to both youth policy and practice; in a British context Brown (in Barry, 2005) suggested that:

> *"There is a recurring and ongoing preoccupation with the perceived threat to social stability posed by unregulated, undisciplined and disorderly youth".*

To go further in our knowledge of the reality of youth policies, it seems central to examine their implementation at both national and local levels. This last dimension appears all the more important that, due to the weakness of national youth policies, most of youth policies are developed at local level (de Luigi & Martelli, 2007; Loncle, 2003). This characteristic is both interesting because it is probably more relevant for young people but also difficult to clarify because of the great diversity of actions and the lack of knowledge on what is going on at local level throughout European local societies.

Nevertheless, young people's participation at local level in public policy and decision making process is highly recommended by the Council of Europe which fosters there a better answer to this population's needs (Recommendation 128 (2003b) on the revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life).

> *"The active participation of young people in decisions and actions at local and regional level is essential if we are to build more democratic, inclusive and prosperous societies. Participation in the democratic life of any community is about more than voting or standing for election, although these are important elements. Participation and active citizenship is about having the right, the means, the space and the opportunity and where necessary the support to participate in and influence decisions and engage in actions and activities so as to contribute to building a better society.*

Local and regional authorities, as the authorities closest to the young person, have a very important role to play in promoting youth participation. In doing so, local and regional authorities can ensure that young people not only hear and learn about democracy and citizenship, but rather have the opportunity to practice it. However, youth participation is not solely about developing active citizens or building democracy for the future. It is vital, if participation is to be meaningful for young people, that they can influence and shape decisions and actions when they are young and not only at some later stage in life".

To examine these different dimensions, the present part is divided into three sections: the distinction between broader constellations of policies for young people; the national structures of youth policies; and the local level which includes a brief presentation of case studies carried out within the thematic working group process in the five countries involved.

2.1 Context of youth participation policies

2.1.1 Welfare regimes and youth transition regimes

One may locate the international comparison of youth policy and youth participation within the wider context of comparative welfare research. Here, the most influential contribution has been made by Esping-Andersen (1990) with his distinction of three 'welfare regimes'. Focussing on the degree to which individuals' labour is being de-commodified from the labour market, i.e. to what extent individuals are secured by the state against the loss of income from paid work. Esping-Andersen distinguished three regime types: a social-democratic or universalistic in the Nordic countries where access is regulated through the citizenship status and a high level of compensation; a liberal or residual in the Celtic and Anglosaxon countries where access is again regulated according to citizenship while the level of compensation is much lower and the focus lies on individual provision; and a conservative or corporatist model gathering the Continental countries where access to social security depends on the occupational and family status. While being still a key reference, this model has been widely discussed and criticised for being 'blind' with regard to gender and ethnicity or for neglecting huge differences between Western and Southern Europe (cf. Sainsbury, 1999, 2006; Gallie and Paugam, 2000).

It also does not differentiate with regard to young people. In the research of the EGRIS group the development of a comparative model with regard to the way in which modern society regulate young people's transitions into work and adulthood differently was therefore a key task. The notion of youth transition regimes refers to existing institutional settings but also to the values and interpretations which they constantly reproduce (Walther, 2006a; 2006b):

"Applying a typology of welfare regimes to the comparison of youth transition contexts requires an extended perspective. Whereas social security compensating for a lack of income through unemployment remains important, structures of education and training also need to be considered- especially according to dimensions of stratification and standardization (Allmendinger, 1989) –likewise their relation to concepts of work and employment (Shavit and Müller, 1998). Employment and welfare, along with education and training, include mechanisms of doing gender through which the relation between men and women is shaped in particular ways (e.g. Sainsbury, 1999; West and Festermaker, 1995). The combination of these structures results in the particular design of programmes for unemployed youth. A comparison of such policies at the same time provides evidence of dominant interpretations of youth unemployment and 'disadvantaged youth' – in terms of ascribing disadvantage to either individual deficits or structures of segmentation. Policies also depend on and reproduce context-specific notions of youth, reflecting the main societal expectations towards young people" (Mc Neish and Loncle, 2003; Walther et al., 2002). (2006b, p. 124-125)

Table 2: Transition regimes across Europe

Regime	Country	School	Training	Social security	Employment Regime	Female Employment	Concept of Youth	Concept of Disadvantage	Focus of Transition Policies	Trend
Universalistic	Denmark Finland	Not selective	Flexible standards (mixed)	State	Open Low risks	High	Personal development Citizenship	Individualized and structure-related	Education Activation	Liberal (more labour market orientation)
Employment centred	Austria Germany	Selective	Standard-ized (dual)	State / family	Closed Risks at the margins	Medium	Adaptation to social positions	Individualized	(Pre-) vocational training	Liberal (more activation)
Liberal	Ireland UK	Principally not selective	Flexible, low standards (mixed)	State / family	Open, High risks	High	Early economic independence	Individualized	Employability	Liberal (more education)
Sub-protective	Greece Italy Portugal Spain	Not Selective	Low standards and coverage (mainly school)	Family	Closed High risks (Informal work)	Low	Without distinct status	Structure-related	'Some' status: work, education or training	Mixed liberal (deregulation) and employ-ment-centred (training)
Post-communist countries	Bulgaria Poland Romania Slovakia Slovenia	Principally not selective	Standards in process of trans-formation (mixed)	Family state	Closed High risks	Low (except Slovenia)	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed	PL, SK: Liberal BG, RO: Employment-centred SI: Universalistic

According to Andreas Walther, in reference to Esping Andersen's (1990) and Gallie and Paugam's (2000) typologies, one can distinguish four youth transition regimes. As demonstrated by table 2, these regimes have a significant influence on the shaping of the notions youth, youth unemployment, and disadvantage and on the focus of transition policies.

- The liberal transition regime in the Celtic and Anglo-Saxon countries is best characterised by the notion of individual responsibility. Young people without work face major pressure (workfare) to enter the workforce; the underlying principal being that that young people should lead into economic independence as soon as possible. The labour market is structured by a high degree of flexibility. While this provides multiple entry options, especially also for young women, it also implies a high level of insecurity. In the context of highly individualising policies young people face considerable risks of social exclusion.

- The universalistic transition regime of the Nordic countries is based on inclusive education systems and individual access to welfare. Rather than primarily pointing to direct labour market relevance the education system reflects the individualisation of life courses. While youth is first of all associated with individual personal development, young people's status is that of 'citizens in education'. This is reflected by an education allowance for all who are over 18 and still in education which contributes to a partial independence from their families. Throughout education and labour market oriented activation policies, individual choice is rather broad to secure individual motivation. Gendered career opportunities are highly balanced due to the broad relevance of the public employment sector and the availability of child care.

- The employment-centred regime of countries such as Austria, France and Germany, in which a differentiated (and partly even highly selective) school system leads into a rigidly standardised and gendered system of vocational training. The dominant task of youth is to socialise for a set occupational and social position – through education and training. This is reflected through the provision of a two-tiered division of social security, favouring those who have already been in regular training or employment, while others are entitled to stigmatised social assistance. Those who fail to enter regular vocational training are referred to as 'disadvantaged' from a deficit-oriented perspective. Pre-vocational measures are governed by the objective 'first of all, they need to learn to know what work means', in other terms: adaptation, reduction of aspirations, holding out.

- In the Mediterranean countries welfare regimes are sub-protective in a double sense. Although the school system is organised in a largely comprehensive way, transitions often imply a waiting phase until the mid 30ies with unequal outcomes. Structural deficits regarding access to welfare and the lack of reliable training as well as youth policies impact on young men and women as they are not entitled to any kind of social benefits. The depend to a large extent on their families who are referred to as 'social amortisator' for the socio-political vacuum. Long family dependency stands for the fact that youth does not have a formal status and place in society – but recent research suggests that there are big differences also among Mediterranean countries, from the positive pole of 'big freedom' for young people living with their parents (as in Northern Italy) to the quite pessimistic pole of 'forced harmony' (as in Southern Italy). Young women have less career opportunities and anticipate responsibility for later family obligations.

- In the post-socialist countries one can not speak of a single transition regime. On the one hand, the past of reliable but choiceless trajectories still influences what is perceived as normal so that the existing regime types do not apply. On the other hand, differences existing already before 1990 have increased since the post-socialist governments – under pressure of World Bank and EU – aim at adopting liberal (e.g. Poland) or employment-centred (e.g. Slovakia) structures. Thus, complex mixtures have emerged which are still in dynamic processes of transformation. So far it seems wise to analyse the developments according to the dimensions applied in the regime typologies without subsuming the countries under existing typologies (Walther and Pohl, 2005).

While youth policy models or transition regimes are typologies which primarily derive from and reflect different institutional logics it is interesting to compare them with socio-economic indicators. While there is not always a direct correspondence between institutional logic and policy success in terms of employment or unemployment performance, both the data on young people's living conditions (primary source of income) and the public expenses on education and on families and children reflect different priorities and normalities of being young and growing up in the different countries (see table 3).

Table 3: Selected socio-economic factors of the five countries regarding the current state of young people, risk indicators and public policy expenses

	Austria	France	Ireland	Italy	Slovakia	EU 27
Current state of 15-24 year olds 2006 in % (Eurostat)*						
employment	54,0	30,2	50,0	25,5	25,9	36,6
unemployment	5,4	8,2	4,7	7,0	9,4	7,6
education	53,7	59,4	57,4	56,2	55,0	59,3
Risk indicators regarding education, employment and living conditions 2006 in % (Eurostat)						
unemployment rate**	9,1	21,3	8,6	21,6	26,6	17,2
early school leavers	9,6	12,3	12,3	20,8	6,4	15,2
Primary source of income 2007 in % (Eurobarometer)						
regular job	52,3	45,3	54,4	37,0	40,2	43,2
parents	24,0	30,3	19,3	49,8	36,5	31,0
state (benefits)	3,8	5,8	6,0	0,2	4,2	4,5
state (allowance)	8,9	3,8	5,2	1,5	2,2	7,0
Expenses in % of GDP in 2005 for ... (Eurostat)						
education	5,44	5,65	4,77	4,43	3,85	5,03
family and children	3,00	2,50	2,50	1,10	1,90	2,10

* totals above 100% result from dual apprent

According to Walther (2006a and b), a model of youth transition regimes can help to explain differences in young people's life course structures. The question of participation and the extent to which it is considered finds its place in this context.

It is important to note that regime models are not descriptive but heuristic. They are too broad to explain structural differences in detail which also occur between national transition systems clustered in the same regime type. They refer to the different logic underlying transition structures

2.1.2 European Youth Policy

Youth policies are not easily disentangled from the overall social and economic policy of any particular region or jurisdiction. The provision of services for young people has traditionally reflected the welfare regime of any particular country it is therefore useful to locate policies and services concerning youth within the overall welfare approach of any particular nation when investigating such services and policies.

We have seen that youth transitions which are embedded in hard policy regimes cannot be seen to overly influence the youth sector; the question now is do welfare regimes exert an influence on this youth sector?

European welfare regimes have witness a transformation over the last three decades that echo the societal transformation towards post modernism and the economic movement to a post-industrial ideologically inspired free market. Taylor-Gooby (2004) defines four sets of "new social risks" which are a consequence of these changes and represent significant challenges to European social policy makers;

- Female participation in the labour force

- The ageing profile of Europe's population

- Industrial change from technical development and globalisation that has reduced the demand for unskilled labour

- The growth of the private sector into hitherto public service provision (Taylor-Gooby, 2004, p. 4-5).

These new risks represent a significant shifting of social structures for young people in terms of gender role and identification, future prospects in the labour market (both public and private) and the commercialisation of formerly public entities.

The changes accruing from these risks have impacted on young people and the provision of services for young people across Europe. The youth sector in various nation and regions has responded in different ways to new risks and challenges in a visibly soft approach influenced by the humanitarian ideology and social justice ethos that tends to underpin the youth sector. This contrasts with hard sector policies in areas such as housing and income support (where age restrictions limit access to benefits and assistance).

As a set of aspirations in this area the European Commission's White Paper on Youth of 2001 represents a concentrated effort on behalf of the Union to devise a:

> *"New framework for cooperation amongst the various actors in the youth field in order to involve young people more in decisions affecting them" (White Paper on Youth, 2001).*

The furtherance of young people's participation in decision making has become a key driver of policy in the youth field in recent years; alongside participation cooperation (particularly in relation to integrating young people), promoting initiative, enterprise and creativity, and the promotion of voluntary activity and citizenship form the core objectives of the white paper.

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> *"There is a recurring and ongoing preoccupation with the perceived threat to social stability posed by unregulated, undisciplined and disorderly youth"*

From an Irish perspective there has been a surge in moral panics associated with young people's behaviours despite the relatively low level of youth crime in the country.

2.1.3 Youth sector

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placed on a continuum from countries with a well-developed youth sector to countries with only a few elements of a self-contained youth sector" (p. 60).

▪ The dimension of target groups or – more generally – of defining youth starting either with early childhood or around the age of 14 or 15 and ending at mid 20s to mid 30s.

▪ The dimension of issues and activities which range from an infrastructure of leisure activities for all young people to the focus of integration measures for disadvantaged or at risk youth.

▪ The dimension of addressing youth as a resource (as promoted also be the EU White Paper) or as a problem which may include both the problems that youth creates for society and the vulnerability problems young people face themselves.

The IARD study comes up with four types of youth policy which largely correspond to modified welfare regime typologies (e.g. Gallie and Paugam, 2000) and the model of transition regimes (Walther 2006a, 2006b):

Table 4: Youth policy models and their effects on the classifications and perceptions of young people

Youth policy model	Countries	Governance	Target group	Issues	Youth as a …
Universalistic	Nordic countries	Fragmented	13/15-25	Participation	Resource
Residual/Community-oriented	Celtic and Anglosaxon countries	Fragmented	5-25	Social exclusion Participation	Problem
Protectionist	Continental countries	Comprehensive	0-25/30	Social exclusion Participation	Resource/Problem
Centralised	Mediterranean countries	Comprehensive	15-25/30	Social exclusion	Resource/Problem

Source: IARD, 2001, p. 108

Again it needs to be reminded that this is rather heuristic than descriptive while also ongoing changes and policy reforms need to be taken into account. As regards Central and Eastern Europe no countries were involved in this study. Referring to the youth policy review carried out by the Council of Europe, Slovakia may be considered as close to the protectionist model (Lauritzen et al., 2005).

2.2 Youth policy structure

2.2.1 National Youth Policies

This aspect appears strongly related to the historical legacy of each country. In this perspective, the Italian report can be considered as a good example:

"Until 1995 there was no systematic national policy for the youth, but only laws on particular aspects that aimed to protect young people in various fields, with responsibilities shared among different ministerial cabinets. Moreover, there used to be no ministry or other equivalent institutional body to coordinate youth policies. Historical reasons for such a lack go back to the early post-war period, when the political forces of the newly established Republic wished to refrain from following the same policies for youth and families adopted under the fascist regime. Rather, they committed both education and transition to adult and professional life to the traditional education structures (family, school, and church) and to the political organisations close to the party system" (Montanari, 1996: 182-183).

The same remark could have been formulated in France where it has always seem impossible to build a strong youth sector after the bad memory that represents the experience of the Vichy Government which created a Youth Ministry in 1940 (Tétard, 1986). Historical aspects are also very important in Ireland:

"Youth work in Ireland at the turn of the Century is associated with the triumvirate of church, culture and politics. In what became the Irish Free State (and later the Republic) voluntary organisations were mainly church based charitable institutions whose efforts were directed at the needs of the 'deserving' poor" (Burgess, 2001).

These different dimensions give us elements of clarification on the ways national and youth policies are implemented in the five studied countries.

Ireland has a minor youth policy sector and many policy issues that affect young people are dealt with across other Government Departments. Irish youth policy is ultimately the responsibility for the relevant Minister of State; structurally however there is a degree of uncertainty at this point in time (July 2008) as the youth affairs section has recently (May 2008) been moved from the Department of Education to the National Children's Office. Irish youth policy is characterised by the influence of NGO's through the National Youth Council of Ireland, an umbrella body for various youth organisations. Youth policy in an Irish context can be taken to refer to two main areas; (1) the provision of sports, recreation, leisure and cultural spaces for young people, and (2), measures designed to overcome social exclusion amongst young people from disadvantaged and marginalised communities.

In France policy is organised at three levels; National, Departmental and Municipal. National policies correspond to three different ministries: a policy of leisure, sport and associative life, a policy of education and a policy of employment.

At the departmental level the social field is now a full competence of the Departments. The department of Ille-et-Vilaine has chosen to give a particular place to young people through accommodation, social and professional inclusion assistance

The municipalities are traditional actors of the youth policies insofar as that they are responsible for their own geographical areas and concerned with issues such as civic participation, sports and education.

The situation in Italy is rather more complex as it is only since 2006 that legal instruments required to consolidate youth policy within a major structure have become available.

The challenge was that of promoting a systematic national policy for young people through the creation of an integrated National Youth Plan, but up to now it's not clear the repercussion of this

action on the youth policy of local governments, which continues to be fragmented and not homogenous in the different part of the country.

In the north over the last 20 years it has been the municipalities that have instigated measures for young people.

In Slokakia there is no special codification of child and youth rights in the legal Code, but the Act of basic rights and liberties is incorporated into the Slovak Constitution. Youth policy is placed under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, through the Department of Children and Youth.

Policy structures are discernable at two levels in Austria; the Federal Government provides the law guidelines and controls the youth policy of the Federal Regions where there are two major sets of regulations: the youth protection law and the youth welfare law.

At the provincial level, the Federal governments are in charge of implementing youth policy measures at the provincial level, regulating youth work outside the school sector. Their most important tasks include youth welfare, youth protection legislature, promotion and support of institutions for youth work, training of staff involved in youth work, public relations work and lobbying measures, services for children and young people. Extracurricular youth work is to a large extent performed by the youth departments (Landesjugendreferate) of the federal governments, including the work of youth associations, public youth work, sports, education and culture clubs.

In all cases the structure and nature of youth policy formation and delivery tends to mirror the ideological foundations of the relevant national/regional welfare regime in the main. It is also noticeable however that the voluntary/NGO sector plays a significant role in providing direct services for young people even within states that have historically heavily invested in public sector provision.

All five countries have a mixture of welfare economy insofar as that young people's needs are fulfilled to various degrees by the state, voluntary/NGO actors, family and local community and market forces (particularly in the area of commercial leisure). One should not forget that alongside the other groups in any population young people also avail of generic services such as transport, healthcare, utilities and housing.

All five nations feature general policies that affect the overall population in terms of leisure and recreational facilitation, cultural activities and welfare provision. There is also a commonality in regard to age related protections that seek to protect children and young people from hazards of one sort or another; and a commonality in regard to age related rights such as consumption of alcohol and access to motor vehicles. In Slovakia for example the Act of Basic Rights and Liberties offers protections and rights to children and young people.

With the exception of Slovakia the represented countries have some form of intent-driven youth policy specifically targeted at addressing the areas outlined by the White Paper. The overall structural picture is of national governments legislating for the provision of certain services and opportunities with the next 'layer down' (federal, provincial, departmental or municipal) bearing responsibility for the detailed tasks involved in delivery of such services.

In Ireland for example the municipal based Vocational Education Committees are tasked with implementing the practice elements of the National Youth Work Development Plan whilst in France the municipalities are the traditional core actors in this area.

A degree of fragmentation becomes evident at this level as some actors are more pro-active than others in progressing events; in the Italian case over the last twenty years the northern part of the country has been very active relative to the south.

Table 5: National structures of youth policy

	Austria	*Ireland*	*Italy*	*France*	*Slovakia*
Fields of public intervention	Youth welfare	Youth work Education	Economic, fiscal, professional, educational, cultural sectors	Leisure, sports Justice, health, social, employment	Education Labour Social affairs Health Interior affairs Culture
Administrative bodies	Ministry for Health, Family, and Youth	Ministry of Education	Ministry for youth and sports Department of social affairs	Ministry of youth and sports Ministry of social affairs Ministry of justice	Ministry of Education Iuventa Other ministries

Types of relationshi

between ministries are unclear. In Slovakia, youth policy is reckoned to be a substantial area and falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, a Ministry that possesses the competency to coordinate all of the administrative actors. Nevertheless, until now youth policy has been mainly confined to the educational sector and the leadership of the Ministry of Education does not seem to be completely consolidated.

One of the major problems when youth participation is considered is the question of the reality of experimentation, beyond the consensual rhetoric in favour of young people's involvement. To develop our analysis on youth participation policies, we have introduced three points that seemed significant to understand the reality of implementation: an attempt to identify the policies that can be labelled as attractive or unattractive for young people; a focus on participation at local level and a description of youth councils in our five countries.

2.2.2 NGOs and the implementation of youth policies

NGOs are the main service delivery agencies in soft sector youth work and therefore are the key actors in making policy happen on the ground. In the main a representative form of democracy is the core model used to elect young people from clubs etc. to represent their peers to the organisation as a whole.

Across Europe a range of such organisations provide information centres, training opportunities, clubs and groups where young people can meet and socialize, and specific social services for young people in distress. As such they are at the forefront of implementing the policies outlined by the White Paper (and were so doing long before this document) and have served as the engine of policy development over the years. In many ways it can be seen that policy is constantly playing 'catch-up' with practice.

In many cases the state has become the primary funder for these organisations and without this support the level of service offered would be seriously curtailed.

Structurally it would seem that policy implementation occurs through a fairly standard system; national government sets the broad parameters and (sometimes) provides the resources.

Regional or municipal entities either provide services directly or, more commonly, contract NGOs (who may well have been providing services prior to such contracting) to deliver services. These NGOs in turn respond to both the requirements of state and municipal parameters (expressed or controlled by funding criteria) on the one hand and to the wishes and desires of the young people on the other hand.

These NGOs in turn feed into policy formation through the membership of umbrella federations who represent their members concerns and desires back to government.

In terms of dictating or inputting into policy and changing policy towards attractive measures young people do possess a powerful tool; their participation through membership or attendance. Put simply, no youth organisation can function without young people's explicit or implicit consent.

- In *Austria* the regulation of youth policies is allocated with the Federal Ministry for Health, Family, and Youth (BMGFJ). Youth policy is co-ordinated and controlled by this instance and responsibilities are shared between the Federal government and the nine Federal states. At the federal level, the BMGFJ is in charge of basic legislature in the youth welfare sector, expert

advice for draft bills concerning youth, implementation of international agreements and agendas, financial support and supervision of youth organisations, initiatives and projects. The responsible ministry coordinates various work committees that include government representatives, social partners, the National Youth Council, the Federal States, experts and NGOs. These committees shall propose policy measures, facilitate co-ordination and observe policy implementation. At the provincial level, the Federal governments are in charge of implementing youth policy measures at the provincial level, regulating youth work outside the school sector. Their most important tasks include youth welfare, youth protection legislature, promotion and support of institutions for youth work, training of staff involved in youth work, public relations work and lobbying measures, services for children and young people. Extracurricular youth work is to a large extent performed by the youth departments (Landesjugendreferate) of the federal governments, including the work of youth associations, "open" (non-association) youth work, sports, education and culture clubs.

- In our sample, *Italy* was the only country in which youth policy was not at all regulated at the national level until 2006. Since 2006, Italy has been endowed by a Ministry of Youth and Sport. This situation is the result of a progressive process that took part during the last decade. The beginning of this process was the creation of a Department of social affairs in 1990. The latter established three major bodies in favour of young people in 1997 (law 451): the National observatory for childhood and adolescence; the National documentation and study centre for childhood and adolescence and the Parliamentary committee for childhood and adolescence. It also promoted Law 285/1997 which establishes the promotion of rights and opportunities of children and adolescents. At the end of the process, one can find the creation of a Ministry for Youth Policies and Sport whose function is to coordinate the actions of the Government whose aims are to promote young people in economic, fiscal, professional, educational and cultural sectors. At regional and local levels, various initiatives have been led to develop youth policies. Some regions have promoted basic laws for youth policies promotion and coordination (in the fields of: youth participation, youth information, intercultural exchanges, spare time and cultural activities, integration of foreign students, prevention of deprivation and deviance, educational initiatives and equal opportunities) (Baraldi and Ramella, 1999, p10). Nevertheless, whilst certain regions have undertaken unitary integrated projects, others still show a worrying lack of co-ordination between agencies (associations, local authority, family and schools). Regarding municipal policies, we can underline that it is only since the early '80s that young people began to be recognised as a social subject, the target of services and interventions from local administrations. Actions were undertaken in large cities of the north of Italy ruled by left-wing councils: Turin, Bologna, Milan, Modena, Reggio Emilia. The starting point was *Progetti giovani*, projects that aimed to integrate different interventions in favour of the youth, by promoting the presence of representatives within local administrations. The main intervention sectors are: sports and spare time, school education, extracurricular activities, struggle against youth marginalisation, youth employment and information. The Italian report underlines the fact that:

> *"local government's action in the field of youth policies has clear limits: first of all, the lack of a basic law to refer to at the national level forces local authorities to adopt urgent, improvised measures whenever they are in need of financial resources".*

- In *Ireland*, the youth sector nationally is regulated in a fragmented way. Youth policy appears to be deeply interconnected with the field of youth work: Rather than coming under the aegis of any

single government body, responsibility for youth policy in Ireland tends to be divided across a number of Government departments such as Education, Health, Labour and Justice. These various departments are charged with implementing policy in their respective areas, sometimes with particular emphasis on particular sub-sections of the population. Youth work is seen primarily as a recreational and leisure orientated activity within the broader social education area and falls under the Youth Affairs section of the Department of Education. The legal framework of youth policy and youth work was established quite recently through: the National Children's Strategy (2000), the Children Act (2001), Child Protection Policies (Children First, 1999), the Childcare Act (1991), the Youth Work Act (2001) and the National Youth Work Development Plan (2003).

- In *France*, national regulation of youth policy appears also highly fragmented. Because of the Government of Vichy's legacy, it has always been impossible to foster the creation of a major youth sector. As a consequence, despite the existence of a rather weak Ministry of youth and sports, most of the decisions regarding young people were taken until January 2005 at central level, by the Ministries of Education and of Social and health affairs and by the Commissariat général du plan (the instance in charge of planning) and at local level, by Cities and their youth services. Nevertheless, as French administration appears to have been built under a rigid silo manner, one of the obstacles of the conception and implementation of youth policies has been to develop transversal partnerships in order to answer to young people's difficulties. During the last decade, youth policy framework has become more and more complex. The State went on transferring social competencies to local authorities (in particular: the totality of apprenticeship and part of the missions locales (local institutions in charge of access to work) to regions; the so-called Fonds d'aide aux jeunes (an allowance which aims at supporting young people in case of emergency) and the social housing founds to the departments; the municipalities are still responsible for the social integration and the social action in favour of young people. The local authorities for their part have developed new focuses toward young people. Among them, the questions of struggle against unemployment, civic participation, health and repression are central.

- In *Slovakia*, youth policy is placed under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, through the Department of Children and Youth. The Ministry chairs the Government council for children and youth, a council that has an advisory role and that is responsible for the grant making policy of the ministries focused on children and youth. Nevertheless, as shown by the report on Youth policy in Slovakia for the Council of Europe (Lauritzen et al., 2005), there is a gap between the official conception of youth policy and the problems of management and implementation youth actors have to cope with. These difficulties are of various sorts: the Government council for children and youth appears to be a rather weak institution; the integration of the different sectors and actors (education, social work, child and family) is unclear; the distribution of roles between the different youth institutions is not yet well known; some sectors are seriously lacking of resources. The Ministry of Education, through the Department of Children and Youth, is responsible and is also the guarantor for the implementation of the policy. The Ministry chairs the Government Council for Children and Youth – a council that has an advisory role and that is responsible for 'the grant making policy of the ministries focused on children and youth' (*National Report*, 2005, p. 17). Ministries, such as the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, the Ministry of Health, of Interior Affairs and of Culture, also contribute towards this aim. Concept of state policy towards children and youth in the Slovak Republic until the year 2007 was adopted on 19 December 2001 by the government of the Slovak

Republic. It defines cross-sectoral objectives of the youth policy in different life fields of young people like Family and upbringing, Education, Employment and social integration, Lifestyle, Participation of children and young people and Youth mobility and European integration. Individual tasks have a character of recommendations and are assigned for bodies of state administration, municipalities and the NGO sector. The main priorities outlined in the Action Plan for the year 2006 will be Human rights education and fight against manifestation of racism and xenophobia with special emphasis put on global solidarity and intercultural dialog, Support of youth participation and active citizenship, Development of knowledge about youth and its application in youth policy planning, Support of voluntary youth work, Development of information of young people through better access to information with the aim to increase their participation in civic life. Another important document adopted by the Government is the Implementation of European Pact for Youth (January 2006) and its Integration into the Strategy of Competitiveness of the Slovak Republic.

Concerning Slovakia it appears particularly important to underline the influence of European institutions on the evolution of youth policy.

These developments show the great variety of national situations and the overall weakness of youth sectors (with perhaps the exception of Austria). Nonetheless, it does not permit us to link this dimension to the youth transition regimes. We unquestionably face a situation where the youth transition regimes do not influence the structure of youth sectors. To explain this, one could raise the hypothesis that youth transition regimes are more embodied in hard policies (employment, housing, education…) than in youth policies. The problem is that these policies are generally considered unattractive by young people which leads us to a kind of dead end as long as participation and empowerment of young people is concerned.

2.2.3 Young People's Participation in Policy Making through National Youth Councils

No country appears to have a system that allows young people to have a direct say in policy making although they all feature a variety of structures that allow limited participation in some form. Umbrella organisations such as the Austrian National Youth Council (BJV), the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI), the Slovak Youth Council (RMS) and the Italian National Youth Forum share similar characteristics. These are federated associations which bring together youth organisations for the common purposes of representing and serving young people.

Countries, regions and municipalities have experimented with various forms of youth forums with mixed results. In Rennes a local youth council failed because it did not have a role in policy making; in Bologna the last effort ended in failure in 1998 as it didn't represent all young people. In Ireland a frequent criticism of the national youth parliament is that it merely follows an agenda set by adults and is unrepresentative of the vast majority of young people. Conversely, in Austria children and youth parliaments are operating in several regions whilst in Slovakia a variation exists whereby some areas are prospering as others struggle.

Despite the rhetoric emanating from various governments in relation to youth participation it appears that very little exists in the way of concrete and tangible mechanisms that would allow young people to directly participate in a meaningful manner in the policies that affect them most. Participation at the highest levels is only possible through youth organisations controlled by

adults who although undoubtedly sympathetic to young people's interests are not young people themselves.

A good example of this disconnection between the important rhetoric on youth policies and youth sectors in the country panel and the influence of youth participation experiences is the implementation of youth councils. Ironically, in the five countries, youth councils never appear as the most appropriate way to foster young people's participation. This assertion is, unfortunately not a surprise, as researchers have already well documented the limits and failures of youth councils to get young people (and in particular the less politicised ones) included in the decision making process (Loncle, 2008; Reutlinger, 2005; Forbrig, 2005). (Loncle, 2008; Reutlinger, 2005; Forbrig, 2005)

First of all, one can underline that participation policies are mainly developed through youth councils in the selected countries. Entitled youth councils or youth parliaments, these experiences are related to the will to close the gap between public actors and young people. These experiences are recognised as part of the tools that may foster young people's citizenship and involved in the decision making process. As underlined by Hoskins (2005, p. 158):

> *"The above-mentioned charter suggests that the effective participation of young people requires the development of permanent youth councils. Dolesjslová'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".*

Nevertheless, if this assertion cannot be contested, there are limits to these formal forms of participation among which the types of involved people, the issues on which young people are consulted, the lack of guarantee concerning the integration of their recommendation into the decision making process (Loncle, 2008; Koebel, 2007; Becquet, 2005 and 2002b).

Table 6 shows that in the field of youth councils, some important national differences can be underlined. Thus, whereas Ireland, France and Slovakia have organized a national representation of young people, Austria and Italy have built regional and local councils. Austria and Italy seem to have a completely facultative system. The councils' composition is regulated by law in Ireland and Slovakia. In the other countries, the targeted young people vary considerably from an experience to another. The countries are not really innovative when one considers the issues of consultation: only Italy and Slovakia have opened the processes to social or territorial questions.

Table 6: Youth councils in the five countries

	Austria	France	Ireland	Italy	Slovakia
Councils name	National youth council	Youth council	Youth parliament	Youth council	Youth council
Date of creation		1997	2002	Beginning of the 90's	1990
Levels of implementation	Local and regional	Central, departemental, local (the latter being facultative)	Central and local	Local and facultative	National, regional and local
Targeted people	Depends on the experiences	Under 25 year-olds	12-18 year-olds organised young people	Depends on the experiences	Representatives from associations
Issues of consultation	Youth policies	Youth policies	Youth policies	Youth and social policies	Youth and local policies

2.2.4 Resource Allocation

Resources to implement policy in the youth arena can be broadly separated into two distinct sectors; soft and hard. The hard sector corresponds with schemes and programmes targeted at young people who are deemed troublesome or a risk (the unemployed, early school leavers and so forth). Intervention by state or voluntary sector (through a franchise type structure) is typical in order to avert or minimise potential disengagement. In contrast the soft sector deals with leisure, recreation and social citizenship type activities.

Across Europe a project type setting with paid and professional workers caters for hard sector interventions whereas the traditional club type structure (characterised by local voluntary staff in many cases) deals with the soft sector.

In France and Ireland a disproportionate amount of funding is slewed in favour of the hard sector; this is unsurprising and evidences the vulnerability of soft sector initiatives to underfunding and cost cutting measures. In the Irish case the NYCI has made repeated calls to the government to provide the funds to implement the National Development Plan which thus far have met with only limited success. In France the decentralisation programme has left regional authorities with a financial shortfall implying a reduction in services.

All represented countries have budgetary allowances and funding mechanisms for the implementation of youth policy; it is the amount devoted to the sector that raises questions around the various governments commitments to these policies.

2.2.5 Policy Implementation

The question of the implementation of youth policies is not only a question of technology of public policy or of concrete content of actions; it is also about the ways local actors adapt national values to local ones (Mayntz, 1980; Kubler, 2000) and about the capacities they find to develop various forms of autonomy in their territories (Padioleau, 1982; Mégie, 2004).

If we now try to understand the ways countries are dealing with the implementation of youth policies, we can try to summarize the situation with table 7. Note that each country has a system of decentralisation or delegation of the national youth policy. This was already true in 2001:

> *"Apparently, decentralisation of youth policies is the ideal in all countries" (IARD 2001, p. 75).*

Two countries have two organisational levels: Ireland is implementing its policy at local level, whereas Austria is implementing its policy at federal level. Italy, Slovakia and France distribute their policy at three levels (national, regional and local levels). Nevertheless, the autonomy of local and regional levels varies considerably.

Table 7: Levels of implementation

	Austria	**Ireland**	**Italy**	**France**	**Slovakia**
National	X	X	X	X	X
Regional	X		X	X	X
Local		X	X	X	X
Autonomy of infra national levels	Important	No autonomy	Important	Moderate	Officially important

- In *Austria*, the Länder have a great autonomy but the fields of intervention toward young people are clearly determined;

- In *Italy*, regions and municipalities are autonomous bodies and the development of youth policies depends on their good will. As a consequence, local and regional youth policies are very different between geographical areas;

- In *Slovakia*, the distribution of competencies appears to be in favour of an implementation of youth policies at and by regional and local levels. Nevertheless, this decentralisation process is not completed yet; in fact, youth policy can be partly characterised by a power vacuum as the competence lies with municipalities which however they are not obliged to implement youth policy (cf. Lauritzen et al., 2005)

- In *France*, local authorities are today mainly competent to deal with young people. Yet, some policies are delegated by the State and their implementation is compulsory (for instance, the question of emergency for the Departments and the apprenticeship for the Regions) and some other policies depends on the will and objectives of locally elected (for instance, sport and leisure);

- In *Ireland*, local youth policy is to be a declination of the national youth policy.

2.2.6 Local youth participation

If youth policy is not in all contexts a fully municipal competence, then concrete practice and delivery can not be understood without taking local situations into account (De Luigi, 2007; De Luigi & Martelli, 2007; Degirmenciogly, forthcoming). This is obvious in contexts without a national policy framework which implies certain standards and mechanisms of resource allocation. However, in the countries in which youth policies are regulated nationally, socio-economic factors as well as different actors as regards youth organisations, non-profit welfare organisations or training providers may lead to constellations which diverge considerably from other local situations. In reality, youth policies are recreating a process of territorialisation that tends to reinforce territorial inequalities of access to rights and to social protection for young people (Pasquier et al., 2007; Loncle et al., 2008).

As mentioned in the introduction to this section, young people's local participation is clearly encouraged by European public authorities and seems to be a general trend of public action today (Fahmy, 2006; Forbrig, 2005; Council of Europe, 2003a; Willow, 1997).

Local youth policies are developing in all of these nations with a more or less strong tradition of territorialisation (De Luigi & Martelli, 2007; Loncle, 2003). For instance, whereas France and Italy have known a long-time predominance of local level as long as youth policies are concerned, Slovakia conversly encounters difficulties in promoting this form of approach.

Nevertheless, the ways young people are considered and the significance given to young people's involvement does not seem to correspond automatically to these traditions: whereas Italy and the Ireland appear to give a certain importance to this participation; France and Slovakia appear to struggle to have it recognised seriously by local actors.

This issue of locality appears very significant for young people's agency (Blackman, 2005, p7), we have chosen to develop a particular focus on the ways local authorities were promoting youth policies in general and youth participation in particular in our five countries.

Exploring these dimensions, we tried to understand the various local regimes as described by Mingione et al. (2002, p. 37):

> *"In order to grasp the structure of local systems, we need to view them within the framework of national models, focusing in particular how the latter have adapted to the actual social, social, economic and cultural configuration of specific cities. For this reason, it is important to take into account the various urban traditions. These can be seen in terms of their economic history, the patterns of development and organisation of civil society, the changing sets of relevant actors, as well as their demographic history and the spatial distribution of different social groups (...). In this context, local welfare systems can be conceived as dynamic entities in which the specific social and cultural context gives rise to a specific mix of actors involved in strategies for implementing social policies."*

Our case studies represented an attempt to enter this dimension. In the following section, we focus on two particular elements of the case studies: the structure of the local youth policy and the features of local youth participation.

2.3   Cases studies

Before describing each individual case study in detail, the following table offers a synthesis of the selected cities and cases:

Table 8: Local youth policy and youth participation experiences in the ten case studies

Case study	Nb of inhabitants Socio economic situation	Structure of youth policy	Type of youth participation experience	Type of young people concerned
Innsbruck, A	137.900 wealthy city	Youth information Youth centres	Jungschar Red Cross	Close circles of young people
Vienna, A	1.7 million medium situation	Youth department	Integrated to youth centres and youth organisations actions	Open to any kind of young people
Metz, F	322 526 many social problems	No specific youth policy (except repression)	A local youth council (in a particular area)?? Many youth organisations	Open to young people of the areas Open to any kind of young people
Rennes, F	272 263 wealthy city	An old youth policy A youth mission	Through the information centre and the late youth council	Open to any kind of young people Open to "virtuous" young people
Cork, IE	119,418 medium situation	Vocational Education Committee+NGO Youth Organisations	Youth Projects, Clubs and Information Centres	All kinds of young people 'At risk' young people
Limerick, IE	52,539 many social problems	Vocational Education Committee+NGO Youth Organisations	Youth Projects, Clubs and Information Centres	All kinds of young people 'At risk' young people
Palermo, I	1.250.000 many social problems	Local youth plan and youth town councillor	A municipal youth forum (to come) Associative actions	All kinds of young people
Bologna, I	460,000 wealthy city	The youth office	A late youth forum Self managed social centres	Close circles of young people
Prievidza, SK	53,097	No specific youth service	Youth parliament	Elected young people
Zvolen, SK	43,147	Committee for youth, sport and culture	Young Zvolen (informal org°)	

Innsbruck, Austria

137.900 inhabitants, capital of the Federal region of Tirol, Innsbruck, and Western Austria. Generally these are wealthy regions with low unemployment rates.

Youth policy

Two main youth institutions: the Youth Information and Youth Centres.

Youth participation

Participation is seen as political behaviour, in particular as voting, co-determination and freedom of speech. Youth participation in Innsbruck is not anchored by law as the Children's Rights Convention suggests, so that the value of youth participation must be interpreted as rather low. The realisation of participatory structures is capable of development. The chances for youth participation largely depend on the young people's initiative and youth workers. There are quite a few opportunities to co-shape, but few to actually co-determine.

Participation measures seem to be weak and fragmented. The two following examples are classical forms of participation which take place in the field of youth work:

Jungschar

The issues the young people get engaged in are mostly social and religious issues. The approach of the organisation implies a strong emphasis on Catholic-Christian faith, which influences the range of activities.

Youth group of the Red Cross Innsbruck

The youth group in Innsbruck is rather small with 23 young people who are between 12 and 17 years old and attend general academic upper secondary schools. They meet once a week with their supervisor where they acquire the knowledge and skills to able to work in this organisation.

Vienna, Austria

Vienna is the capital of Austria and with 1.7 million inhabitants the largest city in Austria. The socio-economic context is dynamic although the unemployment rate which is around 8% is higher than the national average.

Youth policy is administrated within the Youth Department of the Federal Region of Vienna, the MA 13 – Education and extra-curricular youth work. The MA 13 is responsible for strategically coordinating steering?, administrative services for the affiliated entities, the advancement of adult education and youth work. It also coordinated cooperation with other departments and institutions.

As regards youth participation an important aim is the participation of young people, meaning the development of provisions and structures together with children and young people.

Youth centres, youth cafes and youth meetings with the support of trained young people offer voluntary participation, low-key access and self-determination of young people, a variety of contents and methods, diverse norms and values as well as activating and motivating forms of learning. The youth centres are organised by an umbrella organisation which can be considered a

relevant youth policy actor itself inasmuch as it contributes to constant analysis and innovation through research and pilot programmes (www.jugendzentren.at).

Youth organisations are spaces where young people can get to know and experience participation. They offer opportunities to articulate their interests and wishes and to actively shape their own environment together with like-minded peers.

A specific example is the project 'Word up!' The target group of this youth parliament are school children aged 12 to 14 in the 22nd district. The content of the plenum is decided through voting by the young people. The aim is to give the students the opportunity to actively co-shape their neighbourhood and to make propositions on matters that concern them. The youth parliament meets twice a year. It is organised by the Association Viennese Youth Centres. The event is moderated by one member of the Association Viennese Youth Centres and two students. Adults can speak up in the plenary, but they are urged to be short and not to introduce new issues.

Metz, France

Metz counts 322,526 inhabitants. A difficult social context pertains, in particular in the suburbs. The city suffers from an important spatial segregation due to the local georgraph whereby the surburb of Borny is isolated from the rest of the city. This suburb is characterised by poverty and exclusion.

Youth policy

Although the situation of young people is particularly worrying in Borny, policies are really limited. Metz has no real tradition of intervention toward young people; the local conception of caring for this part of the population was born during the seventies and has been based on repression and struggle against delinquency.

Youth participation

Youth associations actively participate in the political arena. While they develop traditional actions related to homework help, culture and promotion of populations from a migrant background, they also take stands on local public policies andon the national issues and debates. Youth organisations often feel they are compensating for the lack of public intervention.

The creation of a Youth council in Borny, in 2001, constituted a major rupture in a local context dominated by a negative picture of the youth and by the will to fight delinquency. It was composed by young people aged over fourteen years old and who were representative of the youth of the area (local youth organisations, young people from various minority backgrounds).

The members of the Youth council used to be considered as potential delinquents and as a particularly violent section of the population. The participation in the Council represents the opportunity to have this vision changed. In this city, where almost no public policies were directed toward them, young people appear to have organised themselves to be able to bargain with policy makers. As a consequence, in the Youth council, they were prepared to develop their recommendations on youth issues and far beyond.

Rennes, France

A medium-sized city (272,263 inhabitants), a dynamic and wealthy city characterized by a relatively fluid social context.

Youth policy

There is a *Youth mission* that is integrated in the Education, sports and areas departments. It implements programs specifically addressed to young people mainly in order to encourage their participation. It also supports local actors in their formulation of youth questions. Moreover, it has a function of referent and expertise on everything related to the youth field in the urban policy.

Youth participation

The *Youth Information Centre of Brittany (CRIJB)* appears as the central structure of participation in Rennes. For ten years, the Municipality has delegated to the *CRIJB* a mission of support of the youth initiatives and young people's expectations. In particular, for ten years, the *CRIJB* runs a monthly newspaper, *Zap*, entirely carried out by young people.

A youth council was created in Rennes in 2001. The young people selected had to be members of an organisation; they had to come from various areas of the city (which, in practice, was very awkward); they had to be between 15 and 25 years old, with an equal representation of males and females. In fact, the Municipality appeared to be in search of a kind of ideal young person, both representative of youth as a whole and able to understand quickly and wisely the political stakes of the experiment. The mechanisms of youth consultation were, in reality, strictly limited. Young people were supposed to directly represent other young people. For example, the issues of student housing, transport and mobility, cultural and leisure information for young people were to be put foward by these representative young people. Their advice was totally consultative and the Municipal council was free to take them into account or not. The latter were not obliged to provide any explanation they decided to ignore such recommendations.

After one year of functioning, only five people were still involved in the process. They were bitter and felt they had been manipulated.

Cork City, Ireland

Cork is the second largest city in the Republic of Ireland; it currently counts a population of 119,418. 12.48% of the workforce of 55,296 are unemployed.

Youth policy

Cork City VEC (Vocational Education Committee) holds responsibility in local areas for the delivery of educational services in the City area. Youth work services are provided by a number of third sector organisations and can be broadly sub-divided into two key areas;

1. Mainstream Youth Provision in the shape of youth clubs.

2. At Risk Youth Provision in the form of Special Youth Projects (SPY), Local Drugs Task Force Projects (LDTF) and Young Peoples Facilities and Services Fund Projects (YPFSF).

The City relies on non-government organisations to provide virtually all aspects of youth provision. The statutory requirements of the 2001 Youth Work Act are contracted to various youth work agencies in this regard.

Youth participation

Youth projects are usually located in disadvantaged communities. These initiatives aim to facilitate the personal and social development of participants to realise their potential and in particular to equip them with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for their appropriate integration in society. In addition, they present opportunities for young people to undertake actions corresponding to their own aspirations and to assume responsibilities within their local communities.

Both mainstream and at risk provisions typically aim to build a relationship between young person and adult and use this relationship to foster the young person's development.

Limerick City, Ireland

The city has a population of 52,539. Limerick's unemployment rate is 23.29%. Furthermore, Limerick contains pockets of severe disadvantage in social housing estates such as Moyross and Southill. The city is frequently portrayed in a negative light due to the criminality attached to the local drugs trade which has seen a number brutal murders, gang feuds and jury intimidation over the last decade.

Youth policy

Responsibility for the implementation of the 2001 Youth Work Act in Limerick rests with the City of Limerick VEC. The VEC has only recently appointed a youth officer and service assessor to oversee the Act's implementation. Contrary to the situation in Cork where a multiplicity of agencies are active the majority of youth services in Limerick city are delivered by Limerick Youth Service.

Youth participation

Southill Outreach Project is a typical intervention with a mission statement that aims to; *"provide meaningful and suitable activities of an educational social and recreational nature, which will empower each individual to plan a future for him/herself"* (Southill Outreach Pamphlet, Undated). The principal provider of youth work in the city (and county) is Limerick Youth Service, they aim *"To Support and Encourage Young People to be Active Participants in Shaping their Futures"* (Mission Statement).

We can state that young people are increasingly taking a central role in the organisation and delivery of youth work in the city with Limerick Youth Services.

Palermo, Italy

Palermo, 1,250,000 inhabitants. Sicily has about 54,7% of youth unemployment. A particularly threatening element for many young people proceeds from the still strong appeal of the Mafia.

Youth Policy

In Palermo, in 2007, the city government approved the realisation of the so called Local Youth Plan (Piano locale giovani), allowing the town of Palermo to participate in the National Youth Plan of the recent established Ministry for Youth Policies (measures in favour of youth and its social participation -access to homes, jobs, business, credit and culture). A councillor is now responsible for "Tourism and Youth Policy".

Youth participation

A Municipal Youth Forum should function as reference point for collecting suggestions, planning and evaluating municipal youth policies.

Some youth associations try to react against social and cultural poverty and to promote self-organised initiatives through animation, networking, community work, performing arts. For instance, *Arciragazzi* is a national association committed to the protection of minors' rights and to the spreading of a culture of participation of children and youths in the institutions and society at large.

Other initiatives were organized to stamp out paying pizzo[2] to the mafia and to build up organizational synergies between political and cultural local actors (shopkeepers, schools, youth associations etc.), aiming at promoting a culture of legality.

Bologna, Italy

The city has 460,000 inhabitants and boasts of one of the highest per capita incomes and lowest unemployment rates in Italy.

Youth Policy

The local youth population is not yet considered a target area for integrated policies and services.

No town councillor is responsible for Youth Policy. Trincipal actor is the Sport and Youth Department which is split into two separate sections.

The Youth Office aims at enhancing the concept of active citizenship, fostering the participation of resident young people and the integration of the non resident students into the town's life. It functions as an active incubator (through financial support and collaboration) for various youth, cultural and volunteering associations active in the cultural field.

Youth participation

No form of youth representation currently exists. The last attempt at building a Youth Forum was in 1998. In every district youth representatives were elected but after the elections they met only four or five times and then disbandeded as they did not succeed in stimulating the general interest of other young people.

In Bologna the phenomenon of self-managed social centres represents an important resource in the process of youth participation and empowerment although conflictual and anti-institutional at times. Over the last number of years several young groups have 'illegally' occupied unused buildings. These buildings soon turned into aggregation, cultural discussion centres. In some

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[2] In Sicily pizzo is the "protection money" imposed by the Mafia to about 80% of shopkeepers and entrepreneurs.

cases they have become recognised by the local authorities and are now real alternative socioeconomic and cultural networks.

Prievidza, Slovakia

Prievidza has 53,097 inhabitants with a ratio of 51.4 % for economical active inhabitants.

Youth policy

The support of youth from local self-government is clear and visible. In the area of informal education, participation and information, young people can be supported financially by using spaces free of charge, by being informed about prepared activities in the city media and by cooperation on the different activities of the city.

Youth participation

According to the local self-government, young people in Prievidza are participating in public life through their presence at city parliament meetings and through personal mee 496.022epuivit,m( )Tj0.0004 Tc2

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likely to be funded are the hard policies. Such policies are neither the most attractive nor the most participative.

▪ The reality of young people's participation has to be explored at local level where a great diversity of situations can be found. We can emphasize the fact the most difficult situations have foundd an answer through interesting and engaging forms of youth participation promoted by public authorities (Palermo, Limerick) and by associative initiatives (Palermo, Metz). Excepting the multiple initiatives lead in Vienna and to some extent in Rennes, it is in the most disadvantaged situations that the question of youth participation is taken the most seriously.

▪ Beyond this diversity of local situations, one can underline that young people seem to be more and more taken into account at both national and local levels. Limits and tokenism still exist of course but from a global viewpoint the question of young people's participation appears to feature more and more often on the agenda setting of public authorities.

Reingard Spannring, Patricia Loncle & Andreas Walther

Chapter 3

Youth Participation under conditions of individualisation

In correspondence with the overall question of UP2YOUTH for the relationship between social change and young people's agency, this chapter deals with the implications and impacts of social change with regard to young people's participation. Here we focus on individualisation as a key aspect of social change as it influences participation on several dimensions:

- pluralisation of society leads to the diversification of patterns of social relationships and social actions as well as of the meaning individuals ascribe to them;

- old social cleavages apparently have disappeared and traditional class-bound ideologies have lost validity. The recognition and articulation of new collective risks which might lead to new collective problem solving mechanisms and political identities is still pending (Evers & Nowotny, 1987). This means that the legitimacy of traditional left versus right politics weakens but is not being augmented or replaced by new political approaches (Spannring et al, 2008);

- liberal educational norms and practices have led to the experience of early independence for young people who develop their competencies in terms of negotiation; who experience themselves as co-partners and less as dependent and under-aged subjects;

- the de-standardisation of life courses undermines the relationship between civil, political and social rights inasmuch as prolonged transitions into the labour market and the increase of precarious work increasingly suspend young people's citizenship status;

- new forms and mechanisms of social inequality and disadvantage emerge which no longer restrict to social positions of different social status but expose groups and individuals to risks of social exclusion; the term "structured individualisation" (Furlong & Cartmel, 1997) describes an increasingly complex structural influence on life chances;

- disadvantaged young people are addressed by activation policies which rebalance rights and responsibilities underlying the citizenship status by making state support conditional on active job search and downgrading aspirations implying an increase in self-responsibility;

- the increasing importance of individual decision-making for the process of social integration and social reproduction requires reconceptualising the relation between social structure and individual agency.

In sum, these aspects suggest increasing obstacles for young people's active citizenship and participation in society (Hirschman, 1970).

In the following we will present some statistical and survey data on recent changes in young people's involvement in different forms of participation. Thereafter we will introduce some perspectives, positions and concepts of the current discourse on these changes. We relate them to the structural changes in young people's life conditions and life perspectives and discuss the theoretical challenges arising for the concept of participation, especially concerning the understanding of young people's agency.

3.1 Trends in youth participation in Europe

The presentation of major trends of young people's participation in terms of individualisation effects may be introduced by a quotation from Joerg Forbrig:

> *"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 wide-spread and effective participation of young people" (2005, p. 7).*

Having said this, we would like to emphasise the fact that from our perspective we assist more in the renewal of relationships between young people (and in particular excluded young people) and politics than to a growth in political apathy.

3.1.1 Political participation

As a matter of fact, if one considers European politicisation, it is possible to underline that it is stable in time and in decrease for young people. Pierre Bréchon (2005, p. 95) shows that differences of politicisation are very important from one country to another and that young people are reproducing them.

Table 9: Participation in an election or referendum in the last 3 years

	Austria	France	Ireland	Italy	Slovakia
Eurobarometer 2007*	70,4%	51,8%	44,1%	75,7%	71,5%
EUYOUPART 2004	80%	62%	n.d.	95%	72%

* Have you voted in an election or a referendum in the last three years? (Eurobarometer, 2007, p. 107)
** Have you voted in the last general elections (Spannring et al., 2008, p. 66)

This proves that these differences are deeply rooted in national cultures. The fact that young people are more educated, more open on the world, and share some cultural features does not narrow the gaps in terms of politicisation: young people from the South of Europe (Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece, France) are still less politicised than young people from the North of Europe (the Netherlands, Austria, Germany and Denmark).

Pierre Bréchon (2005, p. 99-100) considers that if political participation is decreasing among young people it is because of the fact that to vote has taken a new meaning. This trend would be the result of the individualisation process: one tends to vote only if he/she is aware of the issues

at stake. The elder generation tended to vote more systematically by principle and by sense of duty. Even if one did not precisely know how to choose between the different candidates or if one did not particularly like them, one went to vote in order to be a good citizen. Today, as they understand the political game better, young people hesitate much more before voting. In a framework of individualisation, young people vote in certain cases and when the stakes are viewed as crucial. Voting is much more deliberate and cautious act than it used to be and the difficulty inherent in coming to an intimate conviction leads to both indecision and an intermittent vote.

If we examine the results of the EUYOUPART study, we can have some ideas of young people turnout in national and European elections. As the authors underline it:

> *"Two findings draw attention. First, one sees striking differences across countries; while in Italy more that 9 young people out of 10 voted, not even 5 people out of 10 did so in the UK. (...) Second, one can see no systematic co-variation between geographic location, welfare system or the duration of democracy and the rate of turnout" (2005, p. 22)*

The report notes that educational differences in national election turnouts are found in all countries except for Italy, where there is an extremely high overall turnout. Firstly, there is lower voting participation from people with only compulsory/elementary education. Secondly, those with intermediate education did not vote more often than the average (if not remarkably less often). Finally, those with a post-compulsory school leaving certificate tended to participate to a higher extent (cf. Spannring et al, 2008).

Table 10: Political actions to ensure that one's voice is heard by policy makers

	Austria	*France*	*Ireland*	*Italy*	*Slovakia*
Opinions					
Political party	22,8%	10,6%	15,5%	18,9%	11,2%
Trade union	11,3%	10,7%	20,9%	7,9%	5,4%
NGO	9%	8,5%	13%	11,3%	8,2%
Debates with policy makers	22,2%	40,4%	19,5%	33,7%	42%
Demonstration	10,9%	13,8%	10,3%	11,5%	5,5%
Involvement					
Political party*	8,3%	2,2%	5,8%	6,4%	3,9%
Trade union	12,4%	5,2%	12,5%	4,4%	4,6%
NGO	17,7%	11,1%	16%	7,4%	7,8%
Online forum	27,3%	22,4%	13,5%	17,2%	19,7%
Demonstration	14,1%	37,2%	14,6%	30,9%	4,5%

* or action group; source: Eurobarometer 2007.

Additionally, new forms of participation in democratic life seem to have emerged. Anti-establishment mobilisations (through acts such as signing a petition or to taking part in a

demonstration) are growing. Similarly, abstention is seen more and more as a protestation tool, particularly in the case of young graduates. It needs to be noted however that there exists huge discrepancies between the activities that young people hold as effective and appropriate, and the activities in which they actually get involved.

Again, one finds cross-national differences which are reflected to general differences in political cultures such as the variations of involvement in demonstrations or in online forums. *"These persons express their political behaviours according to an enlarged conception of public action which combines representative and participative democracy"* (Muxel et al., 2005). As a consequence, the following question can be posed: To what extent do public authorities, through their stated objectives and types of participation structures, take into account the interests and preferences of young people? In the EUYOUPART project the most recurrent images basically concern confusion about the concept of politics and a heightened negative connotation of politics as such. Reasons underlying such representations are manifold: politics is conceived as purely abstract, without any effective impact in real life, an instrument of social control which is used to dupe citizens, as its aims are shady, dirty and undeclared. It is worth noticing that the most negative judgements in this regard were mainly expressed by females (cf. Spannring et al., 2008).

Nevertheless, our point is not to denounce young people for a presumed fault. We adhere to O'Toole's assertion (O'Toole, 2003, p. 53 in Fahmy, 2006, p.14):

> *"Non-participation is rarely, if ever, seen as a conscious choice. Yet some, perhaps many do not vote because no political party satisfies them… To suggest that such individuals who do not participate in these ways are politically apathetic is too simplistic and sweeping a statement. This view can come close to implying that only activity sanctioned by the State or other authorities is regarded as legitimate".*

This is reflected by young people's statements on requirements for articulating their citizenship status more actively. While a minority suggests lowering the voting age – a suggestion to modify access to existing formal ways of participation – a majority opts for approaches which might be referred to as new and more direct forms of democracy and citizenship (cf. Barber, 1984).

Table 11: Prerequisites for increasing active citizenship

	Austria	France	Ireland	Italy	Slovakia
Lower voting age	21,2%	16,8%	31,1%	13,6%	14,9%
Programmes for voluntary work	67,6%	74,7%	83,9%	77%	76,6%
Consulting young people before public decision concerning them	73,1%	80,4%	86,5%	82,9%	90,8%

Source: Eurobarometer, 2007

3.1.2 Social and associative participation

Having examined the features of young people's political participation, it is interesting to scrutinise their behavioural evolution in the field of formal associative participation. According to

the Eurobarometer 2007, in no EU country are more than half of young people members of any organisation related to leisure activities, especially sports clubs or associations centred on typical 'hobby' activities:

Table 12: Young people as members of organisations

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These small generational differences in associative involvement result from various processes that are specified in the following table. Young people's memberships to political associations or to trade unions decrease dramatically whereas one can observe a clear increase in favour of cultural associations. Thus, associative social links do not stay the same, they are still important but the priorities are changing, in particular for young generations: associations have a role to play in young people's development.

Table 14: Membership in certain types of association according to age, in 1981 and 1999 in %

	Survey	18-29 year-olds	30-44 year-olds	45-59 year-olds	More than 60 year-old	Whole
Political organisations	1981	4	7	6	4	5
	1999	2	3	5	4	4
Trade unions organisations	1981	13	17	18	8	13
	1999	6	12	14	7	10
Religious and parish organisations	1981	7	11	14	21	13
	1999	10	11	13	14	12
Cultural organisations	1981	5	7	6	6	6
	1999	12	12	12	9	11

Source: Bréchon, 2005: 101

3.2 Youth participation, individualised social integration and agency

The changes in young people's participation have been interpreted as shift from steady membership towards increasing on-off engagement due to different temporal horizons. It is also discussed as a weakening of collective in favour of individual forms and issues.

Research on the individualisation of young people's transitions to adulthood suggests that individualised forms of participation have to do with **individualised forms of social integration and socialisation**. They imply the necessity to negotiate transitions more or less without the help of traditional patterns and collective solutions. As Ken Roberts stresses, social class, gender and ethnicity cease to determine the trajectories which used to provide the guidelines for the destination and the best route to this destination. While decades ago young people used to embark on their transitions together with their peers in class and gender-specific groups like on a train ride, young people nowadays negotiate their transitions individually as if they were all taking private motor cars (Roberts, 1996). In addition, structural changes such as ailing youth labour markets and flexibilised labour markets have increased the risks involved in processes of transitions and integration. Smooth transition from school to full time, long term employment is no longer the standard experience of young people. Transitions are instead characterised by discontinuities such as unemployment, non-standard and short term employment which call for an active life management and presuppose adequate financial, social and psychological support. Individualised transitions thus imply opportunities for self-actualisation, choice and autonomy,

but also more risk of downward mobility, uncertainty and stress. The participation of young people can thus be seen as influenced by several factors linked to these new transitions (cf. Walther et al., 2002; 2006).

Firstly, the insecurities young people experience and the need to invest more effort in the transition to adulthood shift the attention from social and political issues to personal coping strategies. Especially for those young people whose transitions are characterised by disadvantage it can be state:

> *"Their 'resource situation' is unlikely to facilitate such engagement, especially given the perceived unresponsiveness of formal political structures to the demands of politically marginal groups" (Fahmy, 2006, p. 47).*

While there is an obvious relationship between young people's social position and their orientation towards citizenship and participation this relationship is not one of linear causality. As underlined by Karen Evans (2002, p. 250-251), answers to this concern are necessary multifactorial:

> *"How young adults experience control and exercise personal agency, exploring the subjectivities associated with choice and determination under differing structural and cultural conditions. What kinds of beliefs and perspectives do people have on their future possibilities? How far do they feel in control of their lives? What is the interplay between these subjectivities and social characteristics of age, gender and social class? How does what people believe is possible for them (their personal horizons developed within cultural and structural influences) determine their behaviours and what they perceive to be 'choices'? ... Whether a person under-estimates of over-estimates their extent of control is very consequential on their experiences and socialisation".*

The subjective meaning of participation evolves from experiences of acting in public situations in order to fulfil own needs and interests – rather than from externally pre-defined goals and forms. Of course, these general reflections need to be differentiated inasmuch as *structures* of social inequalities may reflect different experiences with institutionalised and collective forms of action and the way they help to increase control over one's own life. These inequalities are reflected in the iterative structure of agency inasmuch as, past habits *("participation does not make a difference for me")* are transformed into anticipated identification *("probably it will not make any difference; how could that be?")* and into defining situations of potential participation as requiring own action ("*they do not mean me; this has nothing to do with my life*") (cf. Emirbayer & Mische, 1998).

The relationship of participation to *social contexts* is being fragmented while also the relationship between individual participatory acts and the overall process of social integration are changing. Observations regarding the social inequality of participation such as an apparent lower degree of civic participation among those with lower qualifications or from deprived neighbourhoods do not necessarily put the theory of a mutual interrelation between structure and agency into question. The question of whether an agency perspective can be justified despite life conditions being structured by inequality, precariousness and exclusion is one of the key aspects of the debate on the relationship between structure and agency (Evans, 2002 ; Fahmy, 2006).

Secondly, the late entry into the labour market and the diversity of experiences in a flexible labour market reduces the traditional political socialisation via labour (cf. Baethge, 1989).

As, for example, Anne Muxel and Cecile Riou observed, disempowered young French people with low levels of education and high risk of unemployment are more likely to legitimise violent

demonstrations than students, since it is the only way for them to "talk" to politicians (Muxel & Riou, 2004). Yet, it has to born in mind that often the evaluation of participation is influenced by the power structure, in this case by adults who will label some forms of participation not exactly as "bad" but as "annoying".

There is a dearth of research on the subjective and biographical meaning of participation for young people. One exception is a longitudinal qualitative study on young people's concepts of citizenship (Lister 2003; Smith et al., 2005). One of their findings is that in most statements young people reject a definition of citizenship based on inclusion and exclusion but as a universal status: "*everyone's a citizen from the day they're born to the day they die*" (quoted in Smith et al. 2005, p.431). As regards the implications of citizenship which is reflected by distinctions 'bad' and 'good' citizens, the research reveals to patterns: one which is more adapted to dominant institutions which the authors characterise as the "*respectable economic independence model*" inasmuch as it simply reproduces the norms of the standard life course – or: citizenship as status; the "*social constructive citizen model*" instead refers to everyday practices connected to solidarity, reciprocity and responsibility – citizenship as lived practice:

> "*Citizenship? How do you put it? Being responsible … not just taking, giving back*" (ibid., p. 437).

This refers to the *reflexivity* of agency in late modernity. Constantly situations, identities and practices need to be reflected and negotiated anew as regards the relationship between individual and wider society (cf. Bauman, 2000; 2001).

Isin and Wood (1999) refer to the relationship between citizenship and identity whereby public (collective) engagement needs to be more and more integrated with personal and subjective aspects of identity work. In fact, the reluctance of disadvantaged young people to 'care' for the community can be interpreted as a reaction to the experience of their identities being disregarded: "*Why should we care*?" (France, 1998; cf. Williamson, 1997; Green, 1999; Lister, 2003; Smith et al., 2005).

Thirdly, the individualisation of transitions and lack of collectivist experiences undermines the visibility of collectivist politics, which used to be at the heart of party political systems.

It has been argued in the crowding-out-thesis that collective forms of participation such as membership in voluntary associations, political parties and trade unions has declined throughout Europe while (and because) individualised forms such as demonstrations and consumerism have increased. However, it may not be that easy to distinguish between individualised and collective forms of participation as it seems on the surface. Even apparently individual decisions to act in a particular, socially or politically meaningful way, are linked to membership in collectivities that shape opinions even if they are not organised in any formal way and the individual refuses to become part of a formal organisation. Even if the desire to change society or more immediate structures boils down to private behaviour such as refusing to eat meat or to use aluminium foil in the household, secretly there is always the wish involved that others follow the example. If we expand the notion of participation in such a way the distinguishing feature is rather the actor's *consciousness* of doing something in response to social and political conditions or developments, than the form of organisation.

This consideration is supported by empirical findings that individualised forms of participation in general do not crowd out collective forms: on the contrary, someone who participates in one way tends to participate in other ways as well (Westphal et al., 2008).

While it is debatable to what extent 'politically correct' consumption such as buying organic food or fair trade products falls under political or civic, individual or collective participation, it is obviously a conscious choice. In fact, references to civil society and civic participation reflect the 'Entgrenzung' (blurring of boundaries), the loss of legitimacy, and the fragmentation of the 'political' in late modernity (cf. Sörbom, 2007).

Dominant discourses referring to young people as apathically and passively 'non-participating' are signs of misconceptions of both participation and agency. They face the anomic dilemma that imagined futures (which are also promised by institutional actors) cannot be achieved through available resources and legitimate practices. Therefore, individual coping strategies risk falling through the filter of what – according to dominant assumptions of normality – is seen and recognised as (rational) action and participation. In fact, rejecting certain (formalised) forms of participation may stand for subjective *intentionality* which does not find spaces and ways for expression – or is an expression itself for the fact that young people do not identify a position of their own in relation to the wider society (cf. Lister, 2003).

Rational choice theory tends to interpret a decline in political participation and steady involvement in associations that certain collective forms are no longer seen as effective for reaching individual aims, the value of democracy is weakened (cf. Goldthorpe, 2007). In contrast to this, Joas argues: "*The concept of participation reveals the wish for public and liveable sociality and for an effective creative activity in the community which has not yet been eradicated by the tendencies towards privatisation*" (Joas, 1992, p. 374). The diversification and de-standardisation of life courses makes it more and more difficult to identify institutionalised forms of action as helpful for a meaningful life. Existing forms of participation are either too far away from our personal issues or experienced as not effective enough to make a difference. In sum, the relation between identity and sociality needs to be reproduced constantly and individually under conditions that lack opportunity. Therefore, in a more comprehensive view it might be worth asking how the meaning of action (participation) is (re)constructed individually and collectively. Rather than a discrepancy between individual and collective goals the problem might lie in a decrease of possibilities of interaction in which individual needs are communicated and linked with collective structures. One might argue that consumption and the media are the last remaining collective spheres of action and experience ('participation' in terms of exposing oneself on realty TV and through Internet formats is increases).

However, attention has been drawn to the numerous forms of participation of young people challenging the one-dimensional, institution-oriented notion of politics and the deficit-focused perspective on young people's political praxis. The literature in youth research abounds of examples of young people's involvement in unconventional, elite-challenging participation, sub-politics and social action. Young people are engaged in single issues such as animal protection (Wilkinson, 1996), in spontaneous direct actions and voluntary work (Hackett, 1997), and in participatory projects on the local level (Riepl & Wintersberger, 1999). Eden and Roker (2002) describe how young British citizens are involved in what they term social action, i.e. in groups of people who meet on a regular basis, with the aim of changing policies and/or practices, or rising awareness, either at a local, national or international level. Examples from this study are disabled young people's groups, who challenge images of disabled people, and try to improve access and facilities for disabled people; youth-police liaison groups, aiming to improve young people's relations with the police and to reduce crime rates on local estates; young carers' groups, aiming to support young carers locally and raise awareness of the needs of those caring for family

members; or environmental groups aiming to address issues in the local community as well as campaigning nationally or internationally. Young people are also actively involved in new forms of political protest such as 'street-party-protest' which interweave politics and culture. One example is the movement "Reclaim the Streets" (RTS), a cultural coalition between the ecological movement, ravers and political activists, which has become an essential feature of the anti-globalisation movement. Originally, it evolved around the protest of British environmentalists (the 'Road Protesters') against the increase of traffic and expansion of streets and motorways. RTS demands non-commercialised, autonomous public space. Where RTS-activists block streets and stop traffic, the territory is reclaimed through carnival, theatre, performances, party and dance. The highlight of this movement was the 'J18' action in July 1999 in 30 cities around the world when "*the global carnival against oppression*" took place at the same time as the World Economic Summit in Cologne (Brünzel, 2000). The aesthetic, cultural dimension of political attitudes and behaviour is normally excluded from participation research. However, youth cultural contexts offer space for political socialisation and a frame for political orientation and action which is embedded in an aesthetic praxis (Pfaff, 2006). Increasingly, the analytical and empirical separation of different life spheres is given up in order to capture a more encompassing picture of participation.

Fourthly, young people's attitudes to participation need to be differentiated according to different levels. The local level appears to be crucial for participation as participation is more likely to be relevant for the young people when mechanisms for participation are accessible. In this regard, two dimensions can be explored. Firstly, research results underline that young people have a stronger feeling of belonging at local level and are keener to commit at this level. Secondly, participation forms seem to be dependant upon the degree of local deprivation.

Concerning the first aspect (accessability) Céline Belot shows how deeply young people feel linked to the local and to their community.

Table 15: Spaces and young people's belonging sense in 1999 (average of EU-25)

	Geographical unit 1rst choice	Geographical unit second choice	Geographical unit last choice
The city, the locality	48	19	10
The region, the province, the department	17	36	9
The whole country	23	29	11
Europe	3	11	19
The world	9	5	51

Source: Bélot, 2005: 180

As underlined by the author, the most surprising result is the very strong pre-eminence of the attachment to local space: the local is a place that is recognised for its materiality, it is also the framework in which social relationships are developed, and it represents at last the opportunity to build oneself everyday life practical references.

However, although not differentiating between local and national level, Figure 1, suggests significant differences between countries in the relation between a feeling of belonging to society and the trust in the respective societal institutions:

Figure 1: Belonging feeling and trust toward institutions
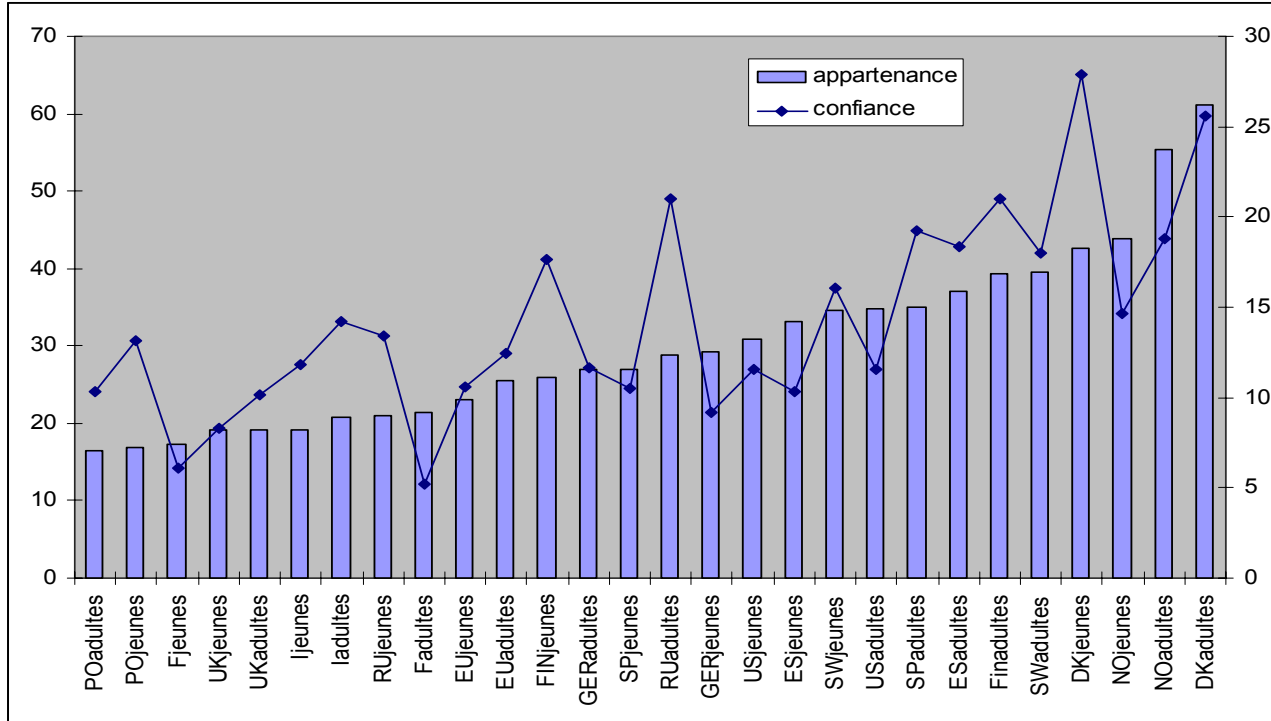
Source: Galland, 2008, p. 34

The second aspect (local deprivation and its links with participation) is difficult to define as an inconvenient or as an advantage. We have seen that excluded people tend to vote less, at the same time some research findings reveal that in some cases identification with deprived area led people to organise themselves and to build a positive identity.

The Italian report refers to an interesting element of young people's relationship to territory with regard to self-organised social centres:

> *"Symbolically, the attenders of self-managed social centres consider themselves as "*metropolitan indians*", living in own reservations and in opposition to the* 'white man' *living in the city centre. A second spatial leading concept – related to the identity of the members of the centres - is also that of* 'nomadism' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1991)*: the social centre becomes the island in which the traveller can find a momentary shelter. The nomadism has also an aesthetic dimension, in which everything (body, clothes, music etc.) can be experimented and contaminated with other languages and meanings. Nomadic experience includes also the psychic dimension: exploration of the mind and of different levels of consciousness (although hard drugs are usually damned and rejected)".*

The French case displays a similar trend: many inhabitants (and among them young people) of deprived areas tend to promote their community, to participate in collective experiences and to develop a strong associative sector. In some youth councils' experiences, the objective is to gather young people who are representative of the local youth community. This logic is

particularly important when the experience of participation is related to the promotion of a territory. The 'fostering' of young people can be seen as a reintroduction of dialogue and a method of re-estblishing social harmony. In practice the recruitment of members for youth councils follows a bottom up logic. These young people come from local associations and are designated as representatives by their peers. These young people typically have varied trajectories and encounter the specific difficulties which affect deprived areas as part of their lived reality (Loncle, 2007). In concluding from research findings on black neighbourhoods in the UK Holland et al. (2007) comfirmed this phenomenon:

> *"Participants' understandings of community must be considered within the wider context of social exclusion. Britain's black community has a long-established and well-documented history of racial discrimination. (...) The popular social capital mantra that 'you have to get out to get on' does not appear to reflect these young people's experiences. Instead, the security of belonging is viewed as a platform from which social progress and social mobility can be built. Caribbean young people have strong bonding social capital in ethnic/racial-specific community associations and they demonstrate high rates of 'civic engagement' in these areas. (...) It was clear that they perceived black neighbourhoods as a resource for politics, collective mobilisation and reaffirming ethnic identity" (Holland et al., 2007, p. 112)*

3.3 The youth participation discourse: perspectives, positions and concepts

It has been shown that the individualisation in young people's participation has consequences with regard to both the functioning of democratic procedures and the social integration of young people, especially those facing social disadvantage. The question of active citizenship and participation of young people affects the intergenerational renewal of values and solidarity, e.g. as regards the financing of welfare systems. If young people are not involved in societies as full actors, if they do not adhere to the social 'pact', then they endanger the social system itself.

> *"Youth's continuing significance to the development of capitalist social relations derives from the importance of age to the political management of social relations and to the changing form of the capitalist state." (Mizen, 2002, p. 6)*

This question is crucial for political systems as the participation of young people is required to legitimate the European representative democracies (Geddes, 1998). Yet, we do know that young people have a critical attitude toward election polls and that they have largely opted for abstention. In so doing they not only discredit the leading political class, they also point out the malfunctioning aspects of the political system (the multiplication of corruption, the gap between the population and elected representatives, the rise of extremist/rightist parties, etc). Nevertheless, it has been suggested that young people's disinterest is strongly linked with their perceptions of personal political efficacy and not with a supposed apathy with political issues in general (Fahmy, 2006). As a consequence, the processes that consist of bringing young people back to political systems represent a major stake for each national political system (Lagrée, 2002; Dwyer, 2005).

Wide-ranging academic assumptions and socio-political expectations govern the development of participation among the upcoming generation(s). Putnam presented a detailed exposition of a key thesis concerning the decline of participation and social engagement (cf. Putnam, 2000). The period in which he makes his observations and conclusions begins in the 1950s and 1960s. He

traces changes in the many forms of social participation and reaches the conclusion, determinable over the long term, of 'decline', associated with the restructuring and modernisation of social structures during this period. This decline is usually viewed as a threat to democracy, since it is assumed that declining support and participation undermines the legitimacy of democracy and affects the functioning and stability of the political system.

In the context of the decline thesis young people attract considerable but questionable attention since the decline in participation is often attributed to the young; i.e. to generational change which implies the replacement of old values and behaviour (trust in political institutions, interest and active participation in politics) by new ones as generations succeed each other (Putnam, 2000). This account of change fits nicely with the generally negative public picture of young people as lazy, apathetic and egocentric. With respect to participation they are charged with a lack of concern for and responsibility towards others and the community. A number of authors have voiced the view that young people in Europe are fed up with politics (Banks, 1993; Bernie & Rudig, 1993; Szagun & Pavlov, 1995; Stainton Rogers et al, 1997). Young people see politics as something boring and irrelevant for their lives. Some researchers even speak about a "*potentially explosive alienation*" and a "*completely apathetic generation*" in regard to young people (Wilkinson & Mulgan, 1996).

While it seems plausible to assume that young people's participation contributes to social integration, in this section we want to present three concepts which are referred to in the current discourse on youth participation: social capital, activation and empowerment. The question is what they refer to as participation and how they suggest enhancing young people's and social integration – especially of those classified as disadvantaged?

The first concept we want to discuss is *social capital* which – like participation – is referred to in the discourse around the civil society aimed at a more direct involvement of individuals and communities in organising social life. The most influential definitions of social capital have been developed by Bourdieu and Putnam. According to Putnam social capital represents a fundamental resource of both individual social positioning and social integration. Accordingly social capital:

> *"... refers to features of social organisation, such as networks, norms, and trusts that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit" (1993).*

In a lecture given at Harvard University (after 2000) Putman added that:

> *"The central idea of social capital, in my view, is that networks and the associated norms of reciprocity have value. They have value for the people who are in them, and they have, at least some instances, demonstrable externalities, so that there are both public and private faces of social capital."*

According to his recent analysis, the process of individualisation undermines the reproduction of social capital and thereby endangers both democratic procedures and social integration. Before this background, policies are required which strengthen civil society by community development and participation. Regarding the impact of participation experiences on young people's social capital, Bassani proposes a useful perspective (2007, p. 32):

> *"Youth's well-being is a highly complex phenomenon, and while its interconnected dynamics are not perfectly understood, I suggest that social capital theory can be a useful tool. Boundless opportunities exist to test social capital theory in youth studies. This is particularly worthy venture because social policy and programs have been keen to advocate social capital".*

Bourdieu's approach provides a more critical perspective inasmuch as it relates social inequality to different access to social capital in a double sense: access to more or less social capital as well as access to social capital which is more or less functional for the individual social positioning:

> *"Social capital refers to the set of current and potential resources which are linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships (people known to you or people who know of you…), or, in other words, to the belonging to a group as a set of agents who are not only endowed with common characteristics (likely to be perceived by the observer, by the others or by themselves) but who are also united by permanent and useful connections. These connections are irreducible to proximity objective relationships in physical space (geographical) or even to economic and social space because they are based upon material and symbolic exchanges whose institution and perpetuation suppose the acknowledgement of this proximity" (1980).*

In a later text, Bourdieu precised the way social capital may evolve:

> *"Social capital is an attribute of an individual in a social context. One can acquire social capital through purposeful actions and can transform social capital into conventional economic gains. The ability to do so, however, depends on the nature of the social obligations, connections and networks available to you" (1984).*

Both Bourdieu's and Putnam's ideas can be – and often are – percieved as the two counterpoles of the discourse. A more differentiated picture emerges if one follows Raffo and Reeves who look at young people's social capital in terms of "*individual systems of social capital*" (Raffo & Reeves, 2000, p. 154) which have to be created in a (relatively) individual way. This perspective allows to see individual coping strategies and identity work as dependent on and embedded in social networks without neglecting the differences in the social capital young people dispose of, e.g. with regard to the balance between strong and weak ties, respectively bonding and bridging social capital (Granovetter, 1973; Putnam, 1993; Field, 2005; Walther et al., 2005).

The second concept we want to introduce is *activation*. Activation stands for a paradigm shift in welfare, labour market and education policies which aims at re-balancing the rights and responsibilities underlying the citizenship status (cf. Van Berkel & Hornemann Møller, 2002). In the area of education this is reflected by the shift towards lifelong learning whereby individuals have become more responsible for the labour market value of their own human capital (Field, 2000). In social policy this is reflected by a process of privatisation and individualisation with regard to risk prevention and old age provision. In policies for disadvantaged and unemployed young people this is reflected by support being made conditional on active job search and acceptance of any job or training measure offered by employment services (Lødemel & Trickey, 2001). Activating labour market policies for young people are accompanied by a participatory rhetoric concerning personalised and tailor-made measures which is reflected by individual action plans as their key procedural tool combining aspects of counselling, control and contracting. According to comparative studies across Europe countries differ considerably as to how individual action plans are to be implemented, especially as to the extent that young people have legal power to negotiate rights and responsibilities with institutional settings. One distinctive aspect is whether young people are individually entitled to benefits through their status as citizens, through their parents or according to previous employment – or not at all. Another issue is to what extent unemployed young people have the right to choose between different measures and destinations (Pohl & Walther, 2007).

It is due to the context of activation that participation is being referred to increasingly in Foucault's terms of discourse and governmentality. Masschelein and Quaghebeur (2003) address

participation as a "strategy of immunisation" which contributes to a culture and discourse in which self-responsibility is increasingly connoted positively (cf. Rose, 1999).

The third concept which is crucial because it is frequently and explicitly used with regard to young people's participation and social integration is *empowerment*. The concept of 'empowerment' has been developed by Rappaport (1981; cf. Askheim, 2003) in the context of community psychology and implies enabling individuals to act by giving them access to resources, building networks (self-help) and providing them insight into the structures of inequality rather than accepting individualising ascriptions (blaming the victim). Empowerment can be defined as:

> *"A process through which individuals, communities and organisations gain control over issues and problems that concern them most. The aim of an empowerment movement is to enable the powerless to take proactive actions to prevent threats and to promote positive aspects of their lives (...). Empowerment is a multilevel construct and therefore, analysis of empowerment methods and outcomes should be directed at three independent levels. These three levels are (1) individual or psychological empowerment, (2) community empowerment and (3) organisational empowerment"* (Kar et al., 1999, p. 1433).

In theory, any kind of young people's participation experience can be seen as an empowerment one. Nevertheless, referring to Kar's definition, we would like to underline that when one examines participation experiences, two sets of alternatives can be formulated: do we face community empowerment experiences or do we face individual empowerment? Is the ideological background/prerequisite of the experience linked with a consumerist assumption or with a democratic one?

Nina Wallerstein (2002: 74) relates to empowerment in the framework of an analysis of a North-American approach of youth participation in the field of health promotion:

> *"Suggested here is a new community empowerment model for social protective factors at the community level, which incorporates both the horizontal community-building dimensions internal to the community, and the vertical community-organizing efforts to challenge "power-over" structural conditions".*

These perspectives refer to participation resulting in young people's empowerment.

However, the relationship between participation and empowerment can and should also be analysed the other way round: to what extent do young people need to be empowered to participate, or in what ways can individual but socially structured resources empower young people to participate in society and politics? Education is still the major explanatory factor for participation. In the age of computer aided communication technology the competence to access, judge and use information is an especially indispensable precondition for participation. However, it is not only young people's education that is important but also the provision of information. It has been acknowledged that youth adequate information must be provided in order to boost participation, in particular with respect to those who suffer disadvantage (Council of Europe, 2003b). In the EUYOUPART study it became clear that young people hold adults (i.e. politicians, local authorities, school teachers) responsible for a lack of information and charge them with strategically withholding information or even with promulgating disinformation (Spannring et al. 2008). Lack of information goes hand in hand with a lack of opportunities to participate in a meaningful and effective way. For various reasons, among them the power structure between young people and adults, most life spheres starting from schools and local

communities do not provide the structures. Although empirical evidence shows that lived democracy in schools, local communities, work places and voluntary organisations increases participation in other spheres, this is not the experience of most young people (Westphal et al., 2008).

The reference to education (see also Part V) and information shows that empowerment risks the same fate as other progressive concepts – such as participation – in the sense of being hijacked not only by different but also by contradictory political discourses. Inasmuch as education and information are seen as the key requirements for participation, this perspective attributes the existing, established and acknowledged forms of participation, and non-participation, to young people's lack of knowledge.Concurrently the vision and potential of new forms of participation is inhibited. This call to educate young people for and inform them about participation represents an approach which is biased towards an understanding of participation firmly located within the existing institutional setting. The empowerment perspective can broaden this perspective, if the aspect of *power* is taken seriously and extends to putting existing institutions and power relationships in question (cf. Walther et al., 2006).

Participation can truly enhance young people's social integration as Eldin Fahmy (2006, p. 21) pointed out::

> *"Participation encourages the interpersonal and practical skills that give young people a sense of self-worth and self-confidence (…). Civic engagement can thus empower communities and citizens to take greater control over the issues that affect them as autonomous agents".*

This has also been evidenced by the YOYO project on the potentials of participatory support measures in enhancing disadvantaged young people's motivation to actively engage in their transitions to the labour market. In many cases the experience of unconditioned support, of being held trustworthy and given both possibilities of choice but also responsibility – an experience in most cases attributed to individual youth or social workers – created the wish to "*give something back*" in the sense of engaging in work with children and youth or other vulnerable groups themselves and/or to choose a career in social, youth or community work (Walther et al., 2006, p. 166-177; p207-213). The actual question is whether or not the power and control aspects include the means by which social integration is defined and in which the necessary resources are invested.

Ladislav Machacek & Andreas Walther

Chapter 4

Participation and Learning

4.1 Introduction

Normally, youth is being referred to as a life phase characterised by preparation for the demands connected to the adult role including the rights and responsibilities of citizenship (cf. Marshall, 1950). In this constellation, the relationship between participation and learning is one of conditionality and postponement: first learn and then participate. Therefore, the restricted citizenship and participation rights of children and minors are normally (e.g. the UN Charter on Children Rights) legitimated by children and young people's developmental status.

The apparent connection between learning and participation is confirmed by the higher participation rates of those young people with higher qualifications (cf. Bréchon, 2005, p.96-97). Ireland's National Economic and Social Forum specify expected skills and knowledge:

> *"Learning to co-operate, communicate and engage for a more open, tolerant and active civil society is, potentially, a major part of a policy response to the development of social capital. At school level, the involvement of communities and learning partnerships of students, teachers and parents in governance, curriculum design and implementation at local level is one response. Also, the content and process of learning in schools can be more closely linked to service and active engagement in the local community". (NESF, 2003, p. 6)*

The link with notions of social capital and civil society simultaneously refers to both the objective of social cohesion behind participatory approaches as well as the dependency of participation on social factors. Conditions of destandardised transitions to adulthood reveal that full citizenship status is connected rather to a set of features of adult citizenship such as having a job than to having specific skills and knowledge. For example, young women display lower participation rates despite of their higher qualification levels (Bréchon, 2005, p. 96-97). The notion of *"arrested adulthood"* (Coté, 2000) symbolises the status vacuum whereby full participation of young people is *"on hold"* (Coté & Allahar, 1994).

This suggests that it is social divisions that account for different access to opportunities and a habitus which is in line with dominant assumptions of participation rather than the disposition of competencies and skills (Spannring et al., 2008).

In late modern societies participation programmes are developed in order to try to fill this gap. However, most of such programmes include and/or refer to young people's need to learn to participate or to be educated for citizenship. Learning and training for participation can happen on several levels and by different means. One approach is formal citizenship education at school, which implies mostly cognitive learning about democratic structures and processes. Another approach is 'learning by doing', that is providing the space and opportunity structures for young

people to have a real influence on decision-making processes. These opportunities can be opened at work, in the communities and even on national level (e.g. youth councils), and also at school.

Table 16: Degree of politicisation in Europe in 1999 according to age and various socio-demographic variables

	18-29 year-olds	30-34 year-olds	45-59 year-olds	60 year-olds and more	whole
Whole	**38**	**45**	**50**	**45**	**45**
Working men	40	53	62	55	53
Non working men	44	43	46	58	52
Working women	32	40	50	48	41
Non working women	35	39	34	35	35
(among which women at home)	*21*	*39*	*32*	*26*	*32*
Education until 16 year old (included)	23	35	40	41	37
Education left between 17 and 20 year old	39	47	56	63	49
Education until 21 year old and more	43	59	72	70	58
Very low income	35	32	30	30	32
Rather low income	34	41	38	47	41
Rather high income	41	45	53	55	48
Very high income	39	52	65	67	55
Wage-earner (more than 30 hour/month)	35	47	57	51	47
Wage-earner (less than 30 hour/month)	35	40	51	48	42
Self-employed person	48	50	62	59	56
Unemployed person	27	34	32	50	32
Farmer	-	62	63	37	46
Craftsman/shopkeepers/manufacturer	43	54	66	64	50
Profession/senior executive	48	62	70	68	64
Middle ranking executive	43	51	61	67	56
Employee	41	47	58	53	50
Worker	28	34	40	35	34

Source: Bréchon, 2005: 97

An overview of the discourses and settings of education for citizenship in and out of schools raises a set of questions:

- How can participation be learned and taught and how is it actually learned?

- What are the hidden messages of the education for citizenship discourse?
- Is learning possible without participation?

In this section, these questions will be elaborated as follows. We begin by investigating different constellations of learning and participation in schools, especially in regard to citizenship education and the role and scope of students' councils across Europe. These particular matters form the main focus of this chapter. We then explore (some of) the diverse guises non-formal learning for citizenship and participation take, such as youth work or programmes related to participatory youth policies. Finally, we will reflect on the pedagogical implications of learning and participation; fourth, we conclude by making some comparative observations.

4.2 Learning and participation in formal education

The engagement in public space seems to presuppose the possession of more or less formal competencies as much as democratic systems depend on the political involvement and preparedness of their citizens to actively participate in civic and political life.

School is *the critical* institution ensuring the transfer of knowledge, skills and competences representing the cultural, economic and political foundation of our society from one generation to the next.

Substantial forms of learning within the system of non-formal education include direct social action aimed at social change, which includes communication between the students, and also between the student and their teachers, i.e. non-verbal methods and informal communication requiring intellectual skills and participatory abilities.

School is an important element for forming an 'informed, responsibi83, TmTf0.0009Tc -0.0002 Tw 1242 0 1

Yet, if a large rhetoric exists in favour of young people's participation, does a real effort prevail in allowing young citizens to acquire the knowledge and competencies required to become effectively committed? As Karen Evans (2002, p. 250) reminds us:

> *"It has been argued that schooling fails to maximize human potential by reducing control beliefs for significant numbers of children".*

Despite this assessment, we have to highlight that in most cases learning experiences take place in school in a very formal manner. Hoskins (2005, p. 160) notes that:

> *"Formal education across Europe on participation and citizenship has been limited in its success. According to Pfaff's (2005) research in Eastern Germany, often the only discussion on citizenship in schools takes place in specific social-science lessons on politics, which students describe as mundane".*

In England's case, Fahmy (2006, p. 146) outlines:

> *"A lack of tradition and professional commitment to political education amongst teachers, a perception of politics as an exclusively adult domain, and a fear of indoctrination, have been key factors in frustrating efforts to provide more accurate political education in British schools".*

In the following we wish to take stock of two key aspects related to participation and citizenship learning in schools: (i) civic or citizenship education as subject of curricularised learning and (ii) students' councils as means of active participations in schools.

4.2.1 Civic education / education for citizenship

Both the Council of Europe and the European Commission show a high interest in the issue of citizenship education within schools. While drawing upon the findings of two recent reports (Birzea et al., 2004; Eurydice, 2005) our analysis is also based upon the country-specific collection of information within the thematic working group regarding this situation in Austria, France, Ireland, Italy and Slovakia.

At first sight the relevant dimensions of analysis are terminology, educational level, the status of citizenship education, the time intensity and assessment.

While obviously citizenship in all EU countries has its place somewhere in the curriculum there are quite different approaches. In some cases it has the status of a separate mandatory subject, especially at secondary level. In primary education it is more integrated, whilst in other settings it is integrated with either history or social sciences, or dealt with as a cross-curricular theme. It is also interesting to see at what age children engage with the subject and for how many years. From our countries, *Austria* is where it is addressed for the lengthiest time, partly in a cross-curricular fashion and partly as a subject combined with history. In Slovakia it is being taught over 5 years as a separate mandatory subject, yet for only one hour per week. The *Slovakia* case is particularly specific inasmuch as the teaching of civic education is both a symbol for the transformation process and a reflection of the desire to implement and entrench democracy through education.

Table 17: Organisation of civic education in school

Country	Terminology	Education level	Approach	Time and assessment
Austria	Civic education History and civic education	Primary Secondary (ISCED 2 and 3)	Cross-curricular principle New statutory subject	n.d.
France	Living together Civic education Civic, legal and social education	Primary and lower secondary Upper secondary	Separate mandatory subject Separate integrated core	Formal national examination 3-4 hours/week
Ireland	Social, personal and health education Civic, social and political education Leaving certificate applied/transition year	Primary Lower secondary Upper secondary	Integrated Separate mandatory subject Part of special programmes	Examined in junior certificate
Italy	Social studies History and civic education	Primary Lower/upper secondary	Integrated Separate subject (partly cross-curr.)	Exams in connected subjects
Slovakia	Civics education social science	Primary (6-9) Secondary (9-11)	Mandatory separate subject	1 hour/week

Source: Eurydice, 2005

In different ways and starting at different ages, citizenship education at school is being assessed similarly to other school subjects in exams or tests. This implies the risk that it is viewed and experienced by pupils as a mere school subject which is to be studied to achieve competence and/or grades but not in terms of subjectively relevant learning. This hypothesis, for which empirical data is thus far lacking, is supported by the reality that civic education plays but a minor role in teacher training. In some cases (*Italy* and *Slovakia*), it is only provided by in-service teacher training whilst in *Austria*, *France* and *Ireland* it is at least addressed by specific initial teacher education programmes. Only in *Austria* (for secondary education only) it is a compulsory component (Eurydice, 2005, p. 48). This still does not prevent the prevalence of traditional teaching methods as reported by our Italian team member:

> *"Strongly traditional teaching methods (above all, in secondary schools), still mainly focusing on the sequence lesson/individual study/test, are the norm and there is no real 'education contract' between teacher and students. What emerges is a gap between the educational theories the teachers declare to follow and their everyday teaching practice. In other words, the present school system has few relations to life and to the affective and the psycho-cognitive conditions of young people going through learning pathways. As such, it hardly ever triggers motivation, with the result that it is difficult for youth to confer meaning to the knowledge learnt, as the offer of knowledge and skills are not expendable in the framework of individual life experience".*

In conclusion, it seems highly dubious as to whether or not the mere fact that civic education is taught in schools (with different qualitative criteria) can contribute to young people's development of democratic values, citizenship consciousness and participatory behaviour.

4.2.2 Students' councils

At school, the process of education for democratic citizenship is also carried out by means of self-governmental bodies making important decisions regarding the functioning and development of the school (children parliaments, student school councils, student councils, academic senates).

Apart from the Eurydice study we can draw upon Dürr's study (2003) commissioned by the Council of Europe as well as on information collected by the national team members from their respective countries.

According to Eurydice, several levels of pupils' and students' participation in school can be distinguished:

- individual level

- classroom level, especially by class representatives

- school level, both by a pupil/student assembly or parliament and by student/puopil members in governing bodies and finally

- local/regional/national unions or associations of pupils or students

As regards the areas of involvement, Dürr from a theoretical standpoint distinguished the following:

- Individual affairs – expressing pupils' interests and problems;

- Peer affairs – relationships between individuals and pupils' groups;

- Class affairs – matters and conflicts between a class of pupils and the teacher, as well as activities, projects and conflict resolution between peers;

- School affairs – matters and conflicts between the pupil community and the management or administration; school projects, communication with the local community, festivals and the school environment;

- Organizational and staff affairs – matters and conflicts pertaining to the regulation of school life, relations with the staff, maintenance and reconstruction of the building, problems with the administration and transport;

- Content and methodological issues – matters and conflicts relating to the scope and methodology of teaching, educational projects;

- Curricular and education policy issues – matters and conflicts pertaining to curriculum regulation and its interpretation, selection of subjects and student assessment; and

- Links with extracurricular activities – issues and conflicts pertaining to the relations between the school and the external community, extramural activities, cooperation with extramural agencies and organizations.

It is obvious that some of this areas (especially leisure time and extra-curricular activities) imply 'more' participation than others such as school affairs, organizational, teaching, curriculum, disciplinary and political matters. On this basis Dürr translates the 'ladder of participation' as conceived by Sheryl Arnstein (1969) and Roger Hart (1992) into "*seven steps to pupil participation*" (Dürr, 2003, S. 29):

- Participation in decision-making
- Consultation on problem definition and preparation of decision-making
- Co-operation in carrying out activities and programmes
- Involvement in designing strategies or planning programmes
- Contributions through attendance at meetings and through labour
- Contribution of some sort (materials and resources)
- Basic information and passive reception of information

It is obvious that only some of these areas are effectively open for pupil participation while the degree of participation varies across different areas – but also according to school and country.

As regards participation on the *individual level* Austria is the only country wherein individual participatory rights are established by law. As regards *pupil and student councils* there are models in all of the five countries involved to different extents, at different levels and endowed with different grades of power (see table 18). At the trans-national level the situation of participation in school can be evaluated only according to formal rules and structures. In actuality the variation from one school to another within the same state may be more relevant than the diversity between countries. Distinctions exist regarding age or educational level, the legal basis, the content, the institutional stability and the continuity.

The general situation in *Ireland* regarding student/school councils is ambivalent.[3] Although the establishment of such councils is a strategic goal of the National Children's Strategy the initiative appears to be very much a matter of choice for the local schools. The mechanisms now exist for young people to request a student council in their school but there is no onus upon the schools to proactively establish councils. The National Youth Council of Ireland has lobbied for the speedier establishment of councils.

In *Italy*, the most important instrument are the Consulte provinciali degli studenti (CSP student councils at provincial level) which constitute a representative student body, which obtains a place to meet from the school authorities as well as a budget (up to the 7% of the school's budget for student activities; ca. 20,000 Euro per year average). The presidents of CSP meet periodically in a national conference to exchange local information, develop integrated strategies and discuss issues arising with the Ministry of Education.

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[3] The Department of education and Science's Student Council Guidelines are available at:

http://www.education.ie/robots/view.jsp?pcategory=10815&language=EN&ecategory=41674&link=link001&doc=37883

Table 18: School and students councils

	Austria	Ireland	Italy	France	Slovakia
Council's name	Pupil/student representatives	Student councils	School councils, Provincial student councils	Student represen-tatives' councils, Councils of se-condary school live	School students councils
Date of creation	During the 90's but promotion since 2nd world war	1998	1999	1989 and 1995	After 1989 2003 by law
Levels of implementation	All levels	Primary Secondary	Secondary	Mainly Secondary	Secondary schools and universities
Kinds of consultation	School life with co-decision aspects	School life	School life	School life	School life, management toward co-decision
Effectiveness	Medium	Weak	Weak	Medium	Medium

Source: Eurydice, 2005 and national information

The main functions of CSP are: dialogue among students; extra-curricular activities; activities involving several schools; proposals and opinions related to student issues to school authorities and local governments; counselling regarding leisure time and vocational guidance; implementation of the Students Statute; activities at national and international level.

In *France* the educational system has undergone a fundamental change. The former model consisted of organising civic education courses. This has been transformed into a model mixing information with experience. At the beginning of the 1990s the forms of pupil representation were reorganised and legally implemented. The current organisational structure is as follows:

In the comprehensive schools, each class elects two representatives who participate in the class council representing the pupils in the relationship with teachers and school managers. Each comprehensive school has a "*council of secondary school life*" (conseil de la vie lycéenne – CVL) chaired by the headmaster and composed by ten pupils' representatives. This council must be consulted on the general principles in the organisation of school life, on the establishment of projects, on information about orientation, health, and security prior to each school board meeting. Five pupil representatives are part of the school board, the forum within which important decisions are discussed and decided upon.

Each secondary school has a health and citizenship education committee which contributes to citizenship education, prevention of violence, inclusive actions in favour of parents with difficulties and health education (particularly sexuality and risk behaviours). This committee is chaired by the headmaster and includes educational, social and health staff as well as parent and pupil representatives.

In the academy (a forum that is more or less the regional level for the education sector) the 'council of secondary school life' meets at least three times a year. It gives recommendations regarding questions of school life and education. It is comprised of at least forty members, half of whom are pupils.

At national level, the superior council is chaired by the Minister of Education and meets at least twice a year. It gives recommendations on questions relative to schoolwork and material, social, sporting and culture life at school. It is comprised of 33 members including a pupil from each academy. The superior council on education includes three pupils.

In *Austria*, apart from individual participation rights, the law contains participation rights for pupil representatives at class and school level, for pupils as members of the school committee and for the establishment of regional and national pupil representation.[4]

On the class level elected pupil representatives are responsible for class related matters. At the lower secondary level class representatives elect a chairperson from amongst themselves. Theis chairperson holds advisory rights in the school committee. In upper secondary education school representatives are elected by directly polling all of the pupils. The pupil representatives' assembly is convened by the school representative. It is a forum for all class representatives can discuss issues concerning the representation of pupil interests and for school representatives to pass information to class representatives.

In each Federal Region the pupil representation is made up from the school representatives of all regional secondary schools. It is the legal representation of pupil interests between the school authorities and the regional parliament. At the national level, the Federal pupil representation is composed of 30 members from across the country. It represents pupil interests' vis-à-vis the Federal bodies, runs an internet site, organises political projects and services such as a helpdesk for school problems, consultation on educational issues and publication of regular newsletters.

Current claims and initiatives regard the implementation of general assemblies of pupils in each school are an additional discussion platform for pupil interests and the establishment of a legal framework for pupil parliaments in all Federal regions.

In *Slovakia* the hope for an increase in the interest of young people in public issues and representative democracy is reflected by the legal implementation of student councils. The 'Student School Council Act' allows the students to express their views in relation to questions, proposals and measures in the field of education, to participate in the creation and application of school-related rules, to represent students in relationship to the principal and the school man-agement, and to elect representatives for the School Council. Furthermore, the school provides space for the non-formal education of young people; mainly through school student councils at high schools (cf. Bosnakova & Machacek, 2005). In fact, student participation seems to become more wide-spread. Between 2004 and 2007 the percentage of schools with a student council increased from 32.8% to 50% (UIPŠ 2004, 2007). This process is supported by the youth department of the Ministry of Education[5]. Between 2005 and 2007 attention has been devoted to

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[4]See homepage of the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education and Culture; www.bmbwk.gv.athttp://www.bmbwk.gv.at/schulen/recht/info/Schuldemokratie_und_Schule 1625. xml [2006/12/15].

[5] The Project of the Department of Children and Youth at ME SR in 8 regions of Slovakia was implemented by IUVENTA-Slovak Youth Institute and in May 2006 approximately 90 young people participated in it. In Autum 2006 and Autum 2007 more than 100 young people, youth workers and teachers participated in these Slovak conferences.

this process of modernization by means of disseminating information of of the 'know-how' type (Bosnakova & Machacek, 2005; Bosnakova & Mihalikova, 2006; Machacek, 2008).

To recapitulate, it appears that the scope of pupil and student participation is most strongly established in Austria, encompassing both primary and secondary education, including individual and collective rights and connecting class room, school, regional and national levels. This is similar to the French situation, albeit restricted to second level education. In Italy and Ireland student participation is less strongly institutionalised yet developing. Slovakia, with the youngest tradition of student councils, represents a dynamic field of societal development.

4.3   Learning and participation in non-formal education

4.3.1 Youth work

One of the most prominent settings for non-formal learning, especially with regard to young people, is definitely in the sphere of youth work. Youth work in most countrie cleaves to a clear principle of referring to young people's interests and/or to leave open space where they can develop their activities and initiatives (Banks 1999; Jeffs & Smith, 1999). This principle results both from the fact that young people attend on a voluntary basis (and would stay away if offers do not match their interest) and on a 1968-influenced movement to turn (open) youth work into a public infrastructure (in associative youth work this is partly different as it restricts itself to specific social milieux). Youth work characterises settings where young people engage in leisure activities, performing arts, sports and/or political action. There are many different fields and forms of youth work in existence (ISS, 2007; cf. Jeffs & Smith, 1999; IARD, 2001; Walther et al., 2006):

- Open youth work in youth centres and youth clubs which address all youth from a certain territory often combining open space to meet (e.g. a bar or café) with organised activities or workshops;

- Associative youth work in organisations addressing either youth from a specific milieu (e.g. religious) or offering a specific purpose or type of activity (e.g. scouts, environmental issues); often attendance is conditional upon membership.

- Youth information and youth counselling.

- Projects related to risks of social exclusion,

- Recreational and leisure activities

- Holiday camps.

- International youth work.

- Extracurricular educational activities

All these forms of course overlap considerably and the above selection of activities is by no means exchaustive. Based on different sources, national constellations of non-formal learning in youth work can be mapped as follows:

Table 19: Non-formal education in youth work

	Austria	France	Ireland	Italy	Slovakia
Concept	Youth work	Socio-cultural animation	Youth work	Socio-cultural animation	Youth work
Legal basis	yes	no	yes	no	No
Dominant forms	Open youth work Associative youth work	Open youth work Associative youth work	Open youth work, Social inclusion	Youth information, Extracurricular activities	Extracurricular activities Associative youth work
Qualification of youth workers	Social workers/ pedagogues, volunteers	Social workers, volunteers	Youth workers, volunteers	Social educators, volunteers	Social workers, volunteers

Sources: IARD, 2001; Lauritzen et al., 2005; ISS, 2007, UP2YOUTH case studies

Explicit reference to learning and education in youth work varies. In *Austria*, the idea of youth work as a space of learning is wide-spread, yet not always spelled out explicitly. This is similar in *France* where at the same time the control function of youth work – aimed at getting young people off the streets to do something reasonable – is rather strong (Loncle 2008). In *Ireland*, professional youth work was traditionally seen more as preventative work with marginalized young people. However, the shift of political responsibility for youth work into the Ministry of Education symbolises that modern youth work is more and more understood seen as an instrument of (non-formal) learning and competence-building (cf. Stokes, 2004).

In *Italy*, the origin of youth work in municipal 'progetti giovani' refers more to a welfare approach aimed at providing young people access to public spaces rather than to an educational approach. At the same time qualifications have been developed inside educational sciences and thereby contributed to an 'educational turn'. In *Slovakia*, the development of youth work is still quite recent and influenced by the decentralisation process. While the national level tries to use European programmes to develop a modern youth work profile, on the local level paternalistic forms of youth work with minimal participatory opportunities and organised activities coincide with afternoon clubs in schools which are connected to schools subjects while referred to as non-formal learning (cf. Lauritzen et al., 2005).

Along these lines of differentiation, it is obvious that the relationship between learning and participation varies independency on the degree of intentionality of the respective programmes which seems highest in Slovakia and lowest in Austria and Ireland where youth work accepts the uncertainty of outcomes in terms of activities, learning processes and skills as a necessary feature of participation (cf. Walther et al., 2006).

While participation seems much more articulated in non-formal education than in formal education, in youth work settings it also displays contradictory aspects: Often it is reduced to one method amongst others and, similarly, social workers often complain that they can not provide participatory offers on top of their normal work load – instead of interpreting it as a principle of everyday practice. The fact that even in youth work participation is less self-evident than one might expect is reflected through differing models of evaluating, measuring or distinguishing different degrees of participation. These however share the contradiction referred to earlier: on

the one hand criticising limited participation, on the other nourishing the assumption that participation can be 'done' in a technological way (Arnstein, 1969; Hart, 1992; Lardner, 2001)

Youth work is often difficult to distinguish from youth welfare services. A hot issue in this regard, is the participation of young people within the context of *public care*. An empirical study on participation within public care carried out in Germany by Pluto (2007) shows the intricate and contradictory relationship between education, protection and participation in this regard. While on the one hand public authorities may have to take decisions against children's or young people's (and their parent's) will in order to secure a healthy upbringing, such processes of education and socialisation are at the same time dependent on the co-operation of the addressees. Apart from this and increasingly in public discourses the participation rights of both smaller children and individuals in total institutions are claimed (cf. Goffman, 1961). The study elaborates that in concrete practice it is the uncertainty of the professional social workers about their professional role and identity which represents the limitation of participation. Their task of securing children's and young people's personal development according to defined goals and principles is experienced as opposition to sharing the power of defining problems, goals and methods with the children, young people and their parents.

The case of public care refers to three contradictory aspects which are less visible in youth work but even there may account for the still restricted participation of children and young people compared to the emphatic participation discourse:

- The interpretation of children's rights as rights of protection versus rights of self-determination

- The contradiction between trust in the abilities and interests of children and young people and the fear of negative outcomes

- The contradiction between intentional education and open-ended participation in terms of equal decision-power.

4.3.2 Participation programmes

An area which may either be referred to as youth work (in the wider sense) or as local youth policies are the specific settings of youth participation such as local youth councils, youth parliaments and youth fora. While there is hardly any empirical research on this area, neither nationa any emlly nionap

Here, the traditional understanding of youth as a phase of preparation for adulthood tends to prevail and even mean that young people are excluded from participation due to a lack of skills or the lacking availability to adapt to pre-set norms and rules. An exception may be cases in which assisting youth workers strictly understand themselves as facilitators working on young people's demand rather than intervening by own initiative. As example may serve the example of *Cork Skateborders* in the Irish case study on the situation in *Cork* (see Part I and Annex).

At the same time youth work, whether open or associative, recreational or extracurricular, information or integration-led may also provide the opportunity of entering realms of decision-making step-by-step where it is linked to participatory structures. The YOYO-study on participation in young people's transitions to work showed that in youth organisations, associations or cooperatives, as well as in settings of open youth work, participants made informal careers from users to taking over responsibilities either in the project or in the wider community. Relevant factors apart from the voluntary choice to get involved and to what extent were; (i) the availability of open spaces where young people can follow their own interests and experiment with their own projects and (ii) their relationships with adults (professionals and/or volunteers) which were based on mutual trust and recognition. This quality was particularly striking in contexts such as one *Italian* case wherein public youth policies are characterised by a structural deficit and where decision-making are less institutionalised by corporatist actors (Walther et al., 2006, p. 153-177). The *Arci Ragazzi Project* in *Palermo, Italy,* engaged in leisure time opportunities provision for children and young people (see also case study descriptions in Part I and in the Annex).

4.4   Young people's views and strategies towards learning and participation

So far we have concentrated on some structural factors facilitating or inhibiting young people's learning for participation. What then about the young people themselves and their experiences of being enabled to participate?

From our case studies we have some, albeit limited, accounts of young people's utilization and experience with student councils which seem to reflect the narrow scope of participation within schools:

In *Italy*, a brief interview conducted with the president of the *Bologna* provincial student council (CPS) revealed the emerging difficulty of involve the students into organized activities, mainly regarding aspects of students and school life or of youth culture in general.

In *France*, Valérie Becquet who has studied the councils of secondary school life (CVL) states that:

> *"The CVL contribution is difficult to assess in so far as it is so recent. Adults insist on the newness of the instance, they consider that only its inscription in time is going to permit to really appreciate its contribution. For the moment, everyone underline a modification in the relationships between the participants and the discovery of the ways each other are thinking and working. Solutions have been found to pupils' problems. The CVL members also appreciated the discussion provoked by the reformulation of school regulation. On the other hand, the questions linked to teaching and schedules have been integrally developed. Pupils have often the feeling that they are not authorised to introduce changes in these fields" (Becquet, 2002b).*

In *Ireland*, enquiries made amongst young people in an informal manner on the streets revealed that school councils are not common and that the agenda for those councils that do exist is usually controlled by adults (teachers) and that certain topics are not open for debate and discussion. Areas suitable for discussion can be vague and ill-defined or else problematised aspects of youth culture (e.g. 'what can be done to limit drug use').

Even in *Austria*, despite the differentiated structure and high level of activity of pupil representation, the profile of the regional and federal representation among pupils is considered to be very low. Many pupils are not aware of their existence, their fields of activity and their services. A survey on the wishes of children and adolescents in Austria shows that codetermination in general and codetermination/participation in school as well as outside school takes a prominent place in the ranking. The two main interest groups which are active at the regional and federal level are the 'Aktion Kritische SchülerInnen' and the 'Schülerunion'. These pupils' interest groups are generally linked to the two Federal political parties, the Social Democratic Party and the People's Party.[6]

In *Slovakia*, a representative survey among secondary school students that was conducted in two parts on a surveyed sample of a secondary school (October 2005, 870 respondents and October 2007, 873 respondents; Machacek, 2006, 2008) provided information regarding their participation in the self-governed life of their schools. While a majority of students (75-80%) know about the existence of a student council at their school, significantly less of them participate in its sessions, and an even smaller number of students take part in elections (30%). A small percentage of students apply for candidacy and actually work in the self-governmental bodies of the school (11%). The main expectations of students towards student councils concerned services (51% in 2005, 53% in 2007), extracurricular interest-based activities (41.7 % - 46.3%) and equipping school with modern teaching technology (36% - 38%).

These findings are confirmed by a representative *German* survey on the participation experiences of young people in school and municipal youth policy. While both settings get very low positive results, the experience of participation is still lower in schools than in the local community (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2007).

While these accounts support the assumption that a majority of young people neither expect nor experience possibilities of participation in formal education, the YOYO project provides some insight into the effects of young people's subjective experiences of participation and their learning biographies. It shows that where young people have the opportunity of identifying with self-chosen activities and pathways they develop motivation for self-directed learning and for taking on responsibility for both their own pathways and issues related to their community (Walther et al. 2006, p. 177-205).

4.5   The other way round: is there learning without participation?

The descriptions, observations and reflections concerning settings of learning for participation made so far suggest that the discourse primarily problematises the skills and competencies of young people with regard to the demands of participatory processes. In fact, these discourses are used to legitimise young people's restricted scope of participation. In schools, students councils'

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[6] For further information see: http://www.jugendbeteiligung.cc/modelle/s_schulsprechertreffen.html [2006/12/15].

competencies are largely restricted to issues of school culture (cultural activities, parties, shaping the school yard) while curricula, qualifications and disciplinary questions are decided from the top-down. At the same time in civic education, young people are taught the acknowledged routines and meanings of participation in order to make sure that they contribute to the reproduction of established forms as adult citizens in elections and as market actors.

In short, learning and education are related with participation in a double way: young people's lack of skills and knowledge justifies a restriction of participation at present while education programmes and participation programmes are designed in order to educate young people for later participation. At the same time, access to learning for participation remains restricted and unequal. Many young people perceive respective learning settings as neither relevant nor effective. Implicitly, they learn from their involvement in such practice that participation does not refer to situations which are relevant to their lives but restricted to formally delineated themes and social fields.

In the following, the relationship between participation and learning is reflected in a more theoretical manner.

If one conceptualises learning as an active process of the learner who perceives and interprets situations subjectively according to prior knowledge and according to need and interest, the intentional arrangement of learning processes – i.e. formal or non-formal education – requires to start from the learner's perspective. From an interactionist point of view, learning – as all action – is a process of (re)constructing meaning and meaning results from identification (cf. Blumer 1969). This refers to a more fundamental pedagogical issue – the relation between intentional education (implying a subject-object relationship which is dominant in institutional settings of education) and subjective learning. In the context of the German education discourse (Bildung) this is expressed by the concept of 'Aneignung' (acquirement, appropriation) which refers to learning as an active exploration of the world and the integration (incorporation, internalisation) of the respective perceptions and experiences into one's own set of knowledge and skills. Social pedagogy especially refers to such a discourse of learning and education and in youth work the provision of (largely unstructured) space is justified in terms of allowing processes of appropriation and thereby learning (Deinet & Reutlinger, 2004). This links with the interpretation of education as formation (Bildung) of the subject (rather than a functional understanding of education as securing qualification, integration and allocation (Winkler, 2000; cf. Freire, 1972; 1998).

From a situated social learning perspective, Lave and Wenger conceptualise learning as "*legitimate peripheral participation*" referring to the fact that all learning takes place in form of entering "*communities of practice*" (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Therefore learning requires mediation between the practice which is constitutive for the community and the subjective meaning making processes of the members. The relation between communal practice and individual meaning depends on the social category of belonging. Legitimate peripheral participation means that the learner is accepted as member of the community despite of his or her restricted competencies. Meaning and belonging forms the basis of identity whereby learning is interpreted as a process of identity work (Wenger, 1998; cf. Miles et al., 2002). This understanding of learning comes close to activity psychology which describes learning as active processes of subjective appropriation of the social and material world (Holzkamp, 1993).

Isin and Wood (1999) have pointed to the fact that individuals develop a sense of citizenship (or participation) only in relation to their subjective identity and life style. Especially under conditions of late modern individualisation and pluralisation this implies that participation can only be learned where it is experienced as enforcing and enriching the individual biography and everyday life (cf. Holford & Van der Veen, 2003).

The requirement of subjective relevance in terms of identification and meaning refers to the question why individuals do engage – in participatory action, in learning or both. According to motivation theory action results from the interaction between the incentive of a subjective motive and the subjective feeling if self-efficacy, the belief of being in control of one's own actions, of being able to achieve subjective relevant goals by own means (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Bandura, 1997; Heckhausen & Heckhausen, 2006). Learning requires that learners perceive skills and knowledge as relevant and the respective learning process as manageable (Biesta & Tedder, 2006; cf. Walther et al., 2002); while participation requires that young people attribute subjective meaning to the issues of participation and perceive their own influence as sufficient to make a difference.

These reflections outline the limitations of intentional education for citizenship – at least as formal settings are concerned which start from given values, norms and practices.

Winkler (2000) argues that education as an intentional relationship which relies on processes of subjective appropriation can only fully be effective if its inherent power differential is (partially) suspended. He argues that participation as a political principle of sharing power needs to replace the asymmetric educational relationship (at least in regular intervals) in order to make learning happen in the sense of negotiating meaning and practice.

A core question in this regard is therefore whether or not young people are taught to accept sets of practices and meanings as given or to interpret them subjectively according to their own needs and interests, and to change them accordingly. From the view point of a social geographer Reutlinger situates learning, understood in terms of appropriation, within the social spaces which are subjectively relevant for young people (2005). He contrasts conventional participation programmes – normally situated in 'containers' – with young people's everyday life 'maps of coping' which are a heuristic way of outlining the space in which their subjective lives take place and in which they try (and have to) to achieve meaningful goals.

These perspectives are confirmed by findings from European research into the life histories of adults about learning for active citizenship. The final report of the ETGACE project identifies the following key aspects of learning for citizenship:

- *effectivity or capacity: developing a sense of agency, of competence and ability to make change happen;*

- *responsibility: taking responsibility for some social issue, responding to and coping with a challenge;*

- *identity: forming one's personal identity, developing convictions, opinions and ideas and connections between oneself and other people." (Holford & van der Veen 2003, p. . 50)*

In action research with children Degirmencioglu confirms the relevance of effectivity for enhancing participatory attitudes and activities, i.e. the experience of being able to make a difference, especially if this is accompanied by the experience that others recognise the own engagement as relevant (Degirmencioglu, 2007).

While effectivity and capacity on the one hand and responsibility on the other refer to the motivational aspects to engage in participation and/or learning for participation, the aspect of identity reveals that learning for participation is deeply interconnected with other areas of life and personal development. Bloomer and Hodkinson (2000) have developed the concept of learning careers whereby they refer to

> *"… orientations to practice, in this case the practice of learning [which are] … simultaneously subjective and objective … [They] … constrain and … enable future experiences. It is a career of events, activities and meanings, and the making and remaking of meanings … and it is a career of relationships and the constant making and remaking of relationships" (Bloomer & Hodkinson 2000, p. 589-590).*

The YOYO project on participation in transitions to work has applied this perspective with regard to motivational careers in terms of biographical processes of motivation and de-motivation. Individuals make experiences in finding or losing access to subjective relevant interests as well as to the means and competencies to fulfil them. Here, structure and agency are closely related inasmuch as this access is structured according to categories of social inequality – a social inequality regarding motivational processes (Walther et al., 2006).

Arguably, learning for participation also needs to be understood in terms of biographical processes rather than mere cognitive absorption of knowledge. The ETGACE project concludes:

> *"Active citizens usually learn their citizenship skills through trying to solve a problem or to fulfil a mission, rather than by setting out to 'learn to be good citizens'. Learning, and citizenship itself, emerge as a consequence of this primary motivation. Learning therefore has to be embedded in those processes. It follows that learning citizenship is unlike many more formal kinds of learning. It is interactive and deeply embedded in specific contexts. In this sense, its processes are unlike those of formal schooling, which, drawing on perspectives from developmental psychology, often present learning as a linear and predictable process." (Holford & van der Veen 2003, p. 8)*

Consequently, Percy-Smith suggests shifting the attention away from youth participation, which in most cases does not consist of more than well-intended consultation (for which young people need to be trained in order to be listened to). Subsequent effects are the exception; moving towards the social learning of adults and young people within the community. For the adults this learning process implies understanding the needs and interests young people, the meanings participation has for them and the different forms which result from different life worlds and life styles (Percy-Smith, 2006).

Conclusions

Our analysis of selected areas of learning for participation show that most educational programmes, especially those in school and those related to forms of representative democracy, follow an objective of adapting young people to institutionalised forms and norms of participation. Many young people experience this process as alienated from their own lives. Althouh none of our countries correspond to a model of learning such as shown above, comparative analysis does shows slight differences, whilst the scarcity of empirical data has also got to be taken into consideration. According to this picture, *Austria* provides the most consistent system of pupil participation in schools, especially as individual pupil rights are legally established. The reservation on the side of young people however suggests that apart from formal structures a culture of participation in schools is yet to be achieved. This also accounts for

Slovakia, where the system is still in its infancy, although the hopes of building democratic relationships in schools appear to be only partly shared by the young people. In *Ireland*, *France* and *Italy* school-based participation appears to be even more peripheral as regards contents, coverage and institutionalisation.

Non-formal education in youth work appears to be the most appropriate and genuine context for participatory learning, especially when meant to provide spaces for young people's appropriation processes. This is less the case in *Italy* and *Slovakia* where it is more understood as the organisation of extracurricular activities. However, in all of the countries youth work suffers from its institutional separation from other policy spheres so that participatory learning can not easily be transferred to other areas and issues which are as or even more meaningful.

In this regard, education for citizenship is to be seen more as an enabling approach – or empowerment – which does not decouple but interconnects participation and learning. A current discourse in this respect is the capability approach (Sen, 1992) which relates social justice (and well-being) to the irresolvable connection between welfare and education, and between rights, resources and skills (cf. Robeyns, 2006; Otto/Ziegler, 2006).

This implies that participation can only be learned 'by doing', that participation rights are not the reward for but the prerequisite for learning participation and that non-formal education for citizenship needs to accept that learners may produce other interpretations, other contents and other forms of participation (cf. Walther et al., 2006).

Consequently the next chapter will address the cultural forms of youth participation – or: the manners by which young people 'do' participation.

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Chapter 5

Participation and youth cultures

5.1 Introduction: To which extent does youth culture influence the forms of youth participation?

The question of youth culture appears to be central to understand young people's attitudes and behaviours toward participation. It is all the more important that young people's cultural practices are today deeply renewed and still somehow largely unknown:

> *"The 20th century has witnessed the emergence of specific youth subcultures which were in many respects unknown to pre-modern societies. Unfortunately, construction of indicators pertaining the cultural aspects of youth conditions is often vulnerable to many methodological problems, stemming from the impossibility of direct observation and the distortions implicit in self-reporting in survey contexts. These problems are further aggravated in an international framework, in that there are relatively few cross-country studies dedicated specifically to youth or in which youth sub-samples contain a sufficiently high number of cases to justify generalisation of findings" (IARD, 2001: 45).*

As mentioned in the interim report of the Up2project (October 2007):

> *" The fact that young people take actions differently with regard to familiy, citizenship or work compared to the generation of their parents and to the expectation of institutional actors may be either ascribed to different demand and constraints by which they are confronted, or it may be interpreted as different cultures of practice, of parenthood, work or citizenship. Culture is one way of understanding the meaning of practice as it evolves both individually and collectively. It embodies the sets of practices developed by groups, communities of societies. These sets of practices are the totality of social actions which are interlinked within a given social context and which share values, principles and norms. Thereby they represent the repertoire from which individuals construct meaning and relate it to specific forms of practice" (pp. 40-41).*

The present report deals with two major trends in the field of youth culture: youth counter culture expressions in our five countries and young people's participation through the internet. Apart from this, we will discuss cases of apparently deviant or criminalized behaviour of young people such as urban riots and ask to what extent these need to be viewed and addressed as an expression of young people's participation.

In the draft thematic report reference is made to youth cultures some of which are termed 'counter-cultures'. This term addresses both critical political movements as well as certain leisure scenes of sub-cultures. This refers to the fact that current participation programmes represent specific meanings of participation (meaning related both to the values and objectives implied as well as to the means and routines applied; cf. Giddens, 1984): there are pre-defined practices and

symbols which mark a social field of participation requiring skills but also resources such as social capital (cf. Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990).

Again, the interim report of our project underlined:

> *"Concerning civic participation, youthful political articulation almost cannot be discerned from youth cultural features: on the one hand late modern political movements such as e.g. anti-globalisation-movement do enfolf a (youth) cultural activity, on the other hand youth cultures themselves are to be seen as participatory movements in terms of their use/appropriation of (public) space, in terms of the shaping of imageries by symbolic policies, in terms of identity policies (e.g. the shaping of gender identities). Although mainstream/dominant culture and subculture in late modernity cannot be discerned that clearly any more, those young people who are engaged in these movements often at the same time are engaged in identity policies based on distinction."* (Interim paper, 2007, p. 42)

Our concern here is to scrutinise different forms of participation which may appear at the margins or even contradicting participation in the view of public authorities. On the one hand we refer to examples of political scenes reported in the Italian and Austrian reports such as squatting as a different culture of claiming autonomy and housing or anti-globalisation protest as a transnational networked community (connected by globalised media and youth culture). These groups/actions refer to the same issues which are also dealt with by formal politics from which they feel excluded and they express their alienation from the meaning officially connected to these topics and the practices applied as rational to achieve them. They relate to formal politics while consciously or not applying different practices of public action. On the other hand, we refer to cultural forms which do not primarily understand themselves as political but centre around leisure activities. A phenomenon which is so widespread that it has almost become a clichee but at the same time is a very good example is the scene of skaters (reported in the Irish report). Skaters occupy public spaces, first because of their extension and material (surface), second because of the visibility they provide. Skaters organise in loose scenes (qualifying for urban tribes rather than rigidly organised associations) and they compete with other groups in their claim for using public space. They thus use interstices of social space (Giddens, 1984) in order to introduce new forms of practice. The apparent materiality of their claim (space) makes them a favourite objective for consulting youth in processes of policy making because achieving a visible result – the skate park – seems feasible without interfering into the social order (cf. Weller, 2006). In fact, this neglects the process of meaning making involved in these scenes and in their public practice and the fact that as much as the practice itself their development is – through the process of meaning-making – is closely related to the identity constructions of the actors. In fact, they may use the park while continuing to perform in public spaces – and only then the issue becomes politicised from both sides. In the French report it has also been argued that even burning cars in deprived suburbs needs to be interpreted as attempt of getting one's voice heard and to become visible. Young people in the riots of 2005 made reference to their citizenship rights which they felt restricted by the policies responsible for the conditions in the suburbs. The term of creative agency here is relevant in its broadest sense: produce, change, provide visibility (cf. Joas, 1992). Youth cultures are contexts in which sociality and identity are linked, related, integrated. They provide access to how young people – from their specific points of view – actually are involved in and contribute to the societal meaning making process, how they perceive and value sociality and the public, how they link past and future within present situations and how they relate it to their own identity work (Fornäs, 1995; Mørch, 1999; Stauber, 2004).

In the previous parts on the individualisation of participation and youth and on the relationship between learning and participation, a central aspect has been that adults and institutional actors start from fixed presumptions of what participation is and how participation takes place. It has been elaborated that in contrast to this, participation takes a different and diversified meaning for young people while the demand of learning applies also to adults who have to learn that participation actually can mean different things and take different forms. In this chapter we want to deal with these different forms of participation. The question for practices and meanings implies a cultural perspective. Therefore we aim at sheding light on the relationship between youth cultures and participation.

5.2   Political Participation and Youth (Counter)Culture

In order to overcome the issue of youth participation through institutional experiences, we have focus our attention of the productions of young people in the field culture. Doing so, our attempt was twofold: first, to better understand the ways young people are engaged at local level; second, the meaning and potential influence of young people's mobilisations on territories. In this regard, we attempt at linking the questions of structure and agency.

5.2.1 Introduction

Political attitudes and political engagement of young people have become central topics in youth research. Research on the political socialisation that leads to those attitudes and behaviours has produced many studies on the influence of the family, the school, and the media. Some research has also focused on peer groups, and a few studies have included the influence of youth culture on the development of political orientations. In this "Up2Youth" study, we do not only take into account the political socialisation factor of youth cultures but consider (countercultural) youth scenes and members of such youth scenes potentially as political actors.

Regarding the relation of youth culture and politics, it is useful to distinguish between three groups of questions:

1. Which youth scenes have a common political understanding? In which youth scenes do most of their members share the same political opinions which might also lead to common political activities? (Counterculture, subculture, youth scenes, and politics)

2. Which youth scenes have which political orientations or, asked on the individual level, to which political orientation is the participation in a certain youth culture linked?

3. Which youth scenes use which forms of political engagement? (Youth cultures, political orientations and participation)

4. Has youth culture developed and established new forms of political participation? (Youth culture and new forms of participation)

After answering those questions from a theoretical and empirical state-of-the-art perspective, ten case studies on youth cultural scenes from across Europe are presented and analysed. Through the description of each of their main activities, attitudes, and ideology; their own media, publicity, and reaction of the public; their friends and enemies; and their contacts with public authorities we provide a broad image of political activism within European youth culture.

5.2.2 Counterculture, subculture, youth scenes, and politics

Youth culture has a long history at least throughout a whole century. Not only the youth cultures have been constantly changing but also the focus of the research on them. First, in the Forties and Fifties, youth culture was regarded as deviant from society. Researchers were interested in young people's criminal and deviant behaviour. The starting point and most famous study in this tradition is Whyte's "Street Corner Society (1943)". When in the late Sixties young people became rebellious, the term counterculture was born. Whereas until the mid Seventies youth culture was more or less homogeneous (Rock'n'Roll, long hair, rebellion against parents and the establishment), throughout the Seventies and the Eighties many youth cultures labelled as subcultures appeared (Waechter, 2006: 129). Both terms, counterculture as well as subculture, refer to alternative cultures to the one of the society as a whole. The term "subculture" was subject of many theoretical discussions. The overall definition of subculture is a subgroup of people in a society who do not share central (cultural) norms of the dominant society. In his "Theorie der Subkultur" Schwendter describes subculture as "part of a specific society that differs to a significant extent from the dominant institutions of the specific whole society through its institutions, customs, tools, norms, value systems, preferences, needs, etc." (Schwendter, 1973: 11). An important school in subculture theory was (and to some extent still is) the British CCCS („Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies"). The CCCS scholars assume that a specific culture is always the one of a specific social class. Therefore subcultures are subsystems of either the dominant culture (upper and middle class) or the class culture of the working class. Youth subcultures develop each in relation to their class culture (dominant or working class). (see Hall & Jefferson, 1976, Willis, 1981).

The concept of subcultures with its strong connection to social classes got critized for example by Baacke (1987). One of his main arguments was that not all subcultures can be localized precisely; they cannot be attributed to a specific social class (Baacke, 1987, 123).

Since the Nineties, the focus in youth research is to study youth scenes. The subcultural approach has been replaced by theories of lifestyle and youth scenes (e.g. Vollbrecht 1997, Muggleton 2000; 2005). Those „post-subcultural studies" have found that youth scenes may or may not be rebellious and that they are more flexible than the subcultures of the Eighties. Young people can participate in several youth scenes at the same time.[7] Not all of the scene members are fully participating; most of them stay on the periphery of one or more scenes. Switching scenes is much easier than it used to be but most young people are still not active members but just sympathizing with scenes (cf. Waechter, 2006). The socio-economic status determines to a lesser degree possible memberships in scenes (cf. Waechter, 2008). The relation of social status and youth scene memberships is the central point in critics on the post-subcultural studies. Shildrick and MacDonald, for example, expound the problems of the shift from the subcultural approach to the post-subcultural studies as follows: „Once one accepts that, for some young people at least, social divisions still shape youth cultural identities, the postmodern tendency to celebrate the fragmented, fleeting and free-floating nature of contemporary youth culture becomes difficult to sustain."(Shildrick & MacDonald, 2006: 126). For them post-subcultural approaches are problematic both empirically because they tend to ignore the youth cultural lives and identities of

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[7] A German study shows that only 20% of young people are members in just one youth cultural scene. Half of the German youth identifies with at least two youth cultural styles (Pfaff, 2006: 120).

less advantage young people, and theoretically because they tend to downplay the significance of social divisions and inequalities of power in young people's lives (ibid.: 126). Furthermore, one may not forget the political, resistant and subcultural character of the subject (ibid.: 136).

However, the "classic" subcultures (Punks, Skins, Hippies, etc.) have not disappeared but they exist alongside new scenes such as HipHop, Drum and Bass, Boarder scenes, etc. An extensive diversification in sub-scenes and sub-sub-scenes has happened and the development is racing, especially regarding online youth culture such as social network sites (MySpace, Facebook, etc.) (see Subrahmanyam et al., 2008). Regarding the socio-economic status of their members the sub-scenes that belong to a bigger, more heterogeneous scene are more homogeneous themselves. Switching between sub-scenes that are related to a certain social status seems a lot more difficult than switching into a different youth scene altogether. Even though it is possible to switch between scenes, there are not only scenes that get along and even partly overlap but there are also opposed scenes. This is especially true for politically or ideologically oriented youth scenes.

Because of the wide variety of youth scenes it helps to categorize them into five types (Waechter, 2006):

- Music oriented,
- Ideologically oriented,
- Sports oriented,
- Media and computer oriented scenes,
- Fan cultures.

Ideologically oriented scenes have certain political orientations and also use different forms of engagement. They are characterised by the fact that their members are united by a common political ethos. Among these youth scenes are Anti-Globalisation Activists, Autonomous groups, Anti-Fascists, Neonazis, Vegans, Animal Liberationists, Active Christians. It is assumed that new media technologies have contributed considerably to a new politicization. The spectrum of attitudes and values ranges from extreme right and racist (Neonazis), anarchist and self-ruling (Autonomous groups) to extreme left and intellectual (anti-globalisation activists). Lifestyles and activities differ accordingly (Waechter, 2006, 2007, and 2008).

Also other youth scenes may have common political attitudes where most of their members share similar political views, but that is not what holds them together. Especially music oriented scenes tend to have certain political orientations, e.g. Punks anarchist-alternative-left-wing, but more often the sub-scenes differ between their political attitudes (e.g. anarchist-left-wing Techno scenes versus right-wing Techno scenes). The other way around, every political movement has its music – or several kinds of music: The Autonomous scene was originally close to the Punk and Hardcore scene, and in the meantime some members prefer Techno, Drum and Bass or Dancehall. The Neonazi-scene overlaps with the movement of the Skinheads, who – among other styles – chose primarily Ska, which was favoured by the original Skinheads in England in the Sixties, but also Punk Rock was the music of their movement. Veganism also has a connection to Punk Rock: Straight Edge fans not only like to forgo alcohol and other drugs („they know that you are more dangerous when you are sober"), but also the use of animal products (Waechter, 2006).

5.2.3 Youth cultures, political orientations, and political participation

Whereas in the past decade in British research on youth cultures the focus was more on styles and club cultures as for example criticized by Shildrick & MacDonald (2006), German youth research also concentrated on youth culture in relation to political attitudes and behaviour.[8] However, there is no integrative theoretical conception of the empirical evidences regarding youth culture and politics. In the following some of the most central and relevant findings are presented:

Strzoda, Zinnecker and Pfeffer (1996) used data of the German Shell-study to show how young people position themselves in the world of youth cultures. In general, there are two ways: The first way is that young people either like youth cultures altogether, don't like them at all, or don't really care about them (in 2006 true for about one third of German girls and boys[9]). The second way is that they prefer certain youth cultures and dislike other ones (in 2006 true for about two thirds[10]). Pfaff (2006 & 2007) found in a different study that half of those who belong to the second way and do have preferences (one third of the German youth) position themselves in countercultures and/or alternative music scenes: Among those she identified four groups: 10% of all young Germans prefer mainstream music and sympathize with right wing scenes, 9% prefer mainstream music and sympathize with left-wing-alternative scenes, 7% prefer Punk, Gothic, Metal and the Anti-Fascist scenes, and 4% sympathize with Skinheads, Neonazis and Hooligans. The second group of the young people with preferences (the group is labelled popular music and media styles) position themselves as computer nerds (12%), HipHop fans (9%), or Pop fans (9%) (Pfaff, 2007: 105). Even though these numbers do not present active participation in a scene but show preferences and sympathies, it is interesting that one third of the German young population position themselves around counter cultural "protest" scenes.

Pfaff (2007) criticizes that, neither in youth studies in political science nor in youth culture studies, regarding political socialization processes the political orientations of the young people are not really interpreted. In her study she sees youth cultural contexts as fields where the development of political orientations happens. She selected two youth scenes to show the relation of youth culture and politics: the Gothic/Punk scene and the HipHop-scene. Using a large sample of 4700 young people the differences between those two scenes become obvious. The Gothics and Punks describe themselves as left-wing oriented and emphasize their open mindedness except towards fascist and right wing groups. Compared to the average young population they are more experienced in political participation. Political discussions are part of the scene and also going to political protests is an expression of belong to the certain youth culture. The young people in the HipHop-scene are to a lesser extent interested in politics and they have less concrete political attitudes. However, they relate to the topic of social inequality which is based on individual experiences and expressed in the rap lyrics. The HipHoppers distance themselves from (established) political engagement; their political agency takes place on the micro-level, for example in taking responsibilities in the neighbourhood. For both scenes, the Gothic-Punk one and the HipHip one it is true that their membership determines political orientations and agency. That study confirms the findings of a previous work on members of the HipHop culture which

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[8] For a summarizing state of the art report see Pfaff 2006.

[9] As confirmed by Pfaff 2006, 104

[10] As confirmed by Pfaff 2006, 104

showed that they lack in political interest and participation. Through personal everyday experiences with inequality they construct criticism towards politics (Welniak, 2002: 37).

For explicit political (ideologically oriented) scenes, their political ideas and activities have been quite well documented. For example, much literature is available on the Anti-globalization movement (e.g. Grefe, Greffrath & Schumann, 2002; Shahyar & Wahl, 2005) and some have also conducted research on Autonomous Groups (e.g. Foltin, 2004). Since for most young people music is the most important reference for belonging to, seeking to belong to, or sympathizing with a certain youth culture, it is also useful to examine the specific political orientations and political practices of youth scenes and to find connections between music scenes and explicit political (ideologically oriented) scenes. For some youth cultures their political aspect has been well documented (for the Punk and Hardcore scene see e.g. Waechter, 1995, Calmbach & Rhein, 2007), for other ones whose common political orientation is not so clear, there is not much research on the political aspect as well. In many youth cultures there are so many subgenres and different local scenes that have different and even opposite political attitudes. In Techno which is usually labelled as "non-political" youth culture, there is not only the better known mass consumer weekend culture, but also small scenes around the world that have a strong political focus. They build their own sound systems, organize free festivals in public space and are connected to explicit political scenes.

The ongoing explosion of online youth culture is also focus of much research. Young people use the Internet for games, information, communication, self presentation and for social networking. Regarding political participation, on the one hand, political youth scenes employ the Internet for networking and for the contribution and circulation of information. On the other hand, the Internet also provides new opportunities for young people who have not been involved in political scenes. Civic engagement in the digital world is a whole big issue that can not be elaborated in this text. However, an ongoing discussion is if the Internet really leads to increasing participation of individuals and societal groups who have been less integrated so far, or if the Internet mainly increases the possibilities of those who are already politically active (cf. Hesse, 2008: 3). Whereas that discussion focuses on weblogs that deal with politics and current affairs, young people more often use weblogs for self presentation and social networks (Subrahmanyam et al., 2008).

5.2.4 Youth culture and new forms of participation

The view that young people are generally disinterested in social and political participation has been challenged by a number of youth researchers who point to the numerous ways in which young people get engaged (e.g. Roker, Player, & Coleman, 1999). On the one hand, active membership in political parties and trade unions has not decreased substantially (Spannring, 2005); on the other hand, many young people have become much more interested in specific political topics such as animal rights, environmental protection, education and health (Weixler & Zuba, 2002). Especially the engagement for single issues on community level such as infrastructure for leisure activities appeal to young people because they can recognise a direct connection between their input and the result of their political engagement (Wintersberger et al., 1999).

Direct actions such as collecting signatures for petitions, or collecting donations possibly fit better into life styles and aspirations of modern young people than ticking a party in a dusty

polling booth. New forms of political protest such as "street party protest" (for example, FreeRe Public-Parade in Vienna) show how young people integrate their political engagement as part of their world view into their life style. Political participation also takes place in the form of local activities and self-help groups as well as youth participation models on community level. Even individualistic action such as ecologically sustainable behaviour can be an expression of a political conviction (Haerpfer, Wallace, & Spannring, 2002).

As the survey data from the EUYOUPART project shows, alternative forms of participation such as demonstrations, boycotts, or occupying buildings, do not attract large masses of young people (Ogris & Westphal, 2005). However, the findings do cast some doubt on the conventional and at the same time simplified picture of an apolitical youth and lead to the question where this picture comes from. Maybe it has to do with the fact that the political dimension of these new forms of participation and political expression is not recognised by the public. Especially if opposition is fun or coupled with violence the public discourse fades out the political content and reduces the young people's activity to amusement or aggression (Tebbich, 2002).

One form of engagement that seems to lend itself to individualistic behaviour is life politics. As Giddens (1994) has pointed out, life politics concerns the defence of life styles. Life politics can be utterly individualistic in its aim, claiming respect from the others for one's ideals and attempting to assert oneself against normative conceptions of the environment. This is particularly obvious in the struggle of young Muslims for acceptance of their cultural heritage and life style. Freedom, tolerance and respect are also granted to the others and are, in theory at least, defended. Life politics, however, also concerns more universal values such as the protection of the environment or social equality in the world. These values are an intimate part of the political identity. Also youth cultural styles can be seen as a form of political protest (cf. Welniak, 2002: 42). Political attitudes and protest are expressed through youth cultural everyday practice. For example, the culture of HipHop expresses not only explicitly social criticism through its lyrics but uses also sub-cultural practices such as rap, DJ-ing, breakdance, and graffiti.

What is particularly significant in the context of participation, and in particular, of life politics is the young people's lack of missionary zeal. In a 'yes-but'-world, a world without ultimate truths, where mass mobilisation by organisations or leaders is suspect, politics is reduced to one's personal activities with the aim of living up to one's own political convictions and moral standards. And since effective political activism is hardly possible, the desire to 'save the world' boils down to attempts to influence the immediate social environment.

Regarding online youth culture, above all weblogs, digital technologies transform audiences into producers. The Internet also provides a new basis for protest becoming part of everyday life (Earl & Schussman, 2008). Through "online petitioning" young people use it already for expressing their demands. Earl & Schussman (2008) describe in their study a new online trend: young people using "traditional social movement tactics, such as petitions, on the Internet to support, contest, or otherwise comment on cultural products and celebrities." Those petitions may address problems in online games, advocate for open-source release of popular software, or demand a record label to send a band on tour. What they have in common is a focus on concerns that are important to youth culture and popular culture (ibid.).

5.2.5 Case studies

In the following section different kinds of forms of political participation that can be found in current European youth cultures will be located. The empirical basis consists in ten case studies. In five countries (Austria, France, Ireland, Italy, Slovakia) two youth cultures each have been described focusing on their political aspect. Some of the youth scenes use well-known forms of participation (demonstrations, boycott), whereas some created new forms and concepts of participation. Both will be examined and presented.

Table 20: Examined youth cultural scenes

Name	Youth Culture	Category	Origin
"Gruppe Freiraum"	Squatters	political	Austria
"Indymedia"	Alternative Press	political/media	Austria
"L'élaboratoire"	Squatters-Artists	political	France
"Le clèbard à sa mémère	Alternative Press	political/media	France
"Republican Groups"	Republican Paramilitaries	political	Ireland
"Cork Skateboarders"	Skateboarders	sports	Ireland
"Ultras"	Hooligans	fans	Italy
"Laboratorio occupato Crash"	Squatters	political	Italy
"Solitary Neo-Cottagers"	Eco-Activists	(eco-)political	Slovakia
"Euro Indians"	Eco-Hippies	(eco-)political	Slovakia

Most of these youth scenes can be labelled as politically or ideologically oriented ones: five of them are squatters (among those, one group has an artistic focus and two groups have an ecological focus), and two are alternative press activists. Of course, following the categorization of youth cultures above, the alternative press activists can also be labelled as media oriented. All of them belong more or less to the alternative-left-autonomous spectrum. Another examined political scene is Republican youths. One scene, the Skateboarders, is sports oriented, and the Hooligans represent a Fan-scene.

The attitudes and ideologies of most of the politically oriented youth cultures are related to left-wing and anarchistic ideas; the only different scene of the examined ones are the Republican groups. All other ones belong or relate to the Autonomous scene and to the anti-globalization movement: On average their members are highly educated; they are likely to be students. But in the examples of the squatters, also other, socio-economically disadvantaged groups (unemployed, homeless, migrant) follow and seek the support of the activists.

Squatters

Main Activities, Attitudes, and Ideology

First of all, the main activity of the squatters is occupying empty unused buildings or areas for using them for following purposes: "'Freiraum' is a space that supports critical thinking distant from societal mechanisms of exploitation and valuation. (…) The space shall provide room for

projects such as a "Volksküche" (open kitchen), discussion evenings, open repair shops ("offene Werkstatt"), workshops, concerts, art openings, etc. Freiraum will be a self determined project for all people interested – independent of their origin, gender, sexuality, or wallet. The available resources will be free for the public use." ("Freiraum"[11]) The declared goal of "Crash" is to create a public space for the town that has to be outside the control of the state and the capitalist logic of the market. In this respect, the social and cultural activities carried out by the collectives assume a clearly political value: they are expression of a universalistic engagement that aims to expand social rights, especially the individual's right to self-determination with respect to satisfying one's own needs. The occupied buildings are meant to be used for living, partying, working, and for political activities. At least theoretically, the social and cultural offers are not restricted to the active members of the scene, but to everyone interested.

The "Solitary Neo-Cottagers" in Slovakia could be labelled as rural newcomers; they have re-settled outlying deserted settlement from urban space. The second Slovakian group, the "Euro Indians" camp in nature and try to live in an atmosphere of the American Great Plains of the 19th century.

Their political attitudes and ideologies reach from anarchistic to leftist ideas. The different examined groups of squatters do not refer to certain ideologies. One of their major believes is that there movement cannot be represented through one common ideology but that their participating activists may have different opinions and attitudes. Therefore ongoing discussion about activities, consequences and political ideas are necessary. However, the Austrian groups of squatters ("Freiraum") express certain political ideas:

- comprehensive participation
- autonomy
- post-capitalism
- reclaiming public space

Comprehensive participation means that all people are welcome to participate in discussions, activities, and in the planning of new activities. It also means that participation should be possible throughout all levels of processes and activities. Unlike traditional political participation which means that participation is restricted to voting, petition signing etc, they want to encourage everyone to be part from creating an idea to its implementation. Autonomy means creating a space out of the range of public authority and without possible influence through public administration. The squatters share a clear anti-capitalistic attitude and try to live and promote a post-capitalism world. This implies other, non-capitalistic values: sharing instead of accumulating, cooperation instead of competition, producing instead of consuming, participating instead of following. Public space is meant to be used by everyone and in any way the users wish to. Through activities such as "open kitchens" in public space people are encouraged to participate and it promotes "alternative" ways of using public space.

A statement of the Austrian group "Freiraum" shows the importance of further ideas such as self determination and societal variety: "The dominant structures – shaped through exploitation of people and nature, pressure to consume, abuse of power, class divergencies, eviction, absurd

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[11] http://freiraum.lnxnt.org/index.html?/moinwiki/FreiraumNews (letzter Zugriff am 23.7.2008)

logic of disposing resources, and alienation of people – do not leave us room for individual agency and self determination. Continuously and using all ways possible, media try to assimilate and to put us into the homogeneous pabulum of the social norms. Would the exciting thing about society not be its possible variety? Unfortunately, this variety does not exist because many attempts are getting scotched, and individual creativity is economically exploited."[12]

Besides of squatting buildings the autonomous groups cover a broad range of activities. Some of those activities are meant to take place in the occupied buildings but due to the possibility to maintain them and in order to make the goals public they are carried out in public space. Other activities are clearly meant to reach everyone interested and also support disadvantaged groups of society. The "open kitchen", a "classic" activity and life form in the squatters' scene, can take place within a squat but also in the public. "Food Not Bombs", originally established in the United States, has not been examined within this project but would be another good example for serving food in the public. Food Not Bombs is a loose organization of groups of more or less young people world-wide who collect food and serve it for free on the streets to the public. Other activities can be labelled as cultural production: The French "L'élaboratoire" perform dance and theatre in public space and produce street spectacles that are famous and recognized for their high artistic level. In doing so, they defend a new way of living, no longer based on consumerism but on exchange and mutual assistance. Also the workshops of the Italian "Crash" have a focus on cultural and artistic activities. They feature self-managed literature, artistic theatre, body expression, and photography. It is also possible for external groups to perform there in jam sessions and exhibitions.

The Slovakian "Neo-Cottagers" focus is on ecological issues. Their main activities encompass the organization of discussions, camps, craft workshops, and mediation exercises. They present themselves as openly pacifists refusing physical violence. Decidedly they are against the modern consumption way of life, and support the development of ideas of voluntary simplicity and permanent sustainable development. The "Euro Indians" present themselves as strictly apolitical, even though they seem to share a common ecological ideology.

Media, publicity, and reaction of the public

All examined groups of political oriented youth cultures have their own website.13 There is also an online squatters' platform: http://squat.net.

Crash also advertises its actions and activities through two local radio stations belonging to the radical left wing (Radio Fujiko and Radio Città). The collective produces also an online newspaper. Above all, contact between the city residents and the Crash activists happens during the demonstration and music events (street parade) which are feared by the population who seem to have forgotten the city's left wing tradition of supporting youth expression and leisure time happening in public space. The proximity between the social centre of Crash and other city

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[12] http://freiraum.lnxnt.org/index.html?/moinwiki/FreiraumNews (letzter Zugriff am 23.7.2008)

[13] For example: Crash: http://isole.ecn.org/baz/chi/crash.html

L'élaboratoire: http://elaboratoire.free.fr

Solitary Neo-Cottagers: www.zajezka.sk

Freiraum: http://freiraum.lnxnt.org

residents creates often trouble due to the different ways of life and to the different needs of time and space. Moreover, the latter considers the young people of Crash as a problem, i.e. regarding delinquency connected with drug dealing, in which also immigrants, chiefly those coming from North Africa, are involved. Answering to the protest of the resident citizens, Crash 2006 was for the second time cleared by the police.

The Austrian group "Freiraum" is clearly visible in the public when they occupy empty buildings or when they are active with "open kitchens" in public space. This is also true for the French squatting artists when they perform their street spectacles. Whereas the French are well recognized by the public (in particular young people) and by the cultural sector of the Municipality, there is less appreciation for the Austrians: Their several attempts of occupying a building in different Austrian cities have so far always ended with a violent eviction through the police force. However, some local green and social democratic politicians show support and there was objective news coverage about the occupations and evictions by a nationwide daily newspaper.

The Slovakian Neo-Cottagers do not have their own journal but their members regularly write for so-called Eco-Forums (Kruh Zivota, Zrno). The Euro Indians have their own website and used to publish their won journal. Both groups also present themselves in discussion forums and in television discussions. Gradually, the Neo-Cottagers increase their number of supporters and sympathizers: Their region Zájezová has become the main centre of ecological life in practice.

Friend and enemy

The squatters are closely related to the anti-globalization movement and linked with other local autonomous groups. When one local group of Austrian squatters tried to occupy and keep a building, in another city, squatters started an occupation for solidarity.

In the case of the French artistic-squatters, they are more related to a larger, national movement of alternative popular culture. Consequently, their "enemy" is the mainstream cultural production and mainstream cultural public policy. They protest against a narrow conception of culture that leads to an elitist offer addressed to the wealthy part of the population.

The squatters in Italy as well as the squatters in Austria perceive themselves as "fighters" against alienation of the capitalistic society and as actors of alternative participative practices to neo-liberal globalization. Besides capitalism, other enemies would be the police, surveillance, the government, right wing groups, etc. The Italian Crash also has a more concrete enemy: The mayor Sergio Cofferati, who though considered a radical leftist, supports a hard "crusade on legality", chasing away house residents, mainly irregular immigrants and squatters.

The members of the Slovakian Eco-Activists are not directly related to any particular scene but ideologically they are close to the environmental movement, animal liberationists and the left-wing/alternative scene. Their enemy is the consumer society. The group of the Euro Indians who describe themselves as strictly apolitical are not connected to any other scene but they are somehow related to woodcrafters, tramps, and scouts.

Contacts with public authorities/organizations and claims from authorities

The young people of Crash refuse the formal contact with the traditional form of politics, but at local level their issues are represented in the local government by the elected of the radical left party of Rifondazione comunista. Also in Austria, the squatters are only in contact with local

politicians, and additionally, they negotiate directly with the owners of the occupied buildings. The French squatting artists are in contact with the locally elected person in charge of culture.

According to their main activities they examined groups of squatters express different goals and claims from public authorities:

The first and most important thing Crash claim is a stable site in town, because in the proposal that they have received from the major the locations of the centre were always far away from the town center with scarce bus services. The second is the opportunity to be heard by the local government in the public questions regarding housing, temporary work, soft drugs and migrants. Also for the group "Freiraum" it is most important to receive empty, unused buildings and areas: "Those spaces have to have room for concerts, art openings, workshops, "open kitchens", "open repair shops", discussions evenings, and other ideas. (…) We want to create a colorful institution that is open for everybody and free of dominant constraints (e.g. pressure to consume, assimilated appearance and behavior) and to offer everyone to become active themselves to be autonomous aside of the norm." The more culture oriented French activists also have the same major problem: They are looking for a proper place to live their artistic life. Currently, they live in an old and unhealthy place where the main building is hardly heated, and most of them live in caravans. Therefore they are looking for better life standard and also to be recognized as proper artists.

Both, the Neo-Cottagers as well as the Euro Indians are not connected to any particular political scene. The Neo-Cottagers focus more on local politics, and they are active in revitalization of traditional local values and local self-sufficiency. The members are involved in environmental projects, the organization of social events and the renewal of local organizations of public character (schools). The Euro Indians stress their apolitical attitude and that they avoid getting involved in any public matters. However, both groups have the same claims from public authorities: They ask for a more sensitive approach towards nature, the use of energetic resources and a greater human-nature symbiosies.

Alternative Media Activists

Two groups of alternative media activists have been examined: one group comes from Austria but is internationally linked ("Indymedia"), and the other one is a local French one ("Le clébard à sa mémère"). There are differences regarding their political connections and radicalism. Whereas the French group is in contact with the green party and related to the anti-globalization movement, Indymedia is not in contact with political parties at all. In contrast, they are closely linked to the autonomous scene, squatters, and groups from the left-alternative spectrum (such as the anti-globalization movement). In their own words, "Indymedia is always part of that movement that it is reporting about". Especially for the French group but also for the Austrian one it is true that their activists are mostly students.

"Le clébard à sa mémère" produces a website (www.leclebard.org) and a journal. They sell their journal in markets and in the alternative spaces, and they also organize public debates (for example on participation or on the North-South-relationship). The French media activists are leftists. They discuss things not mentioned in other media, and defend press freedom and investigation possibilities.

The main activity of the Austrian "Indymedia" group is creating and maintaining a website for participation and communication (http://austria.indymedia.org/ and http://at.indymedia.org/), and

helping to introduce and establish networks who promote alternative forms of politics, action, and ideas. Whereas the French activists work in favor of democracy, Indymedia is more critical regarding the existing political system. They express several principles:

- Open publishing

- Variety of information

- Decentralization

- Anti-Hierarchy

- Transparency

- Networking

Open Publishing means that Indymedia is an open platform that everybody can be part of. Not only publishing is possible for everyone but also participation in the whole process. All people can become part of Indymedia and actively participate in the development and the flow of communication. The principle of open publishing also allows and produces a variety of perspectives and positions on issues. Indymedia wants to extinguish the borderlines between producers and consumers. One way for them to reach that goal is the concept of decentralization. Indymedia has no centers that produce and distribute information but everybody can become part of Indymedia. The media activists stress their focus on breaking down hierarchies, for example in using gender neutral diction. All areas of Indymedia should be as transparent as possible in order to avoid concentration of power. The distribution of information through Indymedia is free of commercial or other interests. Through the principle of networking multilingual, independent political contents can be distributed (http://austria.indymedia.org/).

The French activists are visible in the public through their journal and their public debates. Also because of their particularly good caricaturist they are very appreciated by a small public but also by national journals. They are not appreciated by public authorities but have never been sued. The Austrian Indymedia activists seem to be only visible for those who visit their websites, and therefore there are no reactions of the public or public authorities.

As media producers both groups do not claim anything in particular from politicians or authorities but – as Indymedia puts it – they promote whatever movement they are providing information about. Indymedia also functions as a platform for alternative (political) groups and movements and it that way, they support the claims of those groups. The French and the Austrian media activists have a common enemy: the mainstream media.

Republican Paramilitaries

Following the Good Friday political settlement of 1998 a split occurred in the republican movement (Sinn Fein/IRA) with the militantly orientated section(s) forming two new paramilitary organizations, "The Continuity Irish Republican Army (CIRA)" and "The Real Irish republican Army (RIRA)" (responsible for the Omagh bombing). Both groups are linked to 'Republican Sinn Fein'; the political wing of this movement. The overall movement has a youth wing. The common political direction of those organizations is their engagement for the issue of Northern Ireland.

In contrast to the other described political oriented group whose student members have a middle class background, members of the Irish Republican groups typically belong to the upper working class. As a political entity this movement would claim to be open to any person who supports their political philosophy; however, members are overwhelmingly white, Irish catholic, and upper working class (with significant status within their own communities) people whose family involvement in active republicanism can stretch back generations.

Friend and Enemy

The youth wing of the movement is not affiliated with the National Youth Council of Ireland, nor are they related to other scenes in any formal manner. Individual young people are related to other scenes which interest them such as sport and music. The overall ideology of the movement would strongly encourage members to partake in Irish sports (Hurling and Gaelic Football) and cultural activities (such as Irish language classes).

The principal enemy is the British State (usually referred to as the 'crown') and any organ of this state, primarily military, police and state servants. The second set of enemies is loyalist/unionist institutions which are viewed as oppressive colonial and foreign entities. The third enemy is the Irish state (referred to as the 'free state') which is perceived as a puppet régime of Britain.

Main Activities, Attitudes, and Ideology

The political attitude relates to the non-acceptance of the 'Good Friday' agreement. The movement claims legitimacy as the sovereign government of Ireland from events that occurred during the civil war of 1922-1924. Ideologies are tenuously socialist but most commentators would argue that the movement's sole ideology is 'Brits Out'.

The main activity of the Republican Groups is the dissemination of propaganda at local level through whatever means are available. This includes the use of a particular strain of Irish music (rebel ballads) by bands such as the Wolfe Tones (a protestant who is credited with being the founding father of Irish republicanism) and Eire Og (Young Ireland. One popular song is entitled 'Go on home British Soldiers, Go on Home (have ye know fucking homes of ye're own).

The movement is heavily suspect in relation to the 'Love Ulster' riot in 2006; one of our sources is currently in prison for three years due to his involvement.

Recent media reports that the movement (heavily penetrated by both Irish and British security forces) has regrouped and is intent on a renewed armed campaign.

Media, publicity, and reaction of the public

Republican Sinn Fein hosts a website (http://www.rsf.ie/saoirse.htm) and has its own newspaper 'Soairse' (Freedom). The '32 County Sovereignty Movement has a site at; http://www.32csm.org/. Other than that, they are visible through public parades and marches that are usually held on Easter Monday (anniversary of the proclamation of Independence and establishment of the Irish republic). The movement is secretive (and well-armed); public displays are therefore both limited and heavily policed by the 'Special Branch', the state's serious crime and anti-terrorism police unit.

The CIRA and RIRA are proscribed organizations; conviction for membership carries a seven year jail sentence. In relation to militant activities the state has responded by increased intelligence gathering, liaison with international colleagues (to stymie armaments) and heavy

surveillance. A zero tolerance policy is evident in relation to military activities; however political activates are tolerated as the state views proscription of political wings as being counter-productive.

Contacts with public authorities/organizations and claims from authorities

This movement is in a conflict with the State but anecdotally informal lines of communication are open to the highest level of the Government in the belief that these movements can be persuaded to relinquish armed resistance as a political strategy. The young Republican groups claim legitimacy as the sovereign government of Ireland from events that occurred during the civil war of 1922-1924.

Ultras

'Ultra'[14] is the generic title applied to young people, who represent a particular football fan subgroup appeared for the first time in Italy during the late 1960s as a particular version of the country's political climate with the violent rivalries between neo-fascist (Lazio's Irriducibili, Roma's Boys Roma and TDR, Inter's Boys San are still known for displaying Celtic crosses and Swastikas) and communist groups (Livornos Brigate Autonome Livornesi, Carrarese, A.C. Arezzo's Fossa, Pisa Calcio's Ultras display flags with red stars, hammer and sickles, the anarchy symbol or images of Che Guevara). The Ultras ideology has progressively lost its deep political connotation and since the early 1980s it has increasingly become similar to the "Hooligan" and "Casual" cultures.

Ultras can be from all social classes; however they are predominantly young (16-25 years old) male low educated workers in the north of the country and unemployed in the south. Female members are accepted, but more often are the girlfriends of the group leaders. University students are underrepresented, as the Ultras culture is stigmatized: violent acts of groups of Ultras, which looked like commando-operation with knives, bicycle chains and hammers have led during the years to numerous deaths also among the policemen and have been strongly repressed by the police and stigmatized by mass-media and public opinion.

Friend and Enemy

The Ultras as a movement is not related to other youth scenes, of course individual young people are connected to other scenes, which are interested in sports in general and in music. Some ultra groups are informally associated with specific political factions, which results in rivalries and alliances based on political allegiances. While it is common that some right wing extremist groups distribute propaganda to members of Ultra groups, the left wing extremist groups don't look systematic with proselytism in the football stadiums.

The first enemy is always the police and this rivalry lets Ultras belonging to historically opposite groups make alliance in violent attacks inside or outside stadiums against it. Rivalries among the Ultras themselves are based on animosity toward the team of the same town, mostly in derbies (e.g. Sampdoria vs. Genoa, Roma vs. Lazio, Torino vs. Juventus, Inter vs. Milan), and on

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[14] The word *ultra* is Latin, which means *beyond* in English, the implication being that their enthusiasm for football (and originally for politics) is 'beyond' the normal

different political ideologies (e.g. <u>Livorno</u> communist vs. <u>Lazio</u> neo fascist). There are also rivalries between Ultras supporting the same team, which are based on personal and/or leadership disputes.

Main Activities, Attitudes, and Ideology

The ultra culture is a mix of several supporting styles in the stadium and socialization actions outside the stadium. Ultras sell direct membership cards and make campaign of self-financing as happens in the traditional political activity. They also meet during the working days to plan and prepare the "tifo" choreographies and to activate the participation of the whole kop. Some Ultra groups sell their own merchandise such as scarves, hats, and jackets. In some groups there are also meeting organized to prevent the use of non-justified violence, i.e. against other group which are not enemies.

The political attitudes and ideologies that Ultra groups represent reach from the far left to the far right. <u>Leftist</u>, <u>antiracist</u> or <u>antifascist</u> Ultras group defined themselves <u>Antifa</u> Ultras.[15] They often take an active and aggressive stance against social and economic discrimination inside and outside football stadiums, which they perceive as being deliberately ignored by club management, police and state. Right and neo-fascist Ultras produce internal cohesion and group identity through the loyalty to the stand in which the group is located: also the Curva or <u>Kop</u> becomes the little "heimat" to be protected against the strangers (xenophobic vision of life). According to the ideology of the extremist right, the danger of wasting territory in the stadium represents a metaphor of the social "invasion" of Italy by migrants, which justify the verbal and physical aggression against migrants and rom gypsies.

Media, publicity, and reaction of the public

Ultras use blog and personal websites on the Internet. Also video films that can be seen on You Tube and <u>fanzines</u> play an important part in the Ultra movement. As printing costs decrease and publishing software improves, fanzines have become increasingly more professional-looking.

Regarding the visibility of the movement, they like to arrive en masse when they travel to support their team, and they are visible on the trains, in the station and on the bus together with the policemen who keep a close eye on their movements. When trouble involving Ultras breaks out outside the stadium, it usually takes the form of a political <u>riot</u> (guerriglia) and the police uses with them the same tactics it uses with the political activists.

What are the reactions of the public authorities? Some clubs provide the groups cheaper tickets, storage rooms for flags and banners, and early access to the stadium before matches in order to prepare the displays. When violent actions happens, i.e. physical assaults or intimidation of non-Ultra fans, mass-media and public opinion criticized for a while these types of favoured relationship, but in Italy it is impossible to stop football matches, because they represent one of the most important national "industry" as denounced by the same Ultras.

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3 The annual <u>Mondiali Antirazzisti (Anti-Racist World Cup)</u> held in Northern <u>Italy</u> is the largest gathering of Antifa Ultras in the world.

Contacts with public authorities/organizations and claims from authorities

Some Ultra groups are informally associated with specific political factions, which results in rivalries and alliances based on political allegiances. The groups usually have a <u>representative</u> who liaises with the club owners on a regular basis, mostly regarding tickets, seat allocations and storage facilities. The group leader negotiates with the police regarding banner, songs and position in the stadiums. Other groups don't accept at all the presence of the police in the stadium. Left wing and right wing Ultras share the current discourse: They stand up against "modern football" which means a high price of the ticket, non-traditional times of the matches players and the excessive commercialization of football in general.

Cork Skateboarders

'Skaters' are the generic title applied to these young people although they themselves have sub-groups with different titles such as 'BMXers' and (roller)bladers'. Skaters can be of all social classes; however they do not appear to contain Travellers or other ethnic minority groups. They are predominantly male and upper working/middle class with female members being referred to as 'skater chicks'.

Friend and Enemy

In terms of fashion they are associated with surfer type clothes. They tend to be a group who easily co-exist with other visible countercultural groups such as Goths and metallers. A distinction is evident in their relationship with certain young people from marginalized areas (referred to as 'whackers' or 'scobes', usually wearing tracksuits, football jerseys and/or Burberry and listening to rap/Eminem/Marley/Wolfe Tones).

Skaters do not perceive themselves as having enemies although relations with some other groups are not always friendly. Protests as such do not occur but conflict has developed with power holders in relation to the provision of a dedicated space for these young people to pursue their interests.

Main Activities, Attitudes, and Ideology

In addition to the obvious joy of partaking in a highly skilled activity the young people form strong peer groups and engage in risky activities. Regarding the political attitudes and ideology, the young people concerned seem to be not overly politicized in common with most young people in Ireland, bar an interest in issues such as global warming. They are primarily concerned with a cultural and recreational outlet for their interest; this has however led them to viewing the local democratic mechanisms as possible avenues for advancing their agenda.

Media, publicity, and reaction of the public

Skaters use blog sites and personal pages on the internet. They have also produced a number of video films; 'Anti-Typical' was produced by a peer group with no outside assistance whereas further video work has been produced through CUSP (see below) in conjunction with Frameworks Films.

Compared to other described youth scenes, Skaters are quite visible in the public. A number of thoroughfares in the City Centre have been colonized by young people and these are the main

visible sites of activity. The skaters also use a variety of sites such as the University in a covert manner; late at night and early in the morning. Reactions vary across time. The municipal authorities claim that they are progressing the issue of a skate park and threaten the young people with by-laws that will make skating in public areas illegal. The public tend in the main to view the activity as a harmless enough pastime for young people although some do decry the breakdown of law and order and cite skating as an example of degeneracy. The police tend to ignore skating unless it is interfering with public safety or causing a nuisance. Security guards in shopping centers/other sites tend to be the most active 'anti-skaters' and sometimes vigorously chase the young people away, inadvertently adding to the fun.

Contacts with public authorities/organizations and claims from authorities

The 'Cork Urban Skateboard Project' (CUSP) is affiliated to a radically orientated (for Ireland) local Youth Work Organization, Youth Action Cork. This allows the skaters a formal stake in local youth work and allows the organization to support them.

The skaters are intent on contesting the next round of municipal elections (2009) in order to get their concerns into a more public forum. They are realistic in believing that they will not succeed in getting a person elected but that they will mobilize young people away from the traditional parties and in so doing force these parties to note their concerns.

5.2.6 Conclusion

The ten examples from five European countries cover a broad range of youth culture categories. Most of the described and analyzed groups belong to ideological/political oriented youth scenes, but there are also sport oriented ones, media oriented ones, and fan cultures. Referring to Waechter's categorization of youth culture (2006), only one category is missing: none of participation country partners chose to include a musically oriented youth culture. However, the broad range of covered categories shows that youth cultural activities and political participation are strongly connected. In all scenes that have been described young people have certain beliefs and/ or concerns that make them different from other peers and other groups of society. They find ways how to express their concerns, and they produce and distribute their own media. All of them make themselves visible in public, though in very different ways. Some of the scenes described share their attempts to reclaim public space. The more political oriented ones have a more participatory approach and want the public spaces to be used for everyone whereas the skaters seem to be more focused on being able to use public space for the own purposes.

Also, the Cork Skaters represent the only scene whose members seem not to share the same political attitudes. This corresponds with Borden's description of skateboarders who at the same time points out the counter-cultural nature of skateboarding: As streetskating started in the 1980s and 1990s skateboarders look on the possibilities of modern architecture, leading to new ways of editing, mapping and recomposing the city. The act of streetskating is an implicit critique „of capitalism and architecture" (Borden, 2001: 2). While modern and capitalized cities create more "mono functional" places for housing, working and consuming, skateboarders look on the "form" of the architecture and use it for their other than the original functions. A bench to sit becomes an obstacle to "grind", or a handrail which provides security for the walk on the stairs is the most challenging object in the eyes of skateboarders. Not only in Cork young skaters become politically active in order to maintain or reclaim public space. For example, in Cologne the

skateboarders have found an organization and are fighting against the attempts of the city authorities to criminalize skateboarding in front of the cathedral which has been a favorite skate spot for decades.[16] Skateboarders do not see skate parks as an acceptable alternative but need real urban architecture for their performance and for their statement.

In contrast to the skateboarders in the fan culture example of the Ultras their members are grouped together by their political ideology. Not only in Italy the term "Ultras" encompasses different groups with different emphases (see e.g. Pilz & Völki, 2006) but very different groups within cities and countries and also across countries use the same forms of activism, of supporting their team and of being visible in public. They discuss the policies of the football associations and fight against commercialization (ibid.: 270). Whereas the Ultras have leftist and anti-fascist groups as well as right wing ones, all other scenes and movements analyzed express a common ideology. It is interesting and probably not accidental that most chosen scenes have alternative-leftist ideas that they follow and/ or develop. One may follow that among youth cultures those scenes are especially involved in participatory activities, probably also compared with young people in general, even though participation may not be meant to support the existing democratic political system. Some autonomous groups put forth new political and economic ideas and ways of living together. One may also follow that we, the researchers, are more likely to find explicit political youth scenes whereas the currently used concepts of participation make it hard to realize the political character of more "stylish" scenes, such as skateboarders and music oriented scenes, or fan cultures.

Young people in such scenes use everyday aesthetics to question and influence interpretations and ideas of normality (cf. Welniak, 2002: 42). They do not seek to participate in the "adult political world" and they do not ask for their desires and needs but throw their cultural forms of expression into the public. Acting like that, the adults do not have to be asked for their attention, they will spend attention to young people's cultural expressions. Coming back to our case studies, this applies for the skateboarders as well as for the Ultras. Young people have changed their youth cultural political behaviour. They do not demand discussions and arguments from adults or authorities but create a dispute by their performances and self presentations (cf. Ferchhoff, 2002: 12).

In general, young people in countercultural scenes use different ways of participation: traditional and non-traditional ones. We do not know about their turnout in elections but they organize protests and participate in demonstrations as well as in discussions and negotiations with local politicians. Some groups are formally (Republican groups) or informally (Ultras) associated with specific political factions. Other scenes introduce "new" forms of engagement: they occupy buildings and use public space for other purposes than it is expected from the public and public authorities. As the results of these case studies show, using traditional as well as non-traditional forms of participation is not a contradiction but usual practice.

The leftist and autonomous scenes do not only seem to participate most extensively using various forms of engagement, participation is also one of their main theoretical approaches. Their concept of "comprehensive participation" means the possibility and the desirability for everyone to be part of processes from the idea throughout its implementation. Instead of asking why young people are not interested in traditional politics anymore and trying to increase their traditional

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[16] http://www.dom-skateboarding-ev.de/

participation rates, one has to open the eyes for the young people's activities, and in taking their ideas into account, taking them for serious. Additionally, we have to consider accepting a new concept of participation as it is performed by young people in post-subcultural scenes. Their alternative acting and thinking which is expressed in different lifestyles, the emphasis on their "own" concepts and conducts of life, as well as their own, subversive practices might be regarded as political action. Those young people replace the political discourse with their forms of expression, and through everyday action they try to create their "own world" following their own ideas (cf. Welniak, 2002: 37).

5.3 Internet and informal political participation of young people

A new issue arisen from our research are impact and effects of Internet on informal political participation of young generations. This research field is relatively new, because most analyses aimed to highlight the impact of technology and new media on social and civic cultures were concentrated on adults, neglecting the specific needs of young people.

Before analyzing the core question of Internet and youth participation, it seems necessary to reflect on the relation among youth, Internet and youth culture. Nowadays is a matter of fact that youth and the culture they produce represent no more a regional or national phenomenon but a transnational one driven by Internet, which create universal networks of communication, information-sharing, teenage consumerism and identity politics. Since the Internet permits to bridge distance and language barriers, young people around the world are potentially able to link up in collaborative online discussions and projects and this fact is very fascinating for those of them, who are looking for new form of political and social engagement.

As testified in many youth research, the new generation is much more interested in specific universal political topics (human and animal rights, environmental, health and education questions) and social issue on local level (i.e. infrastructure for leisure activities) than in the traditional political expressions forms and the digital world permit them to network on contingent problems and to see in short the effects of their action, creating a virtual circle between action and engagement.

New Internet-based communications constitutes the tools to facilitate a pervasive diffusion of what we call youth culture and at the same time the arena in which youth find free place to renegotiate and reinvent in progress their individual and collective identity as independent social, cultural and political actors. Through the Internet young people find own lifestyles, combining cultural artefacts (cut-paste-mix) to assert their generational difference from the parental culture (Stevenson, 2001).

In our five countries, the general picture of young people's lack of interest in formal political and civic activities is fairly consistent, but some elements suggest that the 'space' of civil society is differently constituted in each of them. The role of political parties, NGOs, and autonomous social political movements are likely to be very variable. Different traditions and practices regarding political and civic activities together with different levels of tolerance for political dissent seem to be evident.

Each of these institutional differences together with the infrastructural (level of diffusion of broadband technology, free public Internet access, internet cafes, information and communication technology in schools etc.) and individual ones connected with age, gender, educational and

socio-economic background of young people are likely to influence the level and characteristics of political and/or civic participation among youth and the potential role of the Internet in this respect.

5.3.1 Some Data on Young people's Use of the Internet in Europe

The most recent European data design a picture in permanent evolution (a clear tendency towards an increasing use of Internet and, above all, of the Internet). The following differences may be underlined:

Concerning the age factor, while in 2006 nearly three quarters of individuals in the EU25 aged 16 to 24 (73%), and more than half of those aged 25 to 54 (54%), used the internet regularly, only a fifth of those aged 55 to 74 (20%) did so. While the gap in regular use between Member States ranged from one to two for 16-24 year olds (47% in Greece to 96% in the Netherlands) and one to three for 25-54 year olds (27% in Greece to 89% in Sweden), it reached one to fourteen for 55-74 year olds (4% in Greece to 56% in Denmark and Sweden) (Eurostat, November 2006). In Austria, data from the quarter 2007/3 shows, that 92% of 14- to 19-year olds use the Internet. Also in the age group of the 20- to 29-year olds the percentage of Internet use is 92% (Austrian Internet Monitor). In 2006 the use of the Internet at least once a week among the 16- to 24-years old young people was 55% in Italy, 59% in Ireland, 72% in Slovakia (Eurostat, November 2006). This data take into account the age of the youth and not the gender, and this is quite common in the current research because the focus concentrates more on the differences between old and new generations computer literacy than on the gender difference, even if also *gender* influences the access to the Internet. In a comparative study of 15 European countries, Rasanen (2006) finds that in the states studied, higher income, higher level of education and younger age were found to be rather similarly predictors of internet use across the EU, but at EU25 level in 2006 a higher proportion of men than women used the internet regularly (51% of men compared with 43% of women), and this was true for all Member States, although in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Finland the gap was only one or two percentage points (Eurostat, November 2006). Girls are even more disadvantaged in their access; their male peers have more access to computers and are more likely to have one of their own.

Considering the uses of the Internet, we can also point out important differences according to the education level: People with higher education use the internet significantly more often than people with a low education level. In France, while sending emails is a one of the major uses of Internet among young people, it only concerns 67% of the 16-24 years old with low education and 97% of the 16-24 years old with high formal education. The same contrasts can be observed regarding the use of Internet for obtaining information from public authorities' web sites or for interaction with public authorities.

To sum up, we can state that age, level of education and income are still the most significant predicting factors of Internet use in Europe among young people and in general.

5.3.2 The Internet and politics: a faceted relationship

In order to be able to evaluate the role of new media technologies for participative dynamics and for the civic involvement of youth, it is necessary to analyse those researches and studies which

examine - on the level of general population – the relationship between Internet, practices of digital participation and democracy. In the early years after the introduction of the new media, the features of the Internet have given many hopes with regards to their revitalizing potential for civic life and democracy: several investigations conducted in the last decade tried to detect whether these hopes are well-founded and which influence the Internet has been having on democracy and participation. These studies have reached mixed conclusions, pointing out a number of problems, which are primarily due to the relationship existing between the institutional settings and their audience, the concept of democracy and the function of the Internet, that need anyway to be addressed in order to be used as democracy-facilitating tool.

Nowadays there is a growing literature[17] that considers the Internet as a new arena for political participation, but at the same time many are the researchers, for whom the Internet itself doesn't reflect a fundamentally new age of political participation but only a powerful medium that people will use to fit traditional political behaviours (Hill and Hughes, 1998).

Recent literature focuses on the new possibilities opened for democratic mobilisation, but Bimber (1998) affirms that there is no empirical evidence of the relationship between increased communication/information and political engagement. He argues that the Internet could produce 'accelerated pluralism', modifying the structure of political power but not giving rise to a new era of democracy (cf. Aydemir, 2007; Brlek & Turnšek, 2007)

Until now it seems impossible to give an unequivocal answer to the question of the role of the Internet in enhancing and revitalizing political participation, both in its traditional forms such as party membership, voting etc. and in its more informal dimensions.

5.3.3 The current scientific debate

In a classification attempt, the current literature permits to highlight three different attitudes in facing this question:

- The pessimistic claim that the Internet reinforces the voices of the powerful, strengthening inequality for those nations, groups and individuals lacking the resources and motivation to take advantage of the new structure of opportunities. In the early days, hoping the Internet would become universally available, cyberoptimists celebrated it as the new democratising technology, able to bring people together in a virtuous realm where one's offline social status lost its significance. The digital divide was simply meant as having or not access to the Internet, but very soon it became clear that infrastructural access was necessary however not sufficient to take full advantage of the Internet use. The concept of access has also been broadened to include other factors such as computer literacy, interest or motivation (Katz and Rice, 2002) as well as economic, social and cultural capital required for use (Murdock and Golding, 2004).

Considering the global diffusion of new media, Norris (2001) makes a comparison between the digital divide and the communication media divide and comes to the conclusion that the diffusion patterns of the Internet in various regions of the world closely reflect those of old media. With

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[17] In this respect see the detailed analysis of the existing literature on this topic delivered by *Project CIVICWEB - D4 Report: Young People, the Internet and Civic Participation: State of the Art Report*, Institute of Education, University of London, London 2007.

regards to social groups, however, empirical evidence suggests that there the consumers of traditional media differ significantly from those of the new media: while Internet users tend to be young, newspaper readership among young people is more and more diminishing (Thurlow and Milo, 1993; Lauf, 2001). Besides that, being the Internet the medium of choice par excellence it becomes even easier for disengaged people to tune out from political life (Norris, 2001).

- The optimistic (or hyperbolic and unrealistic, see Hacker and van Dijk, 2000) claim that the Internet transforms governance as we know it and restores levels of mass political participation, providing new forms of horizontal and vertical communication facilitating social engagement and enriching deliberative democracy thanks to the Internet's interactive and potentially widely accessible environment where representatives and represented can get in touch without mediation. Such technologies are expected to contribute to the constantly changing nature of the communicative relations between political elites and constituencies. On a more specific level, the argument is that Internet's can be utilised to increase political engagement and participation by executing or promoting democratic processes online by, for example, dissemination of political party programs, publication of policy results.

- The sceptical claim that Internet reflects "politics as usual". The interactivity, breaking down the one-to-many communication model of the traditional mass media and making 'multidirectional communication' possible according to some experts would be the truly revolutionary aspect of this new medium (McMillan, 2002: 165), but as Castells pointed out neither citizens, nor politicians take advantage of it as much as they could, therefore 'the Internet cannot provide a technological fix to the crisis of democracy' (Castells, 2001: 156).

5.3.4 Institutional use of the Internet as a means of involvement

It is a matter of fact that the Internet is more and more used by the institutions in order to communicate specifically with young people. A lot of European municipalities and local authorities have created websites dedicated to them, but these have more an informative nature than an interactive one: they aim at informing young people about subjects such as culture, leisure and sports, training programs, exchange programs, funding possibilities rather than at creating a public debate with them. They also propose at theoretical level, contents closed to civic education (what citizenship is, rights and duties of citizens, different political institutions), but they do not seem to give the young people the opportunities to put into practice these concepts (Shakuntala, 2008).

Moreover, the 'sceptical' have suggested that the Internet is unlikely to have much impact on political institution since it is not really about politics, but it is dominated by the consumer' interests of sex, sport and shopping. (R.Gibson, P. Nixon and S. Ward, 2003: 4-5).

Despite many studies that try to look for the potential of the Internet to increase political awareness and civic participation, until now there is few evidence that the Internet could give power to the powerless or give marginalized groups access to major social power (Dahlgren, 2003; Collin, 2008).

If it is true that at mass level the Internet does not succeed in mobilizing the disengaged, it could be also true that "politics as usual" may be altered by digital technologies, modifying the balance of resources among the political institutions, reducing the costs of gathering information and communicating messages in favour to smaller and fringe groups. These minor realities have

difficulties being heard through the conventional channels of traditional mass media, but are able to achieve through the Internet flexibility, skills and innovative capacity to produce new coalitions able of arising interventions and critical engagement around specific events locally, nationally and internationally.

5.3.5 Young people on the Internet

Some scholars have highlighted the increasing online presence of youth, underlining that the Web as a huge informational and interactive resource on a wide variety of topics, including civic affairs, represents for many young people an important window on the world, which offers them a broader life perspective. Beyond informational use, youth civic websites open doors to access and participation in many different kinds of civic projects, but it has not to be forgotten that, as a source for learning civic skills, values and behaviours, websites would be more effective in conjunction with traditional discussion forums and participative mechanisms.

Not much is known about whether online political sites actually stimulate or serve merely as a virtual substitute for real civic and political engagement. Lash (1996) has suggested that the Internet has lead to a redefinition of daily life for young people, creating a sort of interpenetration of these two apparently separated realms (online and offline). Therefore it would be necessary to reformulate the concept of civic participation and the modalities in which the Internet impact on the involvement in young people's civic life.

Montgomery, Gottlieb-Robles and Larson (2004) have recently carried out a large-scale research with young persons, looking at the nature of their engagement with the Internet and found out that young persons are not merely consumers of digital contents: they are actors and creators of this new technology, creating content themselves, blogs, resources, connection among individuals and organisations. The three researchers present ten youth civic engagement categories which help to materialize civic participation or engagement into the following segments (Montgomery, Gottlieb-Robles and Larson, 2004: 18-19):

1. Volunteering: providing live or virtual opportunities to share skills.

2. Voting: encouraging youth to vote and/or register to vote.

3. Youth philanthropy: providing information on making charitable donations.

4. Engagement with the local community: connecting youth to resources and organizations in local communities.

5. Global issues and international understanding: providing space and means for collaborative discussions and projects on an international level.

6. Online youth journalism and media production: encouraging, and providing space for youth to comment on and analyze the world.

7. Access and equity: addressing issues of inequality, often on a local level of access.

8. Tolerance and diversity: focusing on diversity, multiculturalism, and inequality.

9. Positive youth development: providing resources to help youth deal with challenges.

10. Youth activism: providing a tool for young activists to network and share information.

A meaningful exemplification of digital informal politics comes from advocacy networks and alternative social movements, which have adapted these new resources (online discussion lists, bulletin boards, newsgroups and community network, as well as protest activities, direct action campaigns and civil disobedience coordinated via Internet, action against copyright legislation by file-sharing) to communicate, organise, and mobilise global coalitions around issues (political consumerism, world fair trade, human rights, globalisation, protest against monopolistic positions of software producer using only 'free' software etc.). But also, and above all, at a local level, it is possible to find attempts of transforming politics as we know it, facilitating public discussion, trying to develop interactive bottom-up formats and stressing the interactive many to many and one to many features of Internet communications, its networking and organizational role, its almost unlimited supply of information.

In the following we will report some results of existing empirical investigations or case studies on participative use and applications of Internet at local, national or transnational level concerning informal youth networks and young individuals.

5.3.6 Youth activism and 'alternative' informal networks

Internet-based civic activism is one of the most relevant modalities of youth participation in the net. In the recent years the Internet has emerged as a stage for some forms of political protest, including civil disobedience, sabotage, and virtual blockades, sit-ins, site hijacking, and a range of other activities (Brunsting and Postmes, 2002: 527–528), some legal and some illegal.

Among the first, the principal is the use of websites, which include technologies of website construction and presentation, such as internal hyperlinks, PDF downloads, online shopping, email links, mailing list, RealPlayer audio and video extracts from public and commercial broadcast media. Among the second, we count viral campaigning, in which mass and chain e-mails are sent to Internet users and hactivism resulting from the intersection of three divergent currents: hacking, informational societies and modern social protest and resistance (Jordan and Taylor, 2004: 2).

The findings of the European Civicweb project suggest that a majority of sites are means for offline participation rather than providing online participation tools. The authors show that around 10% of young people are interested in civic and political sites. Nevertheless, these young people tend to be older than other respondents; girls, young women and religious youth are more often represented in this group. Three factors appear to explain visits to political and civic websites: social justice, insitutial politics and youth. Forwarding emails, and signing online petitions were reported to be the most popular form of online participation. The authors also clearly assert that:

> *"Participation in offline and online activities turns out to be strongly positively correlated, demonstrating that online and offline are complementary to each other, rather that substitutive." (June 2008, p. 8).*

Yet, there are country differences with lower online participation in Central European countries (in the study Hungary and Slovenia) and a high rate in the Netherlands (while Spain, UK and Turkey in between) (Bognar & Aydemir, 2007).

We could find several recent examples of independent social action movements (anti-globalists, movements in favour of people deprived of fundamental rights, international NGOs...) with a

reticular organisation that use the Internet to facilitate their internal communication, to keep their members informed, to present themselves to outsiders via homepages and to communicate with other groups, creating interpersonal and 'deterritorialized' networks, reflecting a strategic reaction to the the 'deterritorialized networks' of transnational capital. These movements are issue based, serve a local community or act as umbrella national or international campaigning centres. They constitute off-centred structures, with porous frontiers, refusing the delegation to spokespersons, encouraging various belongings and allowing certain autonomy to their different units.

An example, at different level of development but common to our five countries, is Indymedia (http://indymedia.org), an open platform enabling the activists to orchestrate coordinated civic and political events with precision and at considerably low cost thanks to a powerful and versatile set of digital tools. The activity of Indymedia is not limited to young people; however, it is safe to say that they represent the majority of the activists. First established in 1999 as part of the Seattle days of protest, it proved its efficiency in relaying images, audio recordings and written accounts of the mass blockade (Weingartner, 2001 in Wright, 2004, p. 82). The Seattle movement was able to generate hundreds of separate national demonstrations, all using identical downloaded flyers, posters, and press releases to convey the same message to the media. For the WTO protests the Internet played a central role in the campaign, equipping groups with new digital tools for planning strategy, coordinating activities, promoting press coverage, monitoring their impact, and sharing their successes. Today this network consists of 150 Independent Media Centres covering all continents. It is based on a strategy of open publishing aiming at reforming the media landscape by eliminating the editorial function and permitting to any person to publish their contributions (Couldry & Curran, 2003, p. 46), providing in this way alternative information about current political and social issues both at international and local level in contrast to mainstream and often monopolized media. To understand the power that young people attribute to Indymedia it's very interesting to read the words of Michal a young Slovakian activist, who announced (2004) the intention of his group to found the Slovakian website of the network:

> *"Make your own media! That's the message we want to spread and put into practice. Not the only one, of course - there are other reasons for us to start Indymedia in Slovakia, like ballancing the distorted image of "anti-globalization movement", which got a pretty narrow and low publicity in slovak mainstream media. But on the other side, our interest stays connected to local events and issues. (...) Also, there is a humble but strong hope that we could help to be a "meeting point" of separate activities and groups which operate here in the fields of activism, human rights, labour etc. Many of them are diffused and not connected, in the sense that they've all got their own websites which don't cooperate, so in the end you've got some internet resources, but "disappearing" since not many people is willing to surf all of them to get an alternative to corporate media (...). Internet is the medium of choice, because many other are under control of state bureaucracy (almost as anywhere else in the world where tight laws prevent diversity in radio or TV stations). We think that millions watching the same TV news everyday at 19.00 is a perverse but sadly true image of a media landscape, which got so much controlled that people gave up their imagination and do not even think of alternatives. Feeding people with the same information equals to channelling the same reality. We think that there are many other options to be explored. Indymedia will be our experiment as to how.*

> *that's all for now*

> *Michal http://archives.lists.indymedia.org/new-imc/2004-April/005032.html*

5.3.7 Local level Networks

Expressing discontent is not the only form of informal participation that the Internet offers to young people. Issues affecting local communities that have mobilised protest now tend to have a website detailing their cause and concerns.

For example, the matter of electricity pylons in the Cobh area of County Cork in Ireland has generated public disquiet and protest; a dedicated website (http://www.cobhonline.com/nomorepylons/) exists to promote this movement.

An example in Italy is the website of the Calabrian youth association "Ammazzateci Tutti" ("Now Kill Us All") – formed 2005 by fed-up young people fighting against the 'Ndrangheta' (Calabrian Mafia), after the murder of the vice-president of the Calabria Region in Locri (Reggio Calabria). Ammazzateci Tutti holds regular demonstrations designed to pressure the Italian state into taking action against the 'Ndrangheta, mobilising in Reggio di Calabria thousands into the streets and continuing to form chapters across both Calabria and throughout Italy. This was made possible by spreading their message via the Internet: the main information channel among the activists is the forum on the web site (http://www.ammazzatecitutti.org), counting until today more than 3.000 registered users. The web site enjoy between 45.000 and 60.000 daily contacts.

The Internet constitutes also a way for young people to engage in cooperative activity, a mode of participation that according to Verba and Nie (1972) is not strictly political in the sense of aiming to influence the government' decisions, but more civic as it implies collective activities aimed to solve common problems (active membership in community problem-solving organisations or collective working on local problems). It can be seen as a valuable mechanism for civic mobilisation, as it is cheap to use, provides access to comprehensive archives, permits exchange of large amounts of information, is difficult to censor and provides new ways of mobilizing through peer-to-peer networks.

Local interest groups also use the Internet as a communication and information tool to discuss common interests and keep abreast of events. As with national (and international) networks these groupings do not conform to traditional models of organisations. They tend to be open and non-hierarchical with no fixed membership except for a handful of enthusiasts that maintain the site(s). According to Jasper and Poulsen (1995) and Rodgers and Gauntlett (2003) there are two principal ways in which people can be politically involved: through existing social networks - through conviction of friends and acquaintances, or through moral shocks – major events that spur people into action, such as the above mentioned murder in Locri (Reggio Calabria) or the electricity pylons in the Cobh area of County Cork. In both cases the Internet reveals a good medium to spread information through the people mobilising their engagement towards a common action.

One has not to forget, however, what Lazarsfeld and Merton ([1948]1972) have defined the narcotic dysfunction of mass media: the feeling that only being informed is enough thereby actually diverting from any other forms of action. The online civic engagement could be not immune to this risk.

5.3.8 Young people in blog and personal page: between identity and engagement

In recent years a new opening of the public space to non-professional actors has been created through the auto-publication websites, the alternative media and the development of a political and journalistic blogosphere. Indeed Internet itself has undergone significant transformations during this time becoming, in this regard, a more participatory and democratic medium. Innovative forms of communicative design, such as blogs, wikis, and social networking portals have emerged as central elements of the net, becoming rather widespread meanwhile among young people, and often producing a mixture of personal and political expressive forms: the subjective affirmation (first person utterance, expression of emotions, vivacity of the exchanges), the opening of the expertise carried by individuals or by various collectives (more factual information, verifications) and new forms of discussion (commented information, collective dimension of the argumentation), often connected with technoactivistic forms aiming not only at democratic self-expression and networking, but also global media critique and journalistic socio-political intervention (Kahn and Kellner, 2004).

Fluckiger (2006) analyses blogs as instruments in targeted activities and as the outcome of a constructive activity by users. The author shows that for the young people concerned the meaning of blogs evolves along with the development of their sociability and the construction of their identities. The youngest ones use blogs above all as instruments for incorporating the norms and values of juvenile culture, while the older ones create blogs as tools for expressing themselves within the group.

Concerning the connection of blogging and politics, in France the debates on the European Constitution project before the referendum in 2005 were strongly anchored in this new form of public space. Moreover, offering a lot of details about the events in the French suburbs, the blogs represented a very important tool of expression and communication for the young inhabitants of the deprived areas during the urban riots in November 2005. Youth post and comments were upon the political reaction, the inner suburbs, the problems of the youngsters and the way in which traditional media were talking about the riots. In its turn, the information delivered in these blogs was commented by the traditional media.

In this respect, it should be noted that there is a fluid border between internet use which is characterised as civic or political and more private, personal and mundane internet for which sites as MYSPACE or ICQ are typical examples. Here, young people primarily present themselves with their likings or dislikings, their music or fashion style, they expose pictures of themselves partying with friends etc. However, they also use the sites to upload own music, own video clips or mobilise peers for specific activities. While already these activities may be interpreted as participation in terms making statement sin the public they may shift quickly into definitely political activities – such as circulating activities during riots (see below) or as rating their school teachers. In Germany, for example the site spickmich.de has been prosecuted upon initiative of a school teacher who claimed against being rated by her pupils on the web according to – from her

perspective – unfair formulations and criteria. The site has its own rules – only pupils from the respective class are allowed to participate – and how this should happen in order to prevent abuse. As referred to in Part 3 of this report, such issues are normally not covered by pupil participation in school whereby the internet – and especially mundane youth cultural sites which are not explicitly political or civic – provide a low-threshold opportunity.

5.4   Urban riots as young people's participation?

The discussion of what participation is and what forms of young people's expressions may be recognised as participatory activities has been led throughout the thematic working group process. With regard to most of the above mentioned counter cultures, there is broad consensus about their participatory character. Their forms of participation may be alternative, sometimes also illegal, but as regards themes and issues they stick to the political agenda (peace, freedom, environment, poverty etc.). At the same time there are subcultures – or rather configurations of collective actions rather then well-defined subcultures – which do not have an explicitly political self-understanding but emerge from, conflict with authorities or other groups. In the following we will reflect to what extent 'urban riots' – which is mainly used for violent conflicts between disadvantaged social groups such as ethnic minority or immigrant youth and the state authorities – are a case of youth participation or not. In other words, one could consider if these phenomenon should only be considered as part of youth delinquency or if they should also be analysed as expression of young people's involvement in public affairs. To analyse this question, as a first example may serve the French urban riots from November 2005 could be used as a good example.

The event that was at the beginning of these demonstrations was the death of two young persons with a migrant background in Clichy-sous-Bois, the 27th of October 2005. These two young persons thought that they were hounded by the police force and they decided to hide themselves in a current transformer. They were electrocuted and died. Nicolas Sarkozy, at the time, Minister of the Interior (which means in charge of the police) expressed himself on this event and affirmed that a high level of severity was necessary to struggle delinquent attitudes, in particular against the "racailles" (a very pejorative term to designe delinquent young people). This drama and the official reactions led to a wave of urban riots that were exceptional both for their scale and their duration (most of big and medium size cities of the country were affected and a "state of emergency" -état d'urgence- was declared the 8th of November), even if one compares them with the most emblematic riots of the 80's and 90's (almost 10 000 cars were burned and 3 000 young people were arrested). Most of the actions were isolated (even if the TV played certainly a role by giving examples to young people) but some of the riots were clearly organised and prepared through cell phones and blogs.

If we now analyse the literature that was dedicated to these urban riots, we can underline the existence of two tensions in the sociological debate: the question to know whether the young people who were involved in the riots were a specific group of young people or whether they were representative of all their generation; the question to know whether this movement could be considered as a political movement or whether it was only the expression of youth violence and delinquency.

Concerning the first aspect, we would adopt Hugues Lagrange and Marco Oberti's analysis (2006) when they underline the complexity of a situation that mixes factors of young people's

growing precariousness and of modalities of ethnic (young people with North or Western backgrounds face multiple forms of discriminations) and spatial (the relegation of migrant populations in deprived areas) segregation. Nevertheless, considering young people's precariousness, considering the anti-CPE – a special measure to help young people to enter the labour marker- demonstrations that took place during the spring 2006, we think, together with François Dubet (2006) that these riots can be seen as a sign of the awareness of a whole generation of the difficulties it will encounter in their routes to adulthood and in their future. The results of the study led by the Fondation pour l'innovation politique (Stellinger, 2008), that show that French young people are the most pessimistic of Europe, tend to confirm this assertion.

About the second aspect, our answer is more delicate.

On the one hand, some young people who were interviewed after the riots tended to explain that they were mobilised because the media and in particular the TV showed what was going on in Clichy and they just wanted to do the same, to be part of the movement. These attitudes tended to reinforce the government's discourse according to which these young people were well known delinquents, most often in irregular situation (which became to be incorrect when young people's files were examined by the justice).

On the other hand, most of young people who took part in the riots expressed their feeling of injustice, their awareness of the social inequalities they have to face in all the dimensions of their everyday life (Mucchielli & Le Gaoziou, 2006). They also insisted on the fact that they were French young people but that they had to face multiple forms of discriminations. Under this viewpoint, one can affirm that the urban riots were a highly politicised movement: young people expressed their expectation of a better citizenship (both symbolic and material) and their refusal, not only to be poor, but also to be despised, ill-considered, not respected, and deprived from citizen's rights (Sala Pala, 2006). As a matter of fact, we can consider that, even if young people were not always perfectly aware of the political dimension of their involvement, they were clearly expressing a political rebellion.

Gerard Mauger (2006) proposed to talk in their case of a "proto-political rebellion" and Didier Lapeyronnie (2006) of a primitive rebellion.

> *"The riot is clearly infrapolitical, marked by the incapacity of a poor and marginal population to access to the political system and by the dependence toward the system. Violence is both a rational and efficient means of pressure and a means of protestation against an unbearable situation. But the riot is also clearly suprapolitical. It refers to the fundamental values of the society, it lays on the affirmation of the moral superiority of a 'we' victim of injustice, and here again it signs the refusal of a deleterious system that keep people from living" (p. 446).*

If we adopt this twofold consideration (urban riots as the expression of a generation and as a political message) it becomes clear that urban riots can be considered as a form of political participation.

As another example may serve the conflicts around the 'Rütli-Schule' in Berlin in March 2006. It started with an open letter of the teachers to the regional government in which the situation of a school (a 'Hauptschule' which belongs to the lowest track of the selectively differentiated German school system) attended by more than 80% pupils from immigrant backgrounds with a high level of everyday violence was described as no longer manageable. While the teachers complained about being understaffed and about a lack of social workers in the school, they on the one hand criticised the hierarchically differentiated German school system which failed to

provide their pupils any career perspectives. On the other hand, they took up the underclass discourse by blaming immigrant families for not caring about the future of their children. This open letter created a major interest by the media which in turn provoked violent reactions on the side of the pupils once their school was surrounded by journalists, cameras and the police. In fact, it was reported that some of the young males pretended violence on demand of TV reporters.

The public discourse in the media focussed on the failed integration policy whereby immigrant children do not succeed in school. They took up the distinction between 'us' and 'the others' in the open letter as well as referring to an everyday climate of violence and crime rather than analysing the relation between marginalisation and the opportunity of becoming visible through the public interest (Höfel, 2007). In fact, their behaviour may be interpreted as offensive stigma management for which – in some cases – any kind of visibility is better than none.

According to Stevens, Bur and Young participation needs to be seen as a relation between those members of society who already have power and those individuals who want to extent their influence:

> *"This process is dialectical in that it will involve conflict." (Stevens et al., 1999: 7)*

If we consider that individualisation and fragmentation in unequal society may case constellations of anomy, that is the growing discrepancy between socially accepted norms and life styles and the availability of means and ways to achieve them, one could therefore argue that participation must be conflictual if it shall not contribute to the exclusion of those who cannot relate their lives with the dominant implications of citizenship.

5.5 Towards an un-biased agentic perspective towards young people's participation

In this section we want to reflect if and how the concept of participation can be re-formulated in a way which opens the perspective beyond existing institutionalised forms, structures and meanings in away which starts from young people's agency.

The question for the relationship between participation and agency may appear as a tautology inasmuch as participation is often being interpreted as the acting out of the citizenship status. It refers directly to the duality of structure and agency as conceptualised by Giddens (1984) according to which structure (e.g. citizenship status) facilitates agency (e.g. civic engagement) while agency contributes to structuration (changes in the meaning of and the rights and responsibilities included in citizenship). Emirbayer and Mische (1998) explain the relationship between structure and agency by means of a temporal perspective. They argue that agency links past, present and future: actions emerge from and are embedded within existing experiences, routines and environmental structures – that means results of processes of structuration in the past; at the same time; however, actions also imply an imagined future which includes the imagined consequences of own intervention; this interrelation is acted out in present situations. This understanding of agency which Emirbayer and Mische refer to as "relational pragmatic" is highly instructive for understanding participation in terms of "citizenship as practice" (Lister, 2003) or "lived citizenship" (Hall et al., 1999). In fact, participation may be a way of qualifying agency. It may help to distinguish between the fact, that every situation is actively and subjectively perceived and interpreted, decisions are made – although choices may be restricted –

and thereby structures are actualised, and agency which is endowed with the qualities of citizenship, especially individual choice (cf. Isin & Wood 1999; Walther et al., 2006).

It is very helpful to follow Ruth Lister (2003) in her distinction between citizenship as status from citizenship as practice as she argues that – especially if referring to young people or immigrants – individuals may act as citizens without holding full citizenship status while others may hold full citizenship status without acting as citizens. This refers to the necessity not only to criticise token forms of participation but also to discuss the culture of participation (e.g. Riepl & Wintersberger, 1999).

Here, we are confronted with the **normative ideas** of how young people should participate.

To put it in an exaggerated way, young people should behave politically in ways that support and legitimate the political system (notwithstanding the crisis of democracy), or young people should participate locally in ways that do not call the adults' aims and strategies into question. Dalton (2007) refuses Putnam's diagnosis of a decline in engagement as biased towards existing bourgeois norms but points to different participation structures which contribute to changes in the social structure in a long-term perspective. Instead of general decline, the theme is transformation as a shift in the repertoire of social engagement. The identifiable reduction in specifically traditional forms of participation, it is claimed, is compensated for by the expansion and diversity of "modern" forms. The consequence is described as a move from "duty-based citizenship" (voting, paying taxes, obeying the law) to "engaged citizenship", which refers to independent, assertive behaviour and concern for others (ibid.: 4). The theory is based on norms of civil engagement, the former stressing the obligations and responsibilities of the citizen in roles perceived as involving limited participation, while the latter comprises an expansive view of civil activity which actively seeks to express political preferences which cannot be separated from individual life styles and identities (cf. Isin & Wood, 1999).

Indeed, it has been argued (e.g. Stolle & Hooghe, 2005) that the exclusive focus on traditional models conceals much of the new forms of participation, styles of political expression, new political issues and political targets. Instead, the notion of sub-politics comes into play which is orientated towards the life-world of citizens. While the notion of politics traditionally used in political science is linked to the idea of an institutionally constituted political community (polity), political programmes (policy) and power relationships (politics), sub-politics do take place outside political and corporatist systems and involve not only social and collective actors but also individuals who claim power to shape their societal environment (Beck, 1993). One example for this shift of boundaries is the increasing political weight of consumers in the market. It has been suggested that the exclusive focus on economic benefit may tend to dissolve among producers as well as consumers and open up space for a knowledge-based ethics in the production, distribution and consumption of goods. In this context consumers and producers would transfer certain characteristics and obligations of their citizen's role to their role as participants in the market (Stehr, 2007: 305).

In fact, it is almost impossible to separate the analytical meaning of participation from it's the meaning of democratic participation. Of course, from the perspective of policy and practice there is a dilemma how to deal with "negative participation" which violates principles of democracy, freedom and tolerance such as involvement in racist and right wing scenes. This question has also been problematised in the framework of the CIVICWEB project on Internet-based participation (CIVICWEB, 2007). However, while such orientations must in many instances be understood as

strategies of coping with uncertainty, risk or denied recognition, they still are forms of participation, even if a narrower traditional concept is applied. They refer to issues officially accepted as political and – apart from illegal and violent activities which however do neither account for all individuals nor for all groups – they rely on formalised ways of membership and expression.

The conceptualisation of citizenship as practice provides a link to the biographical perspective which is necessary in reconstructing and understanding individuals' agency over their life time (cf. Pohl et al., 2007). With regard to the extent to which young people have active influence over the objectives, settings and forms of their transitions into the labour market, the YOYO-project conceptualised participation as "biographical self-determination". This means, having the possibilities of using collective social structures (institutions) for constructing the own biography on the basis of choice (Walther et al., 2006).

Such a biographical view on participation relates citizenship to the subjective process of identity building which under conditions of late modernity has to be seen as a lifelong process of identity work (Isin & Wood, 1999; cf. Keupp et al., 1999). In order to function in the sense of relating individuals to their wider community, state and society citizenship status – as a a legally fixed set of rights and responsibilities – depends on individuals' identification processes; on the grounds of belonging to the community and/or because they agree to the rights and responsibilities as appropriate and fair. This in turn requires that the rights are relevant for their achieving their life plans and their everyday coping strategies and that responsibilities are experiences as manageable without being overburdening (cf. Reutlinger, 2005; Böhnisch & Schröer, 2008).

The perspective on citizenship as practice implies to leave participation open for subjective meaning in the context of individualised biographies. In fact, the decisive question between 'real' and token participation needs to be extended to the contents and issues of participation. This means to put emphasis to the White Paper's definition "decisions which concern them" rather than restricting it to issues of "community life" which are not necessarily subjectively and biographically relevant. Extending participation to such 'hard' policy issues requires an integrated concept of participation which connects recognition of identities and redistribution of resources – that is of individual and collective participation. It combines a (social and youth) policy perspective with a pedagogical perspective of learning as appropriation and identity work under late modern conditions of uncertainty and insecurity. According to Reutlinger the relationship between participation and young people's biographical coping strategies requires taking on a space perspective – and especially to locate them in everyday life settings rather than in institutional "containers" which are detached from real life and where participation cannot be endowed with subjective meaning (Reutlinger, 2005).

Attempts to increase youth participation would therefore profit from a basic discussion how society, communities and individuals are prepared to open up spaces in which the equal participation of different generations can take place respecting and valuing the otherness of each other and building on it through communication and cooperation. Experiences of being taken seriously, of mutual respect and cooperation as well as an honest sharing of power seem to be the most basic ingredient for the empowerment of young citizens. It implies the development of motivation and self-efficacy.

On a theoretical level, a perspective which avoids the short-comings and reductions of current approaches is Nancy Fraser's work on the politics of needs interpretation (not only consulting

people but including them in interpreting the findings of consultations) and of participatory parity (balancing redistribution and recognition) (Fraser, 1989; 1997; Fraser & Honneth, 2003).

An important point would therefore be to analyse different discourses in which participation has different functions and to see what this means in practice (in terms of really 'empowering' individuals for participation; see especially Barnes et al., 2007). There is some debate, especially in qualitative research, about the involvement of those who are being 'researched'; both for ethical and epistemological reasons (Argyris et al., 1985). While such approaches may be subsumed under action research, participation becomes more and more common in the context of evaluation research: users are not only asked about their experiences but increasingly also involved in the research activities (Ray & Pohl, 2006; Barnes et al., 2007). The question is actually what happens with the findings – who interprets them? This refers back to Nancy Fraser's 'politics of needs interpretation' (1989).Consequently, a broad definition of participation needs to include all activities of young people as potentially participatory which are carried out in the public and of which they are at least aware of being public. And – following the YOYO project (Walther et al., 2006) – it needs to include young people's identity work, biographical construction and coping strategies. They need to be seen as attempts to take control over their lives in the context of public institutions such as youth policy and youth services, education, labour market policies or welfare.

Pat Leahy & Andreas Walther

Chapter 6

Youth participation and agency in comparative perspective

The introduction of this report posed the two key questions:

1. Which forms and conditions of participation (both initiated by public actors and emerging from young people's own activities) contribute to young people's recognition, improve their position as co-citizens and are likely to increase their influence on their own lives in the context of their communities? This question relates to current European discourses according to which young people's participation is necessary for both *social integration* and *democracy.* At the same time it is based on the assumption that individual agency requires enabling institutions and procedures.

2. Which forms and conditions of participation (both initiated by public actors and emerging from young people's own activities) are attractive for young people? To what extent and under what conditions do young people subjectively feel active as citizens? This question relates to the perspective that from young people's position neither democracy nor social integration are ends in themselves. They balance their responsibilities against their subjective *identities*; assess them according to their *biographical* matching and to the extent to which they contribute to their everyday life coping strategies.

In correspondence to the overall perspective of 'Youth – Actor of Social Change' these questions have been formulated in relation to *social change*. Social change is conceptualised as resulting from the interrelationship of structure and agency which has lead to an *individualisation* of society and human life courses. The modern perspectives of democracy and social integration are the results of this individualisation process inasmuch as they problematise and organise the relationship between individual and society in modern societies. At the same time individualisation affects and challenges democracy and social integration, and undermines existing institutions.

Therefore, the research perspective has focussed on the tension between existing institutionalised forms of participation and new processes, mechanisms and activities which are claimed to be participatory by their protagonists or to share some central aspects of participation. This explains why particular attention has been paid to *culture* in order to analyse changing forms and meanings of participatory practice. It also makes clear the need to highlight *learning* in order to analyse how existing institutions try to educate young people towards certain forms of participation in relation to what young people actually learn about their influence in society.

Finally, this report has been written from a comparative perspective involving research teams collecting data regarding youth participation in Austria, France, Ireland, Italy and Slovakia. This comparative perspective allows us to distinguish general aspects of youth participation in late

modern societies from country-specific factors and thereby to increase reflexivity in both research and policy making.

This conclusion chapter is structured as follows. It first summarises and discusses the country-specific information from a comparative analytical perspective. Thereafter it discusses the key policy requirements that the participation of young people raises, and also the dimension of 'attractiveness' versus 'unattractiveness' for young people in existing policies.

Finally, it will conclude by reviewing to what extent the research on the analysis of youth participation contributes to the analysis of young people's agency and social change.

In most aspects, we have stepped onto new ground inasmuch as that youth participation is paradoxically over-emphasised in public discourses yet at the same time relatively under-researched. As UP2YOUTH could not engage in empirical research we have identified the various existing research gaps which will be highlighted throughout this concluding chapter.

6.1 Youth participation in comparative perspective

The information on youth participation which we have collected with regarding the selected five countries partly derives from European statistics such as EUROSTAT, European surveys such as the EUYOUPART study and from other comparative research such as the IARD study, the All-European study on pupils' participation in school and the YOYO study on the potential of participation of young people's transitions to the labour market.

The information collected tentatively covers the areas of youth councils, pupils' and students' councils, the organisation of civic education in school and non-formal education in youth work. The contextual factors regarding national youth policy structures and the way how these aspects relate to comparative typologies such as models of welfare regimes and transitions regimes are also encompassed. We now summarise the information on a national basis through brief country portraits.

Austria appears to contain the most sustainable context of young people's participation amongst these five countries. Youth councils and pupil/student councils benefit from a legal framework which prioritises representative forms of participation and which, to some extent, includes forms of co-decision making. Every second young person is a member of an organisation, usually in leisure time and recreational oriented settings whilst every fourth young person is involved in voluntary activities. Despite these spaces for participation, the most relevant form of political activity (apart from voting) is participation in an online forum rather than being active in parties, trade unions or NGOs. As regards young people's education for, and support in, participation civic education is a mandatory school subject. Despite this obligatory foundation it remains unclear as to what extent the cross-curricular establishment is a strength or weakness.

Professional youth work relies on a distinct social work profile in open youth work while associative youth work depends largely on volunteers. In sum, youth participation in Austria seems well-organised which both facilitates and restricts engagement at the same time within institutional boundaries. At the same time counter cultures experience institutional pressure (see Chapter 5, pp. 81-101). This degree of organisation seems to prevail at national and regional level (including schools). The Austrian case studies (see Annex, pp. 159-169) suggest that local

provision of participatory opportunities heavily depend on the political priorities of local governments.

In *France* youth councils account for the local, the department and the national level although less sustainably institutionalised than in Austria.

Student councils are restricted to secondary schools and have minimal impact on the organisation of school life. The fact that school headmasters are present in council sessions suggests a paternalistic approach. This is also reflected through the stressing of legal instruction as part of civic education, and by a youth work model of socio-cultural animation in which (at least as regards its traditions) the organisation of 'positive' leisure time activities dominates over the provision of open spaces.

From the young people's side the degree of organisation is lower than in Austria. Only one fourth of French young people are members of any organisation in which cultural activities and arts play a major role. A mere one in eight is engaged in voluntary activities. The preference for taking part in demonstrations can be interpreted either as a resentment against a dominating paternalistic approach (which is reflected by a connotation of participation with alternative forms of political activity) or as an expression of a distinct interpretation of 'the public' in French society. Especially at the local level participation opportunities are strongly dependant on political priorities. The overall impression of a more paternalistic approach is echoed in that youth participation often implies the involvement of youth workers in decision-making.

In *Ireland* youth participation is implemented both nationally and locally. Despite of the title of a youth parliament access and recruitment occurs through membership in organisations rather than through elections. Where school student councils exist they are weak and hold restricted competencies. Civic education in school is conceptualised as both a separate and an integrated subject under the title of personal, social and health education, which suggests a more individualised than institutionalised approach. In Ireland youth work is a distinct professional discipline with its own qualifications. Provision is often through youth or social organisations and open approaches stand alongside more targeted preventive practice aimed at the social inclusion of young people deemed to be at risk. The meaningful participation of young people tends to be a central tenet of these organisations. Slightly more than one fourth of these young people declare themselves as members of an organisation and one out of every six is engaged in voluntary activities. NGOs are the most trusted and used means of political articulation. Corresponding to the central role of youth and social organisations, youth participation is often referred to in terms of social capital while (due to the positive economic dynamics which has only recently started to weaken) at the same time consumerism is explicitly interpreted as a form of participation in society.

Table 21: National configurations of participation in Austria, France, Ireland, Italy and Slovakia

	Austria	France	Ireland	Italy	Slovakia
Dominant concepts of participation	Youth organisations Involvement in local communities Youth centres	(Alternative) Political participation Civil society Pedagogical method Participation of youth workers in decision-making	Youth (and social) organisations Consumer participation Local/national partnerships Social capital	(Alternative) Political participation Information through public administration Community psychology (social networks)	Youth organisations Political participation Involvement in local communities
Youth councils					
- name	youth representation	youth council	youth parliament	youth council	youth council
- level	local, regional, national	local, departmental, national	local, national	mainly local	local, regional, national
- legal frame	yes	yes	yes	no	yes; close to ministry
- access	variable	variable	organisations	variable	organisations
Student councils					
- name	Pupil/student representation	Student representatives' councils, councils of secondary school	Student councils	School councils, provincial student councils	School student councils
- level	All levels	Mainly secondary	Primary, secondary	Primary, secondary	Secondary
- issues	Co-decision	School life	School life	School life	School life (towards co-decision)
- sustainability	Medium – high (legal framework)	Medium	Weak	Weak	Medium
Civic education					
- name	Civic education	Civic, legal and social education	Social, personal and health education	Social studies	Civic education
- educ. level	Primary, secondary	Primary, secondary	Primary, secondary	Primary, secondary	Primary, secondary
- subject approach	Cross-curricular, mandatory	Separate, mandatory	Integrated and separate, mandatory	Integrated and separate	Separate, mandatory
Youth work model					
- name	Youth work	Socio-cultural animation	Youth work	Socio-cultural animation	Youth work
- legal basis	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
- dominant forms	Open youth work Associative youth work	Open youth work Associative youth work	Open youth work Social inclusion	Youth information, Extra-curricular activities	Associative youth work, Extra-curricular activities
- professional qualification	Social workers Pedagogues	Social workers	Youth workers	Social educators	Social workers
Young people's membership in organisations, voluntary and political activity (Eurobarometer 2007)					
- Total …	43,4%	23,1%	28%	13,4%	11,5%
- of which most	Hobbies	Cultural, artistic	Hobby-related	Cultural, artistic	Youth
- Vol. activity	24,5%	12,5%	17,6%	15,8%	24,8%
- Polit. activity	Online forum	Demonstration	NGO	Demonstration	Online forum
Context factors					
Governance of youth policy	Comprehensive	Comprehensive	Fragmented	Comprehensive (since 2006)	Comprehensive
Age range of youth policy	0-25	0-25	5-18	15-30	15-25
Youth policy model	Protectionist	Protectionist	Community-based	Familistic	Transformation
Transition regime	Employment-centred	Employment-centred	Liberal	Sub-protective	Transformation
Welfare regime	Conservative	Conservative	Liberal	Sub-protective	Transformation

Youth participation in *Italy* is the least established among these countries. It is neither legally prescribed nor facilitated through infrastructures at national level apart from a fund from which organisations can apply for financial support for among other activities, participatory projects). If established, youth councils are restricted to the local level. In schools the situation is slightly more structured. On the provincial level in secondary education sometimes student councils do exist. Civic education in schools is integrated into the subjects of social sciences, law and economics, and/or history. As regards youth policies and youth work, they depend heavily on the local socio-economic and political climate. The most widespread local youth policy is youth information which refers to a 'user' concept of participation in relation to public institutions. Apart from this, youth work (socio-cultural animation) focuses on organising extra-curricular activities rather than providing spaces; a reaction to this state of affairs is a movement of self-organised youth centres which overlaps with alternative youth cultural scenes (see Chapter 5, ctp. 83). The similarity with the French case is reflected by participation implying alternative political engagement, by the prevalence of membership in associations with a cultural or arts focus, and by young people prioritising participation in demonstrations as the foremost method of political activity.

Slovakia needs to be viewed from the perspective of an ongoing transformation process and desire for a deeply-rooted democratisation of Slovakian society. In principle following the Austrian model is envisaged as the most appropriate means of achieving this goal, by implementing youth councils at local, regional and national level and by making them sustainable by means of a legal framework. This also applies to pupil and student councils and the inclusion of civic education as a mandatory subject in the school curricula. This top-down approach is mirrored in the close relationship between the national youth council and the national youth policy. At the same time it seems to be a limiting factor; especially if one takes into account that many towns or cities neither encourage the development of youth councils nor undertake a major investment in any youth policy at all. A profile of professional youth work is still in the making, with a rather weak focus on open youth work and a stronger emphasis on youth associations and the organisation of (rather formal) extra-curricular activities in school. In contrast, young people themselves are only rarely members of organisations but when they are they prefer organisations with a focus on young people. While almost one fourth are engaged in voluntary activities, they prefer the discretion of online fora for expressing political views. In sum, the Slovak case may be interpreted as an attempt at institutionalised democratisation. On the one hand it provides opportunities for participation while on the other hand these structures can actually hinder progress as they are not yet contextualised within local contexts and youth cultures.

The comparative analysis of structures, meanings and forms of youth participation in these five countries is obviously limited by lack of sufficient and solid data. Apart from this, an international comparison of youth policy especially suffers from the paramount importance of the local level, not only for delivery but also for implementation. An attempt at comparative analysis can therefore only begin from the restricted information available.

Despite the limitations of our comparative analysis, it is possible to formulate some conclusions regarding our key questions from a comparative perspective:

- In all countries institutional approaches towards youth participation are oriented towards implementing youth specific forms of representative democracy such as *youth councils* and towards motivating young people to get involved in these. However, there are

differences as to what extent these structures are institutionalised and equipped with power and resources. Here especially, Austria and Italy represent extremes on the continuum. The case studies however also suggest that differences between single municipalities may be greater than between nations and primarily depend on (party) political priorities.

- Institutional actors stress the importance of *organisations* being 'transmission belts' of participation. Nevertheless, there are considerable differences as regards activities and the membership of young people in organisations with the highest rates being in Austria and lowest in Slovakia. These differences largely follow the general characteristics of organisational culture and civil society in the respective countries.

- *Youth work* is one important area of youth participation. While in Slovakia it is organised primarily through youth organisations, open youth work plays a key role in Austria and Ireland (and to some extent in France as well). In Italy self-organised youth centres close the structural deficit of public youth policies and in Slovakia youth policy relies primarily on youth organisations to provide youth work type services.

- While in all countries policies primarily aim at acculturating young people to the existing forms, meanings and practices of participation, the case studies into *counter-cultures* (like squatters) presented in Chapter 5.2.5 suggest some differences in how authorities deal with them. In Italy a very criminalizing approach versus political dialogue in Ireland (rarely and with pre-conditions attached from the state) and France, with Austria in the middle as there may be contacts and support from certain political representatives but also conflicts with authorities and the police.

- As regards *pupils' and students' councils* in school again the Austrian model seems to enjoy larger competencies and a more sustainable legal basis than in other countries. Whilst in all other countries participation in school is restricted to issues of school life, in Austria aspects of co-decision are included.

- This difference vanishes when it comes to *civic education*. While all countries have implemented it as a mandatory subject in terms of formal teaching about the existing institutions, there are differences as regards the thematic focus; more life style oriented in Ireland with a focus on health or highlighting legal education in France. Differences are also apparent as to whether it is taught as a separate subject or integrated with other subjects.

In order to explain the differences between institutional forms of youth participation it is necessary to analyse them in relation to the wider social contexts in which they are embedded, through which they are endowed with specific functions and cultural meaning. As a second step, we will therefore relate the indicative national configurations displayed above with other comparative models on youth related issues (Walther, 2008).

The first and closest is the typology of youth policy models suggested by the IARD study distinguishing a universalistic, a community-based, a protectionist and a familistic model (IARD, 2001).

According to this typology, *Austria* and *France* both represent the protectionist model yet they appear rather different in our findings. Similarities are restricted to an institutional framework

covering all levels. However, the possibilities for self-articulation emerging from this framework are surprisingly broad in Austria. In contrast, the paternalistic approach prevailing in France reflects a protectionist attitude towards young people in general. Apart from this the differences between local contexts is bigger in France than in Austria where youth policies are administrated on national and regional level (Loncle, 2008).

Ireland stands for a community-based approach in youth policy which may explain the key role of NGOs and the reference to a social capital discourse, participation is less strongly facilitated by institutional structures and legal framework.

The *Italian* case is symptomatic for a structural deficit in youth policy, reflecting in turn a rudimentary welfare state in which *the family* has a central role as social 'shock absorber'. While youth information centres represent the widest spread tools to close the gap, youth work is only slowly developing under the notion of socio-cultural animation (as in France) which is representative for European countries characterised by Romanic and Catholic cultural traditions.

In *Slovakia* it is obvious that authorities and organisations aim at building a model similar to the Austrian one. However, it remains unsure as to what extent it matches the needs of contemporary Slovak youth, how it fits into the overall institutional framework and whether the historical legacy has been sufficiently taken into account. The loose relationship between local, regional and national level which resulted from a rapid decentralisation process seems to undermine good policy intentions especially (Lauritzen et al., 2005).

By extending the perspective towards welfare and transition regime typology (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Gallie & Paugam, 2000; Walther, 2006a, 2006b) we can move towards (some) further potential explanations and contradictions. These potential explanations and contradictions require further research however.

The well-organised form of participation in *Austria* corresponds to the corporatist structures of its conservative welfare regime and employment-centred transition regime. From this perspective it seems both contradictory and yet plausible simultaneously relatively wide possibilities of participation are provided in the framework of a rather selective education system which restricts individual choices.

The same applies in that benefit entitlements are not universal but citizenship rights are connected to following institutionally predefined pathways. This is similar to the situation in *France* where corporatist structures are weaker however due to the (still) centralised model of governance and the fact that youth policies have never been organised in a strong sectoral manner. This may not be an effective mode of governance in youth policy but it does result in more paternalistic policy making.

The liberal welfare and transition regime is characterised by a strong emphasis on individual responsibility. In the *Irish* case this seems less visible with regard to youth policy and youth participation but it is balanced by the Catholic legacy of strong voluntarism. An interesting fact is that youth work is in the responsibility of the education ministry and (similar to the UK) non-formal education and youth participation are being promoted in the context of activation policies aimed at mobilising human capital (Pohl & Walther, 2007).

The relevance of informal channels and structures for welfare and youth transitions in *Italy* also applies with regard to youth participation. While a lack of youth policy structures implies a lack of recognition of young people as co-citizens it has also lead to the emergence of a dynamic third

sector in which young people do express and articulate themselves. However, due to a lack of resources these forms are rarely sustainable. In *Slovakia* the re-definition and re-structuring of the relationship between individual and society are still in progress. In various areas, policies for young people seem to orientate towards the conservative or employment-centred model. However, both the socio-cultural and also the socio-economic contexts are different. In compared to Austria the percentage of unemployed young people (who are affected by restricted social rights) is twice as high, while it seems to be widely accepted that young Roma are excluded from participation and citizenship.

Obviously, these reflections are formulated in terms of hypothesis rather than conclusions. This is in itself the consequence of a deficit in empirical data and signposts the necessity of further research. From the perspective of this comparative analysis the *key research gaps* identified concern among others:

- information on the structures of national and local youth policies including youth services, youth workers and especially on the relationship and variation between national and local structures (for instance, the degree of autonomy of local authorities and their capacity of answer young people's requests or expectations);

- information on the structures of dominant forms of youth participation in different countries, as well as evaluation regarding coverage (in particular in favour of politically or socially excluded young people), influence and effectiveness;

- the relation between policy structures, service models, young people's legal status and cultural notions of youth;

- analysis regarding the relationship between different degrees of membership in organisations, forms of political articulation and institutional structures of participation;

- understanding of the different meanings of 'politics', 'policies' and 'the public', and of the role they play in individual biographies.

6.2 Policies as enabling and disabling factors of youth participation

The previous comparative section has revealed that policies actually do make a difference regarding the scope for participation. It is still though debatable as to what extent these differences are interpreted as minor variations of a standard model of participation (with a narrow range of areas and issues often seen as tokenism) or if they imply different qualities of participation.

The range of countries involved was not exhaustive enough to respond to the questions raised by this scenario, particularly as neither a Nordic country nor the UK was involved. In the UK at present tion

historical situations; conversely, it fixes, often narrowly, the competencies of youth participation.

- The relationship between *national and local level* is another ambiguous area which needs to be taken into consideration. While on the one hand the local level is the closest to young people's needs and everyday lives and most appropriate for direct negotiation, it is also much more vulnerable to political change whereby the guarantee of universal citizenship rights is weakened. It also varies according to the autonomy of the local level vis-à-vis the national one. In Ireland, for instance, where the local level has almost no autonomy, young people encounter a lot of difficulties in being heard. In none of our countries could we find an ideal balance and dialogue between the national and local level which maximises the strengths of both levels.

- The national profile of *youth policies* is indicative of the priorities of adults and institutional actors; in addressing youth primarily with regard to supporting them in 'being young', in protecting them regarding their general vulnerability, in focussing on the inclusion of disadvantaged youth, or in leaving youth largely under-regulated. Williamson rightly points out that "*All countries have a youth policy- by intent, default or neglect*" (2007). Especially in this regard, the debate on children's and young people's rights in the aftermath of the UN Convention on Children's Rights is instructive. In some countries the rights to be protected is stressed, in others the rights of self-determination are prioritised. Referencing children's rights in terms of protection may also restrict the scope of participation (cf. Fottrell, 2002).

- This reflects the different *representations of youth* that have been analysed through the framework of the models of youth transition regimes: youth as a phase of personal development secured by citizenship status in the universalistic regime of the Nordic countries, youth expected to become an independent and self-responsible market actor as soon as possible in the liberal regimes, youth which is defined by socialisation for and allocation to standardised occupational positions in the employment-centred regime or youth without an official status reflected by a structural deficit of youth policies in the sub-protective or under-institutionalised regime in Southern European countries (Walther, 2006a; 2006b). Nevertheless, a common trend seems to affect more or less all of the selected countries (or at least Italy, France and Ireland) according to which young people are more and more considered as vulnerable and therefore become subject to a more protective (and thus less participatory) approach (regarding health and delinquency in particular).

- This also relates to the regulations that govern young people's access to *welfare* which in turn determines to what extent to young people are autonomous in making biographical choices and decisions. This is most generous and least conditional in the universalistic regime type; restricted and/or conditional in the liberal and the employment-centred regimes; and substantially lacking in the sub-protective Southern regime type (ibid).

- *School systems* are probably the most powerful institutional realm of youth policies, not only in terms of institutional power and persistence but also because young people spend considerable time there and because they heavily influence current and future life chances. One dimension is the extent to which schools facilitate and enable pupils' and students' participation on both the individual and collective levels. Another dimension is

the extent to which educational decisions are taken by children and young people or for them by the system. This relates to the distinction between comprehensive versus differentiated, permeable versus selective school systems (ibid.).

While these foregone categories resulted from our comparative analysis of different institutional structures, we now desire to give consideration to the views of young people themselves in the following section. In so doing we must confess that the depth and breadth of our coverage in this regard is limited due to the lack of empirical data in this respect.

6.2.1 'Attractive' versus 'unattractive' policies as factors of youth participation

In the debates on youth participation, reference is often made to the observation that some policies are apparently more attractive for young people than others (Declaration of Vienna, 2006; Coyote, 2002; UNESCO, 1999). The assumption that the attractiveness of youth policies is strongly linked to their participatory dimension relates to both the low participation rates of young people and the essential fact that policy needs to take young people's motivation into account.

In defining the notion of an attractive policy we have therefore taken account of the deeply subjective nature of this concept and constructed a definition based upon previous research which strongly indicates the policy forms that can be deemed attractive (Barry, 2005; Walther et al., 2006).

A wide definition of 'attractive' policies is policies that lead to successful outcomes from a number of perspectives. We therefore propose the following;

- The young people who are the chief targets of the particular policy.

- The organisations and measures that implement the policies.

- The policy makers and their constituents.

The fullest definition of attractive policies is therefore measures that meet with the approval of all stakeholders in a democratic and participatory manner whilst still fulfilling the explicit goals set by the policy. This wide definition, however, implies keeping policy objectives vague and general while underneath the surface interpretations, meanings and implications may contradict.

A narrower definition of attractiveness stems from the realm of youth work practice and focuses on measures that flow from policies which young people themselves opt into of their own free will (hence the voluntary engagement ethos of many youth organisations).

The nature and characteristics of such policies are intrinsically attractive to young people as the young people place a value on whatever (perceived) benefits are attached. The benefits from policy must, in this respect, be of a realisable value to the young person in terms of meeting needs and desires from the young people's point of view.

Unattractive policies, in contrast, tend towards coercive programmes that (usually) target a narrow area or specified group of young people although some policies have been analysed as a form of "*institutional of intolerance of youth*" (Hamilton and Seymour, Youth Studies Ireland, Vol. 1, No. 1, autumn 2006).

The ASBO (anti-social behaviour orders) debate in the U.K. is illustrative of this form of policy response which strictly controls and suppresses non-conform behaviour (See http://www.statewatch.org/asbo/ASBOwatch.html). Workfare type initiatives that withdraw or reduce social assistance if young job seekers refuse job or training offers, age related rights that discriminate against young people and in the broader sphere the apparent unwillingness of the adult community to take young peoples' concerns seriously (despite the adult world's willingness to appropriate youth culture when convenient) can be construed as unattractive policies (cf. Weil et al., 2005; Walther et al., 2006).

6.2.2 Young people's perception of youth policies

Young people's trust in governments and public institutions is traditionally rather low with below average rates in Central and Eastern Europe and the UK, and above average values in the Nordic countries and Austria (see also Chapter 3; cf. Walther et al., 2006; Eurobarometer 2007; Galland, 2008; Spannring et al., 2008). We have hardly any access to empirical data on how young people perceive youth policies. It is possible to hypothesise that the mass of young people do possess a rudimentary knowledge of the age appropriate rights and responsibilities that pertain in individual countries. How far they connect such rights and responsibilities with political decision making is unknown; given the widespread concerns surrounding general political disengagement (reflected in voter apathy) we may well postulate that their level of knowledge in this area is poor.

In contrast to this hypothesis there is evidence to show that certain young people are adept at using local political systems (such as the Cork Skateboarders; see Chapter 5.2.5, pp. 98-99) and that young people are aware of the manner in which policy shapes their lives (see the YOYO research, Walther et al,. 2006).

Barry (2005: 2) has noted a 'critical divide' in young people's location in civil society whereby their relative separateness from the adult world of power and privilege exacerbates their isolation from policy decision making, the phenomena of relative deprivation.

> *"Young people gaze upwards because of their age and, hence, status in the social hierarchy".*

Her research (which focused on disadvantaged young people) revealed both a (subjective) knowledge of social and political systems and the;

> *"Strong desire of young people for more genuine involvement in decisions that affect their lives and greater respect through having their voices heard"* (p. 300).

A dearth of information exists in this field, perhaps highlighting the disjunction between policy drives on participation and the lived experience of young people. What is evident is a duality wherein young people report very positively on their local service providers and especially individual persons while they view political mechanisms with cynicism and distrust. A young Irish guy, after having expressed his mistrust into public institutions, especially the employment service, differentiates with regard to a specific social worker:

> *"I know her, she's all right"* (quotation from the Irish YOYO-sample, in Walther et al., 2006, p. 138).

The experience of interaction with municipal authorities of a group in Rennes left the young people feeling manipulated; the skater group in Cork were frustrated and angry at the

communications received from certain municipal officers. Yet not all experiences were negative as a group in Metz expressed confidence in the process of interaction.

In Austria frustration and scepticism is evident in relation to politicians' willingness to engage

Characteristically, hard policies are hierarchical, inflexible and narrowly focussed on remedying perceived deficits. They tend towards a large scale bureaucratic set of actions that rely on hard objective criteria (such as income levels, educational achievements, evidence of seeking employment) as evaluation criteria. Such policies are usually delivered by large-scale state actors (such as education and/or welfare departments) and are centrally funded.

In contrast the soft sector operates from a relationship focus and prioritises the voluntary engagement of the targeted young people. They tend to be much more locally orientated and tailored to meet the needs of individuals with a 'package' of loosely structured programmes that emphasis citizenship, social and political education and self-realisation within local commu4415j76.3189 2006 T

The relationship between hard and soft policies is best perceived as a continuum (Walther et al, 2006; see table 22) rather than polar opposites; policies can be located anywhere along such a continuum with the 'ultra-hard' coercive programmes yielding to softer initiatives as one moves' along the continuum. While the hard sector is prioritised by policy institutions and policy makers, and thereby is much more influential, ironically the softer policies represent a developing set of systems that are much more in tune with the requirements of the 'knowledge society' which is at the heart of the European Union's future aspirations (Walther et al., 2006b, ctp. 3).

Programmes on the soft extreme are of a voluntary nature, schemes and projects in the middle sector can be voluntary or involve a degree of coercion or reward; i.e. in Austria compulsory schemes exist for the unemployed young person. Failure to participate in these schemes results in a cut in benefits. In Ireland the Youthreach system pays young people an allowance for attendance. Across the various countries attendance is compulsory in the hard sector. In Italy coercive youth participation cannot function as there is no entitlement to welfare without having paid social insurance payments.

The popularity of a 'workfare' regime in relation to young people among policy makers is evidently growing despite the high idealistic (and commercial) value afforded to youth. All the available evidence overwhelmingly shows that young people themselves far prefer the soft process orientated measures where participation is voluntary and the emphasis' is local; the Irish Youthreach programme (Stokes, 2000) is a national programme that is heavily decentralised with individual centres operating more or less independently. Similar to the 'Connexions' programme in the UK the ideal is seen as *"central control combined with local autonomy"* (Holmes, in Youth and policy, Issue 83, Spring 2004, p30; cf. Pohl & Walther, 2007).

Amongst others (cf. Walther et al., 2006; Barry, 2005) Ann Phoenix's work indicates that young people themselves possess a solid understanding of the social terrain which they must navigate in being young (Phoenix, 2007, cf. *UP2YOUTH newsletter* 1/2008). They respond to new risks and opportunities in shaping their own lives, yet there is evidence in the research mentioned above of frustration and alienation engendered by hard activation policies.

One may therefore expect that hard policies are generally unattractive to young people as they problematize young people and seek to impose centrally formulated solutions to the supposed deficits of large groups of young people. The recent measures introduced in the UK to combat the 'surge' in knife crime amongst young people in the recent past (although statistics tend to show no real rise in the level of such crime) are exemplary in this regard (*The Guardian*, 16/7/08). Measures such as curfews, increased police profiling that focuses on particular sub-cultural styles (such as hoodies and baseball caps), parental accountability and an emphasis on personal responsibility evidence a moral panic induced hard policy response. Virtually all youth organisations either completely eschew such approaches or present them to young people in a watered down fashion that seeks to minimise the most unappealing aspects of these policies. An overview of this particular scenario suggests that soft policies are attractive because they are grounded both in the subjective world view of the targeted young people and in the notion of meaningful participation (Casey et al, in Youth Studies Ireland, Vol. 2, No.2, Autumn/Winter 2007).

In contrast to these reflections, the YOYO research suggests that the relationship between the attractiveness of policies and their location on the soft to hard continuum is not as linear. Young people know that they need those resources and opportunities distributed by the hard sector

policies while at times they also reflect the low status of the soft sector by rejecting involvement in youth work as irrelevant or simply 'not real'. In the YOYO case studies, those measures proved highest attractiveness who managed to combine hard and soft factors, e.g. by providing jobs or qualifications within a participatory and safe environment (Walther et al., 2006). From this perspective relevance appears to be the more appropriate category, especially if qualified in terms of *biographical relevance* which includes both viable life chances and a subjectively coherent identity.

The attractiveness or biographical relevance of youth policies to young people in the represented countries is heavily predicated upon the needs that such policies aim to serve; in the main policies that are 'youth friendly', address issues that concern young people and delivered in a localised setting tend to be viewed positively by young people.

Policies that are hard edged and more control orientated are predictably unpopular. Statutory actors as such seem to show more concern with medium hard individualising deficit issues that are presumed to be solvable rather than soft approaches that would promote involvement and participation.

A degree of tokenism is readily visible in relation to meaningful participation; despite the high-flown rhetoric most participation mechanisms do not appear to offer young people any real element of power in decision making.

6.2.4 Making policy attractive – and successful

Leahy (2008) ventures that success in working with young people is predicated on five interlinked factors; (1) the *quality and commitment* of the workforce, (2) the effectiveness of the policy/service in *meeting the subjective and objective* needs of the young people, (3) the provision of *adequate resources* to complete the work, (4) the allowance of *sufficient time* in which to work and (5) *unity and clarity of purpose* in theoretically understanding the mission of the policy/service. According to European research on measures for disadvantaged youth one may add as a sixth factor which is closely related to Leahy's factors 2 and 3 is the *access* of young people to the respective service. Access has several components: spatial 'reachability' or closeness to the everyday life of young people, compatibility with their life styles and 'presentability' within youth cultural scenes and peer contexts, the absence of stigmatising entrance procedures stressing individual deficits (Walther & Pohl, 2005; cf. Walther et al., 2006).

Youth work Ireland have set down service standards (Griffin, 2004) which reflect these factors and heavily emphasis the involvement of young people in the drafting of service goals, the design of programmes, the management of resources, the perceived outcomes for programmes and participants and the professional standards of youth workers, both paid and voluntary. In terms of engaging and attracting young people it is instructive to note the excellence requirements in the area of professional standards. Youth workers are expected to be courteous; respectful, punctual, reliable, discrete, mature and humorous (Griffin, 2005: 45).

It is apparent that soft sector policy initiatives rely on relationship based practices which young people find reassuring and personal delivered by adults who are deemed trustworthy and reliable. The success or failure of youth policy initiatives rests largely with the attractiveness of these policies for young people. Young people can and do vote with their feet and construct alternatives (through the hidden economy for example) for themselves that better suit their needs.

The non-engagement of a large amount of young people with soft sector provisions aimed at recreation, leisure and cultural activities in favour of either market or street and peer level pursuit's bears out Williamson's point regarding young people's ability to navigate through society in a manner consistent with their own desires to some degree (Williamson, 2002).

Significant quantities of young people do engage with soft services that ultimately flow from policy directives and therefore evidence a requirement for these services. This is not to say however that services are de facto attractive; on the contrary many services are poorly funded and under resourced yet they continue to attract young people as there is little or no alternative. Successful and youth friendly policies remain the ones that consciously attempt to engage with young people around the issues that concern the young people rather than the youth issues that concern adults.

The manner of engagement is of crucial importance in this regard as young people, no more so than any other group; respond to services that treat them with respect and dignity and as conscious persons able to make their own decisions.

In no case was the evaluation of services conducted by the young people although at least one Irish NGO, Youth Work Ireland, has recently implemented a 'Quality Standards Framework' that requires young people's participation. Evaluations tend to be conducted by funding bodies, government agencies and the organisations themselves (Lalor, de Roiste and Devlin, 2007, 269-275). In this regard a number of local drugs task force projects operated by youth work service providers in Ireland were evaluated by a private company (Horwath Consulting Ireland) contracted by the Government agency responsible for funding (Horwath/Matrix, 2008).

While the requirements of youth participation appear coherent and undisputed with regard to youth work (for both its voluntary structure and its marginal institutional and political weight) the picture becomes more contradictory and ambivalent as soon as harder policy issues are concerned such as transitions to work. The YOYO research revealed that in transition policies participatory approaches are rather the exception than the rule. Based on the analysis of 28 case studies across Europe, the following factors of participation have been elaborated which facilitate young people's "*biographical self-determination*" in their transitions to work (Walther et al., 2006):

- *Choice* relates both to the individualisation of youth transitions as to the dimension of making youth policies or youth work accessible for young people inasmuch as it is the precondition for identification with the respective option – whether it concerns leisure activities or career destinations. The strength and authenticity of young people's counter cultures results from the fact that they have been not only chosen their culture but that this culture results from their own practice and invention (see chapter 5).

- *Space (and time)* for experimentation with self-chosen and self-initiated projects in a self-responsible way – which does not imply absence of support in order to identify subjective needs and interest as well as to discover one's own strengths and weaknesses individually and with regard to goals which are subjectively meaningful;

- *Open outcomes* rather than pre-defined activities or processes whether these are located in non-formal education, counselling or information. Often for unemployed young people, counselling especially implies direction towards low-skilled (and low-status) careers. These careers are portrayed as 'realistic' and within reach if one considers the low competitiveness and/or employability of these young people rather than respecting young

people's choices and offering support towards both achieving, and rethinking these choices in the case of barriers and obstacles.

- *Trustful relationships* are a basic requirement for participation given the disaffection of young people from public institutions. This means that participation may infer responsibilities onto young people, without being conditional in terms of accepting only certain ways of participating.

- This does not exclude *conflict.* On the contrary, conflict necessarily emerges between individual and institutional views, between young people's interests and adult expectations, and especially under conditions of individualisation, fragmentation and diversification of life courses and transitions. Conflict processes require both spaces and rules to be played out under conditions of equal opportunities.

- Finally, participation implies *negotiation rights* with the institutional actors administrating their transitions. These negotiation rights result from a strengthened legal status for young people who have not yet reached a full and stable employment status.

While these qualities refer particularly to a biographical interpretation of participation, they also imply some general relevance with regard to participation in other life spheres and contexts.

In assessing participatory approaches this suggests that measuring participation in terms of 'more' or 'less' influence, power or control as implied by classification scales (such as the 'ladder of participation' Hart, 1992) is perhaps too narrow. Such perspectives need to be extended to the perspective of relevance, especially biographical relevance as one size does not fit all. The different forms and issues of participation need assessing according to individual and current life situations.

From this perspective, participatory approaches need to be more flexible and reflexive and based on recognition and dialogue as intended by such approaches as Giddens' (1994) life politics or Nancy Fraser's (1994) politics of needs interpretation. They argue that in a climate of individualisation and de-standardisation social justice cannot rely on one-dimensionally bureaucratic forms of redistribution and equal opportunities but needs to be connected to identity politics and individual recognition.

In this regard, the *access* dimension appears to be rather basic as it points towards rethinking (i) why young people should be interested in participating, and, (ii) how participation opportunities need to be re-organised in a way that different individuals in different life situations can perceive them to be relevant and effective means with which gain control over their own lives.

The question of access naturally relates to the understanding of 'the public' and 'the collective' which can be seen as central aspects of participation and which patently need reconsideration under conditions of individualisation.

Obviously, in countries in which welfare and support for young people in transition is connected to the individual citizenship status (like in Denmark or Sweden) participation rights and opportunities are more wide-spread and their necessity is more self-evident. An example is the Swedish youth policy bill from 2004, concerned with increasing young people's "*access to power and welfare*". In contrast, in countries in where entitlements for welfare and support depend on the family and occupational status of the individual participation is restricted to life situations which correspond to the perceived normal or standard biography. While Austria is an example of

rather well-implemented participation rights, these rights do not entail widening young people's scope for biographical agency beyond the realm of formally and institutionally pre-defined pathways.

A youth policy approach aiming at enabling young people's active participation and biographical agency, while taking these reflections into account may be titled "*from services to spaces*" (Percy-Smith, 2007). Services always derive from an ex-ante definition of needs and responses, whilst spaces imply experimental movements in order to discover the needs and responses, both individually and collectively, in dialogic relationships.

The *Key research gaps* identified with regard to the policy requirements of youth participation are set out below:

- How do young people perceive youth policies in general and their possibilities of participation in particular? Do they experience them as accessible and effective?

- How can notions such as attractive versus unattractive or relevant versus irrelevant policies be operationalised and applied in such research?

- How do young people relate individual life situations to concrete mechanisms of political decision-making?

6.3 Youth participation and agency in social change

In this final section of the concluding chapter of our report we want to come back to the fundamental theoretical question regarding the relationship between young people's participation and their agency. We understand agency as the ability of individuals to act intentionally and meaningful in the sense that every single action they undertake is at the same time an attempt at constructing one's own life as meaningful. While agency is fully subjective, it is at the same time social in the sense that each single act refers to and is embedded in situations which are socially structured through resources and opportunities. It is also social in terms of previous meaning-making processes and the hierarchical relations which provide certain interpretations with more power and recognition than others. This means that although all individuals are always agents, not all agency necessarily transcends structural social barriers (cf. Giddens, 1984; Coté, 2007; Pohl et al., 2007).

Taking into consideration that social change towards *individualisation* and de-standardisation of life courses implies that individual biographies can no longer rely exclusively on routine actions these active processes of meaning-making become more complex and more explicit. One perspective which helps to analyse biographical agency under these premises is the understanding of action in everyday life as acts of biographical coping, implying the securing meaning and orientation, of social belonging and of agency (Böhnisch & Schröer, 2008). Another perspective is that of biographical reflexivity, or 'biographicity', which suggests that the biographical meaning and continuity of each situation that the individual finds themselves in needs to be assessed in terms of its biographical implications: what does this mean *for me*?

From this perspective, participation may be seen as a form of qualified agency, or more accurately, as acting as it does only not underlines the sociality of the biographical or coping perspective, it also implies a public dimension of subjective agency in a social perspective.

Participation in this sense refers to those acts by which individuals communicate with the wider community about needs, interests, legitimacy and adequacy of action.

The public aspect is crucial insofar as that it distinguishes social action in limited groups of individuals who know each other from social action. This addresses or at least does not exclude the anonymous generalised 'other' or 'co-citizen'. Thereby all actions or coping strategies of young people are not participatory per se; but those which imply a consciousness of social character, relationship with and dependency on the wider community are.

This differentiation is crucial as there is serious critique not only towards the participation discourse but towards the agency discourse itself.

A first line of authors argue that agency as intentional finds limits in structural barriers whereby some individuals are less agentic than others. A second line of authors, inspired by Foucault's perspectives on power and domination through discourse and governance (Foucault, 1976; 1994; cf. Rose, 1999; Cooke & Kothari, 2001; Masschelein & Quaghebeur, 2003), argues that discourses of life participation (and also of lifelong learning) are transmission belts of individualisation. These have to be analysed in their relation to existing power relationships, especially with regard to neo-liberal trends towards policies aimed at activating individuals to be more self-responsible (while less reliant on social solidarity), participation is referred to as a "*strategy of immunisation*"; a cultural process of re-coding the implications of the relationship between the individual and society.

In sum, we argue that individuals are always agents in the sense that they not only try to cope with but also to shape their own lives in meaningful ways. This includes a longing for social recognition. Social structures restrict people's opportunities to choose among different options and strategies, and their perspectives are to act in ways that are both subjectively satisfactory and recognised by society. While biographicity qualifies general agency with regard to the self, participation does so in regard to the wider community and society.

From this background the relationship between *learning and participation* can also be re-analysed. The contradiction (in fact the double-bind message towards young people) between teaching civic education (intended as informing young people about their potential influence as citizens) and the restrictions governing pupils' and students' participation in school can be taken as evidence that token participatory programmes not serve only to legitimize existing circumstances. They furthermore teach young people to take responsibility for their own needs and interests despite the fact that there still are (more and more) structural barriers and short-comings regarding young people's capabilities to act in a self-responsible manner (Sen, 1992; Otto & Ziegler, 2006).

Ann Phoenix's research has led her to point out that young people are simultaneously achieving social identity whilst "*often conscious of the fact that their agency is disregarded by both particular adults and by societal institutions in general*" (Phoenix, 2007). Moreover, they operate in social systems that dictate position and agency along the lines of class, gender, ethnicity and physical ability within a late modern society that has optionalized aspects of identity. This becomes most obvious through the *cultural perspective*, especially through the case studies into young people's counter-cultures where they consciously opt towards positioning themselves within a societal arena of power relationships that is nevertheless outside of existing institutionalised pathways. At the same time they do so by engaging in the of doing identity (or identity work, or acquiring identity capital; cf. Höfer & Keupp, 1997; Coté, 2007) through

connecting power struggles with life styles. Of course this applies as well to those few who actually find engagement in youth or student councils meaningful and effective, as one form of communicating their interest and concerns to the wider community in and through the public. It is less obvious with regard to those actions which are normally interpreted as merely transgressive or deviant acts in public spaces such as public drinking, violence or rioting. Such actions are easily attributed to determination through structural constraint rather than as emerging from subjective processes of meaning-making.

This point's to the relationship between agency, identity and democracy in late modern societies. In theory, democracy can be understood as a modern way of organising societies on the basis of active individuals who compromise on the fulfilment of their individual needs and interests by identifying spaces and procedures for negotiation. The form of representative democracy implies the existence of typical needs and interests and typical ways of life and fulfilling these needs and interests which can be addressed through representation. Thereby it needs to be seen as a historical form of societal organisation which has been developed in parallel to Fordist production, consumption and life-courses (c. Myles 1992; Bauman 2000; 2001).

In addition, according to Smith et al. (2005), young people who do not engage in acknowledged forms of voluntary activity or participation have in fact clear ideas about the interdependency of their own life plans and everyday life actions with the wider community and society at large.

However, under the prevailing conditions of late modernity typical needs and life-courses which could be represented collectively appear to no longer exist, therefore the connection between the individual, the community and the society need to be reshaped into a more flexible format and diversified.

The same accounts for 'the public' a term that implies different modern and late modern conceptualisations of the social space in which individuals act. Habermas's analysis reveals the importance of public space as civic for the development of democracy although he shows that the distinction between public and private was blurred from the beginning due to the parallel development of democracy and capitalism (Habermas, 1992).

The contradiction between private economic actors and the market as a key area of social integration has been underlined as crucial for the devaluation of reproductive functions and the subsequent discrimination suffered by women in modern society (cf. Fraser, 1994). It is also visible nowadays in regard to consumerism and the media experienced as relevant public spaces, at least as far as subjective everyday experiences are concerned. Considering the individualisation and fragmentation of life-courses it is obvious that the large majority of participatory programmes, normally located in 'containers' rather than reaching out into the everyday life worlds of young people, remain fairly meaningless and irrelevant for most of the young people concerned. This is as much the case for youth councils as it is for pupils' and students' councils. In fact, many young people refer to those who engage in such councils as the well-adapted squares (or L7, in young people's own terminology) who prepare for a future role as a (traditional) adult (cf. Skelton & Valentine, 1998; Miles, 2000; Matthews, 2001; Smith et al., 2005; Reutlinger, 2005).

In dominant discourses 'the public' relates to notions such as 'the common good' thereby implying a potential consensus within society. These notions can no longer be relied upon as self-evidently shared under the conditions of de-standardised life-courses. In fact, the political and social geography of late modern societies is characterised by fragmentation into more or less

connected social spaces according to different social spheres (e.g. economy, politics) as well as according to individual biographical relevance.

The question is whether these (few) overlapping spaces can be referred to as the late modern public or, if one insists on assumed qualities of the modern democratic public, there are still any spaces remaining that are formally conceived of as public whilst also being biographically relevant for individuals, especially young people. Concluding, one may agree with Bauman that participation in late modernity means "*more, not less, of the 'public sphere'* (Bauman, 2000: 51), possibilities to congeal and condense "*private troubles into public interests that are larger than the sum of their individual ingredients ... so that they can acquire once more the shape of the visions of the 'good society' and the 'just society'*" (ibid.).

This reveals, that rethinking youth participation under conditions of individualisation points primarily to the need of rethinking spaces and forms of *communication* between young people – individuals as well as groups –

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Annex: the local case studies

Austrian Case Study 1: Innsbruck

Reingard Spannring

(With the help of: Elisabeth Aichhorn, Magdalena Chiste, Renate Fuchs, Franziska Gögele, Barbara Hummerl, Lintner, Katharina Lunardon, Elisabeth Romaner, Birgit Schwarz, Vera Sellich, Anja Steiner, Eva Trebo, Beate Werth and Petra Witting)

Innsbruck is the capital of the Federal region of Tirol. The economy of the city rests mainly on tourism and industry, but also on its many educational institutions such as the University of Vienna, Management Centre Innsbruck and the administrative bodies of the city and the Federal region (Encarta, 2007). The size of the population is around 137.900, among them approximately 24,000 foreigners.

Innsbruck, and Western Austria generally, are wealthy regions with low unemployment rates. In 2006 the District of Innsbruck (including the city and the surrounding country) had an employment rate of 78%, 4.3% of the population were registered unemployed. Of these 5377 unemployed, 2278 were women and 3099 men; 1126 were foreigners (AMS, 2006).

Innsbruck is both a municipality and the capital city of the Federal Region of Tirol; therefore the political and administrative structures at the municipal level have to be distinguished from the Federal level Region. Issues concerning the Federal Region are determined by the Regional Parliament and Regional Government. Administratively, there are several departments in the Regional Government. With respect to young people the following institutions are relevant: the Department for Education, Culture and Sports, (to which Youth Department; 'JUFF', belongs); the Department for Health and Social Affairs (within which lies the Department for Youth Welfare[18] and the Children's and Youth Advocacy). There is close cooperation between the Federal Region and the City.

On the municipal the level, the major is the chairperson of the city senate, dominated by conservative parties. The city administration is divided into 5 departments with a total of 29 offices. The most relevant with respect to young people are the Office for Youth Welfare, and the Office for Children's and Youth Care/Supervision. The latter is responsible for promotion and funding, for youth centres and youth projects, and functions as contact point for youth work.

Offices and institutions see a major part of their work in the funding and support of projects as they themselves do not initiate any. The city councillor manages €600,000. While there seems to be enough money for projects, the institutions would like to be able to expand their staff.

Interviews with a city councillor and two representatives at the administrative level reveal several attitudes toward youth participation. Participation is seen as political behaviour, in particular voting, co-determination and freedom of speech. One of the interviewees did not see the point in having specific participation structures on the political level, since there are already a lot of opportunities for co-determination which are not used by the young people.

They are increasingly overtaxed with an excess supply of opportunities and demands to make decisions at an early age. Young people have to select the activity in which they want to invest

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[18] Youth Welfare offers parents, children and adolescents comprehensive help in the form of ambulant family care, inpatient care, foster child care, education counselling, youth protection, crisis intervention, emergency bedding and streetwork.

energy in, and they often invest in those where results are easily achieved. However, people who are actively engaged in the area to promote youth participation argue that it should be seen as the responsibility of the politicians to make offers visible and attractive for young people.

Some policy makers stressed that youth participation only works in temporary projects. Because of the young people's changing interests it is ineffective to try to bind them to one project for more than a year. However, promising and sustainable concepts for continuing participation have been proposed by the organisation 'Mitbestimmung', but these proposals were not realised by the responsible policy makers.

Another commentator maintained that structure and spaces are already there for young people to participate, it was rather a question of making them easily accessible.

Participation can also be seen in a continuum between passivity and activity. On the one hand, institutions and projects are understood to mobilise young people, on the other hand, they are understood as an entertainment service which young people can consume.

There are contradictory appraisals of the young people's passivity or activity with respect to participation. Some interview respondents suggest that it is up to the youth institutions and to adults to initiate and support youth activities, while others describe young people as eager to channel their energies in a socially positive way. These young people do not want to lean back and get served.

All interview partners wish to see more participation in the future through either more projects or mobile youth work, or through the greater involvement of young people as experts in political processes. They agree that the 'societal climate' should improve in that young people should be taken more seriously and that there should be more co-determination.

Youth participation in Innsbruck is not anchored by law as the Children's Rights Convention suggests; consequently that the value of youth participation must be interpreted as rather low. The realisation of participatory structures is capable of development. The chances for youth participation depend largely on the initiative of young people and youth workers. There are quite a few opportunities to co-shape, but only a few to actually co-determine.

Youth participatory projects in Innsbruck (not city council)[19] (some examples, coached by "Mitbestimmung.cc".)

- Nature-oriented landscape gardening Kindergarten Lönsstrasse, Innsbruck (2000-2001). In the planning process are the Kindergarten children, the manager of the Kindergarten, a project manager, a representative of the garden and park department Innsbruck, and partially the major and a city councillor (3 more projects for Kindergarten).

- Participation of children in the planning of a play and nature park in Innsbruck (2002-2003): this project involved over 500 children, the city of Innsbruck, the garden and park department Innsbruck, the local Kindergarten and primary school and the organisation 'Mitbestimmung.cc'.

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[19] http://jugendbeteiligung.connetation.at/index.php?id=26

- Youth platform 'HÖWE' involves 10-30 young people who – among other activities – organise round table discussions with politicians. It was set up in 1996 and remains ongoing.

- Participation of Kindergarten children in the 'Festival of Dreams' project (1994-2002). The children developed many ideas for the festival which were then realized by the festival management.

- Meinungsmacher mm: 3 Jahre internationales Projekt, IBK als Partner hatte Partizipation in einer Stadt implementieren als Struktur – ongoing

- Schulparlamente am Akademischen Gymnasium and other schools

- SOS Kinderdorf: 5 Jahre Schwerpunkt Partizipation, Konferenz Researching Children

- Stadtverwaltung erneuert Stadtrecht, mehr Partizipation.

Youth institutions

There two main youth institutions in Innsbruck: the Youth Information institution and the youth centres. The Youth Information ('Infoeck') was set up by the Youth Department of the Federal Region of Tirol 13 years ago. It assists young people by giving information and advice on leisure activities, events, travel, EU-youth programmes, au pairing, training and further education and the youth protection law. In addition, there are a number of WebPages, where young people can access information:

- www.infoeck.at

- www.infoup.at

- www.junges-innsbruck.at

- www.jugendinfo.cc

There are seven youth centres in Innsbruck:

- Jugendtreff 'Shelter' and 'Webradio'

- Jugendtreff Pradl

- Jugendzentrum Hötting-West

- Jugendzentrum O-Dorf

- Jugendzentrum mk

- Kinder- und Jugendzentrum St. Paulus

- Zentrum für Jugendarbeit z6

- ‚Mitbestimmung.cc' (http://www.mitmischen.cc/article.php?id=41)

This organisation initiates and helps in the organisation and management of participation projects in Tirol.

Exemplary description of the Youth Centre Hötting-West

The non-profit organisation 'Jugendhilfe Innsbruck' was mandated in 1991 by the Senate of the City of Innsbruck to establish open youth centres. The costs are borne by the City of Innsbruck and the Youth Department of the Federal Region. These youth centres are Hötting West and two others. Hötting West is the largest centre. It provides young people with sports, cultural and leisure facilities in the neighbourhood. The youth centre is open to everyone and is used by a range of diverse cliques autonomously or within the frame of the general operation of the youth centre. The aim of 'Jugendhilfe Innsbruck' is not only to offer attractive leisure activities but also provide help and counselling.

The youth centre is a participation project which involved a number of groups during the planning phase such as youth organisations, autonomous youth groups and the already existing youth centre. The project was well accepted by both the young people and by the city authorities.

The activities of the young people in this youth centre range from competitions in billiards, table tennis and table football, to film projects, creative projects and to cooking. Some of the young people helped to create the youth pages of the city newspaper. A team of social workers in the centre established a house management board in order to involve the young people in the management. The director of the youth centre has a very positive picture of the young people and stresses that they have to be encouraged and given space in order to develop trustful relationships and activities.

From the perspective of one 14 year old girl her participation depends on her interest on the activities on offer. She takes part in the table football tournament because she likes it. She cannot influence the environment outside the youth centre, although at school she feels understood and is involved in school events and in the lessons. At the youth centre she has a say in everything and is always consulted. Her ideas were not realised in the programme of the youth centre, because the majority of the other young people had been against her suggestions. She finds participation outside the youth centre difficult because of adult prejudices and intolerance.

An 18 year old user of the youth centre appreciates the fact that while there are hierarchies outside, there are none within the youth centre. And he also likes the fact that one can participate but is not pushed to do so.

Youth organisations

An overview of institutions for children and young people in Innsbruck is given by the City of Innsbruck (www.junges-innsbruck.at) and the Austrian National Youth Council (www.jugendvertretung.at). However, it is virtually impossible to develop an encompassing list of organisations. The criteria used for the internet research on youth organisations in Innsbruck were that they had to have an explicit youth orientation or youth group and had to be based in Innsbruck.

List of organisations:

Religious organisations
- Baptistengemeinde Innsbruck – Kinder und Jugend (http://www.bg-innsbruck.at/index.php?id=10)

- Evangelische Jugend Innsbruck (http://www.ej-innsbruck.at.tt)

- Katholische ArbeiterInnenjugend (http://www.dibk.at/index.php?id=21&portal=81)

- Katholische Jugend (http://www.dibk.at/index.php?id=21&portal=24)

- Katholische Jungschar Innsbruck (http://www.jungschar.at/innsbruck/)

- Kulturelle muslimische Jugendunion (http://emus.at/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=17&Itemid=31)

- youngCaritas (http://tirol.youngcaritas.at/)

Nature-related youth organisations

- Alpenvereinsjugend (http://www.alpenverein.at/jugend/Team/Tirol/index.shtml)

- Naturfreunde Tirol (http://www.naturfreundejugend.at)

- Pfadfinder und Pfadfinderinnen Österreich (http://www.ppoe.at/tirol/)

Political youth organisations

- GAJ – Grünalternative Jugend Tirol (http://innsbruck.gruene.at/gruenes_netzwerk/gruen_alternative_jugend/)

- JUSOS Tirol– Junge SozialistInnen Tirol (http://www.sjoe.at/content/tir/home/index.html)

- JVP Tirol – Junge Volkspartei Tirol (http://www.jvp-tirol.at/)

- RFJ Tirol – Ring Freiheitlicher Jugend Tirol (http://www.rfj-tirol.at/)

- GfPA -Gesellschaft für politische Aufklärung (http://www.uibk.ac.at/gfpa/index1.html)

- ÖGJ, Gewerkschaftsjugend (http://www.oegj.at/)

- Landjugend/ Jungbauern (http://www.tjblj.at/index.php?id=49)

- Kinderfreunde Innsbruck (http://www.kinderfreunde-tirol.at/)

Student unions and representatives (university level)

- AG Innsbruck - AktionsGemeinschaft Innsbruck (http://www.agibk.info/)

- LSF Innsbruck - Liberales StudentInnen Forum (http://liberal.squarespace.com/uibk/)

- Pufl-Gras (http://www.pufl-gras.at/)

- KSV-LiLi Linke Liste (http://votacomunista.at/news/)

- RFS – Ring Freiheitlicher Studenten (www.rfs.at)

- VSSTÖ Innsbruck – Verband Sozialistischer StudentInnen (http://www.vaust.net/index.php)

- ÖH Innsbruck - Österreichische HochschülerInnenschaft (www.oehweb.at)

- Südtiroler HochschülerInnenschaft

- There are numerous student9sch1431.79801 Tm(!")T4.w 12 3002 Tw 12 3 0 12 106.26022831.78 Tm(Th

religious issues. They organise group meetings for children, lobby for children's rights, initiate activities for human rights and social issues, or visit institutions such as homes for the elderly.

The approach of this organisation implies a strong emphasis on Catholic-Christian faith, which influences the range of activities. Space for an active shaping of the environment exists in the institution of the Church, for example in the function of an altar server, or by co-determining church service for families, children and young people, or in the organisation and attendance of interconfessional meetings. However, denominational affiliation is not a necessary precondition for membership in the organisation. Young people experience different forms of co-determination and democratic processes. They express their desire to be heard, not only within the organisation but also outwards. They are frustrated with not being taken seriously by adults in meetings and boards. Of central concern for the young people are social values, relationships and integration, co-determination and equality. The voluntary, non-paid engagement of the young people is taken for granted.

Youth Group of the Red Cross Innsbruck

The organisation is active in the social and health sector. It relies predominantly on unpaid voluntary work (about 87%). The youth group in Innsbruck is rather small with 23 young people who are between 12 and 17 years old and attending general academic upper secondary schools. They meet once a week with their supervisor where they acquire the knowledge and skills to able to work in this organisation. These meetings are structured to provide a coherent curriculum. The young people can co-determine the proceedings, the content of the meeting, the time scheduling and additional leisure activities to some limited extent. Outright flexibility is virtually impossible within the structure and the scope of functions of the organisation. The overall weight of the young people in the organisation is rather small, since there are many university students working for the organisation so that the Red Cross does not have to rely on the younger volunteers.

The young people participate in the sense that they influence the social and health sector in the city through their voluntary engagement. As is the case with the young people's engagement in the 'Jungschar', the voluntary work is taken for granted and not recognised as participation.

Youth in public spaces
Streetwork

Streetwork as an institution for young people in Tirol is safeguarded by Article 11 of the youth welfare law of the Federal Region of Tirol.

Z6 streetwork in Innsbruck provides social, cultural and 'free-space' work for young people with a low threshold. The aim is to support the needs of the young people as they are formulated by the young people themselves and to effect a sustainable and holistic improvement of the situation of the particular young person. The basis for this work is a long-term provision of contacts and relationships which enables the social workers to provide adequate help with respect to situation, strengths and perspectives of the young person. Z6 makes efforts to find access to groups of young people who are disadvantaged with respect to material, psycho-social and infrastructural resources and who cannot be reached by other existing institutions.

The aims with respect to the clients of z6 streetwork are:

- recognition of the life-world and everyday-lives as a precondition for intervention

- stabilisation of scene or groups structures (not in every case)

- to enable/strengthen self-determined action

- enlargement of action space through needs-oriented leisure and cultural work

- support of relationships aside the problem fixed level

- prevention of problematic or problem generating behaviour

- support of clients in formulating their needs on the basis of a reflexion of their circumstances

- support of clients' skills and strengths

- development of life perspectives and competences

- gender-sensitivity

- harm reduction (health, crime)

- opening of access to material, social and institutional resources

- support of subsistence: housing, work, financial security

- Streetwork makes it necessary to involve the social-spatial environment of the young people. In this respect z6 aims to

- improve the acceptance of youth cultures in general

- improve acceptance in the environment of the clients such as other tenants or users of public and private institutions

- foster integration of youth groups in the community

- make use of available leisure provisions

- initiate new opportunities for adequate leisure and free space

- network with other institutions where clients request help from

Furthermore, z6 streetwork lobby's for these young people in public debates in order to improve their living conditions as well as their social and spatial resources. More specifically, they aim to;

- give a voice to those young people who are not heard in public

- improve acceptance for the young people's legitimate needs and wishes among people working in public institutions and departments

- influence local (social and youth) policy making in the interest of the clients

- respond to political measures, which endanger the living space of the young people (see above)

- present and interpret the life-world 'street' in appropriate media

- develop efficient street-work projects

Schools

The authors of this section carried out research on participatory practices at a commercial school and college in Wörgl, a town to the east of Innsbruck. There are around 700 students and 70 teachers at this school. This school was chosen for practical reasons. All schools and colleges are subject to the same regulations concerning participation which are based on the 'Schulunterrichtsgesetz'. The authors interviewed the head of the school, the education councillor, the student speaker of the school and a student class representative.

With respect to the representation of student interest there is active participation of the students' speaker and his two deputies. They meet once a month with the director in order to exchange problems, wishes and proposals, and information. There are organisational problems, problems of specific classes and problems with teachers that are discussed and solved. The head of the school is surprised that there are not more problems. In between the meetings the students' speaker approaches the director rarely, other students virtually never. There are very few students who are interested in becoming a students' speaker (in 2007 there were 5 candidates for 700 students), but those who are elected are always very active. The director sees the reasons for this general disinterest in the low prestige of any engagement for the welfare of the community, in the predominance of other interests such as sports, first relationships with the opposite sex and the lack of encouragement by parents.

The director emphasises the importance of the school climate by taking the students' concerns seriously. Furthermore, he organises an annual lunch with all the class speakers, parents' representatives and students' representatives in order to facilitate communication and problem solving. The school speakers' summon a meeting with all the class speakers. In addition, there is the school community board ('Schulgemeinschaftsausschuß'). It consists of the head of the school, three representatives of the teachers, three representatives of the parents and three representatives of the students. Each member, apart from the head of the school, has a resolving voice. According to the law, the school community board has to meet twice a year. It can decide on school events that last several days, parent-teacher meetings, rules of the house, projects to support participation at school, school autonomous curriculum regulations, school autonomous decisions on class size, school autonomous regulation of school days, etc. Its second task is debate important questions of education and didactics, planning of school events, and other relevant issues arising. This particular school community board has four meetings a year. According to the head of the school, the students' representatives are very active; partly determine the issues that are to be discussed. They show courage in confronting the teachers and their contributions are very constructive. However, he concedes time constraints restrict the space for participation.

According the education councillor, participation primarily takes place outside the legal framework. One example is the graduate ball, which the students largely organise by themselves. The students are also active in organising buffets for the parent-teacher meetings since this is an opportunity to earn money for the class community. Participation is dependent on the degree of importance of the event or project for the young people. Some young people with a strong social consciousness develop their participatory interests and activity quite rapidly, leaving those with

low levels of interest far behind. This school has co-organised the ski-world cup for disabled persons and has contacts with non-school organisations such as the youth section of the Red Cross. In the context of the latter, the students organise a first-aid seminar which attracts many students (since they need the training as part of their driving licence, perforce proving the importance of relevance).

Concerning the motivation to get involved in and for the school community, the school speaker stressed his strong interest and will to effect change at his school, for example the inconvenient bus connections. He had prepared intensively for the election of the school speaker, putting a team together and getting ready for the hearing where he presented his plans as future school speaker. Since his election he has been to seminars on school law and he has collected more information from the two students' organisations 'Schülerunion; and 'Aktion kritische Schüler'. The class representative said in his interview that he had been motivated by his class mates to accept this office. Nobody wants to take it on and the class representative himself did not think he was doing an important job. Compared to the school speaker the class representative had not sought extra information with respect to school participation. Both interview respondents estimated that most students do not know about their rights and do not care about them.

The authors conclude that interest in voluntary work is generally very low, especially as individualism, expressed in statements such as; "*I can sort that out myself, I do not need a representative*", seems to hamper the development of community solidarity. Time constraints and interest priorities lying in other areas (such as leisure, relationships and homework/learning) decreases the feasibility of engaging in voluntary work dramatically. In order to get active the benefit must be directly visible and close to the individual's problems and interests. Furthermore, the activity must also be effective and socially embedded.

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Austrian Case Study 2: Vienna

Natalia Wächter

Structure

The population size of Vienna is roughly 1.7 million including 18.7% foreigners (2005). The unemployment rate is around 8%. Politically, Vienna has a long social-democratic tradition. Today, it remains dominated by the SPÖ, the Social Democrats, in the City Council as well as most District Councils (16 out of 23)[20].

Youth affairs are dealt with in the Youth Department of the Federal Region of Vienna, MA 13, Education and extra-curricular youth work. It is responsible for the promotion and coordination of adult education as well as provision in extra-curricular youth work. It is therefore structured into two areas: education/pedagogics and youth/pedagogics. With the help of the offices for budget and staff, control, public relations and organisation the department safeguards the functioning of the structures. Several entities are affiliated (Libraries Vienna, media wien, a fashion school and music school in Vienna) with this department.

MA 13 works to safeguard a city-wide, demand-oriented, district-oriented and life-wide provision of educational and leisure time structures for the Viennese population. An annual focus on the assurance of quality standards is central to the work of the MA 13, as is the provision of structures which provide socially just access in both terms of equality of chances and social balance. The infrastructure should therefore be low-threshold and ask for only socially compatible fees.

The MA 13 is responsible for strategically coordinating management, administrative service for the affiliated entities, for the advancement of adult education and for youth work. It also coordinates cooperation with other departments and institutions. The department places a high degree of emphasis on the evaluation of processes and quality management alongside evaluation.

Youth work

The MA 13 provides stimuli and sets priorities for activities in the area of youth work. The focus is on the coordination and integration of various interest groups in Vienna. It is responsible for the planning, steering, conceptualising and tuning of activities in open and leisure-oriented pedagogics, outreach youth work, mobile youth work, street work and animating supervision ('Viennese Park Supervision').

There is close cooperation with non-profit organisations such as wienXtra, the Viennese Association of Youth Centres [Verein Wiener Jugendzentren], outreach projects and mobile youth work, the organisation 'Rettet das Kind' (Streetwork). Other non-profit groups include organisations that carry out the 'Viennese Park Supervision', youth organisations, the Viennese School Board and other independent organisations and initiatives that receive funding.

The main aim is to improve the living quality of the target groups in Vienna. Meaningful leisure time activities are seen as an integral part of preventative work. This is the intention of, for

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[20] Source: http://www.wien.gv.at/statistik/pdf/viennainfigures.pdf

example; the Viennese holiday programme of wienXtra, the Viennese youth centres and the Viennese park supervision. Group and clique work as well as low-key counselling are further important methods of outreach youth work and streetwork.

Another important aim is the participation of young people, meaning the development of provisions and structures, together with children and young people, so that they can actually pursue their interests and have their needs supported through development in creative and positive ways.

Young People's Cultural and Leisure Time Provision

The city of Vienna aims at motivating and enhancing creativity, fun and activity in Vienna. It also supports cultural diversity, social intelligence and responsible behaviour. Under this motto the MA 13 offers a range of activities in the fields of youth culture, leisure, information and further education.

In the unmanageable jungle of opportunities for leisure activities it is not always easy for young people and families to find out what is right for them. Important preconditions for an active choice are the knowledge of one's own interests and talents and a critical assessment of the leisure time facilities. Here, the task of wienXtra as the biggest stimulus giving institution in Viennese youth work is to provide qualitatively sound and diverse facilities.

In order to provide facilities that enhance the experiential possibilities for children and young people's development and it is important to take into account their life worlds. Adventure, play and fun are just as important as emancipation, personal and community development, democratic consciousness, tolerance and social integration. WienXtra does not arrange its facilities according to gender, social background or ethnic origin, but tries to adjust it according to the age and interests of the target groups. In order to open access for all activities are either free or the fees are reduced. WienXtra is supported by the MA13 and cooperates with more than 300 partner organisations.

Youth Institutions

Open youth work

Youth centres, youth cafes and youth meetings offer young people spaces where they are under no consumption pressure. They are staffed with trained youth workers who support the children and young people in shaping their space, able to co-determine the respective programme and carry out projects. Activities in the district improve the relationships between all inhabitants in the district.

Youth work aims at supporting the development of the young people's personalities by making diverse life experiences and social contacts possible. It offers culture, education, exercise, counselling and support for young people and children. What is particular is the voluntary participation, low-key access and self-determination of young people, a variety of contents and methods, diverse norms and values as well as activating and motivating forms of learning.

The largest provider of youth work in Vienna is the Association of Viennese Youth Centres. It provides projects, youth centres and youth meetings, mobile youth work and district youth work as well as courses and projects for finding out occupational aims. The association sees itself as a platform of youth interests, as an initiator and pool for ideas. They strive to create space for

young people where they can pursue their visions and ideas independently of their financial and social situation. At the same time they are supported in learning to take on responsibility and act for the benefit of the community. Tolerance and openness towards young people of diverse ethnic backgrounds is required to create a common space of activities for all. In this way, being young in Vienna can mean taking the future into one's hands and to shape it according to one's own wishes.

Active organisations:

- [Verein Wiener Jugendzentren](#) (Association Viennese Youth Centres)
- [Verein Rettet das Kind](#) (Association Save the Child)
- [Bassena Stuwerviertel](#)
- [Verein Zentrum Aichholzgasse](#)
- [Multikulturelles Netzwerk – cult.café](#) (Association Multicultural Network –cult.cafe).

Viennese Youth Organisations

Youth organisations are oriented towards the needs of the young and act in their interest. Youth organisations are spaces wherein children and young people can get to know and experience participation. They offer opportunities to articulate their interests and wishes and to actively shape their own environment together with like-minded peers. Youth organisations provide a high level of continuity through their democratic structure. At the same time they try to be modern and flexible through changing work foci, contents, projects and activities.

Youth organisations have a broad variety of different structures, target groups and facilities. They deal with many different issues and offer a broad range of activities which are realised in many different ways, from weekly meeting to bigger projects. Although almost all organisations are structured by membership many offer facilities with open access so that young people can bring along their friends. Leisure, fun and entertainment comprise one set of aims; additional aims include the mediation of social, political and cultural concerns as well as personal values.

The activities of these young members are mostly voluntary, self-organised, collectively organised and realised. The participative approach is therefore an essential element. Children and young people learn to get involved in various social spheres and to take on responsibility for their group. Often, the children are members of their group until adulthood. Thus, they experience multiple socialisations which help them to develop their personalities and motivates them to stay engaged in society as adults.

Active Organisations:

- Austrian Alpine Association, Regional Youth Section Vienna - [Österreichischer Alpenverein Landesjugendführung-Wien](#)
- Action Critical Students Vienna [Aktion Kritischer Schülerinnen und Schüler Wien](#)
- Association Bnei Akiva Vienna - [Verein Bnei Akiva](#)
- Protestant Youth Vienna - [Evangelische Jugend Wien](#)
- Young European Federalists Vienna - [Junge Europäische Föderalisten Landesverband Wien](#)

- Circle Freedom Youth Vienna - [Ring Freiheitlicher Jugend Landesgruppe Wien](#)

- Austrian Trade Union Youth Vienna - [Österreichische Gewerkschaftsjugend Landesgruppe Wien](#)

- Green-alternative Youth, Vienna - [Grünalternative Jugend Wien](#)

- Association Haschomer Hazair - [Verein Haschomer Hazair](#)

- Austrian Young Workers' Movement, headquarters Vienna - [Österreichische Jugendarbeiterbewegung Zentrale Wien](#)

- Youth Community of Christian Life - [Diözesanversand Wien Jugend-Gemeinschaft Christlichen Lebens](#)

- Catholic Youth, Archdiocese Vienna - [Katholische Jugend der Erzdiözese Wien](#)

- Catholic parish youth, Diocese Vienna - [Katholische Jungschar Diözesanleitung Wien](#)

- Austrian Children's World Regional group Vienna - [Österreichisches Jungvolk - Österreichische Kinderwelt Landesgruppe Wien](#)

- Austrian Children's Friends, Regional Organisation Vienna - [Österreichische Kinderfreunde Landesorganisation Wien](#)

- Kolping Austria Diocese Vienna - [Kolping Österreich Diözesanverband Wien](#)

- Viennese Rural Youth – Young Gardeners - [Wiener Landjugend - Junggärtner](#)

- Viennese City Association Grammar School Students' Association - [Wiener Stadtverband des Mittelschüler-Kartell-Verbandes](#)

- Nature's Friends' Youth, Vienna - [Naturfreundejugend Wien](#)

- Austrian Youth Movement Young ÖVP (Austrian Conservative Party) - [Junge ÖVP Österreichische Jugendbewegung Landesorganisation Wien](#)

- Viennese Scouts - [Wiener Pfadfinder und Pfadfinderinnen](#)

- Austrian Scouts Association, Regional Corps Vienna - [Österreichischer Pfadfinderbund Landeskorps Wien](#)

- Socialist Youth, Regional Organisation Vienna - [Sozialistische Jugend Landesorganisation Wien](#)

- Viennese Students' Union - [Wiener Schülerunion](#)

Young People in Public Spaces

Mobile youth work

It is not always evident that young people are listened to or heard. Mobile youth work strives to especially support disadvantaged young people in co-shaping their environment. Mobile youth work in Vienna is offered by the institutions 'Back on Stage' (Association Viennese Youth Centres) and 'Back Bone' (Association 'Alte Fleischerei') for 12 to 21 year olds, who cannot be reached by other institutions. It represents an autonomous field of work with respect to content

and method within extra-curricular youth work in Vienna. The main foci are preventive work and lobbying for the interests of young people.

Mobile youth work is oriented towards selected districts and neighbourhoods and addresses young people who spend most of their leisure time in public places where they are often seen as a nuisance and therefore excluded and marginalised. 'Back Bone' and 'Back on Stage' want to counteract this social exclusion by supporting young people in claiming rights. The two institutions want to improve living conditions, support young people's ideas and there realisation, and to strengthen their co-determination in political processes and the co-shaping of their environment. The needs and interests of girls and young women hold particular significance.

The facilities are developed on the basis of young people's needs. They feature low-thresholds and include project work, leisure activities and counselling for individual young people. Mobile youth work means taking care of young people's problems without patronising them. This often implies offering space that is not pedagogically loaded in order to foster their autonomy.

Active organisations:

- Verein Wiener Jugenzentren (Association Viennese Youth Centres)
- Back on Stage 5 (5th district)
- Back on Stage 10 (10th district)
- Back on Stage 11 (11th district)
- Back on Stage 16/17 (16/17th district)
- Verein Alte Fleischerei (Association Old Butchery)
- Back Bone 20 (20th district)

Viennese Park Supervision

The Viennese Park Supervision improves the life situation of young people in parks and housing estates. This supervision has existed for ten years and is animation and leisure time oriented. The catalyst for the foundation of this institution came from increasing conflicts in the parks centred on the diverging interests and needs of different groups of park users, and the lack of youth facilities in these dense, built up areas. Pilot projects demonstrated the positive effects of supervised parks for the whole community. This led to the introduction of park supervision in all districts which became possible due to close cooperation with the Viennese Park and Garden Department. Financially, this leisure time facility is funded by the individual districts.

Park supervision is oriented towards the neighbourhood and therefore takes place in the direct vicinity of the children and young people's homes. The 6 to 13 year old cohort especially constitutes the target group but there are also needs-oriented programmes for adolescents.

In addition, other user groups are involved in dialogue such as parents and elderly people. This interaction has improved the social climate in a sustainable way, leading to a better identification and integration for young people within public space.

At fixed times during the week trained supervisors are present in the parks. There are 120 locations spread across the city. For the children and young people involved joining in present's new opportunities for play, personal support and social security. These opportunities are free. The

supervisors are confidential persons, who act and speak in support of the needs and interests of the children and young people and who offer space for individual development. One particular aim of the park supervision is to let the young people outgrow prejudices with respect to culture and generation, and to increase the equality of opportunity between girls and boys. The activities include ball games and other games involving physical exercise, sports, card and board games, creative activities, parties, tournaments, projects and excursions.

Active Organisations:

- Balu&Du
- Bassena Stuwerviertel
- Come In
- JIM - Youth in Meidling (12th district)
- Juvivo
- Kiddy & Co
- Parkbetreuung Margareten (park supervision)
- Verein Multikulturelles Netzwerk (Organisation Multicultural Network)
- Verein Wiener Jugendzentren (Association Viennese Youth Centres)
- Verein zur Förderung der Spielkultur in den Parkanlagen des 17. Bezirks (Association supporting play culture in the parks of the 17th district)
- Wiener Familienbund (Viennese Family Association)
- Wiener Kinderfreunde (Viennese Children's Friends)
- Wiener Kinderfreunde - Bezirksorganisation Leopoldstadt (Viennese Children's Friends, district organisation Leopoldstadt)
- Wiener Kinderfreunde - Bezirksorganisation Brigittenau (Viennese Children's Friends, district organisation Leopoldstadt)
- Wiener Kinderfreunde - Bezirksorganisation Liesing (Viennese Children's Friends, district organisation Leopoldstadt)
- Zeit!Raum

Outreach Youth Work

Many young people cannot afford to go to costly events, but neither do they wish to stay at home. They do not they find the available leisure-pedagogical programmes and activities attractive. Rather they hang out in particular public places. It is in these areas that outreach youth workers operate. Young people who spend a significant proportion of their leisure time in public space sometimes need stimulation for meaningful leisure time activities. Young people who want to be involved in shaping their environment need support and encouragement from adults. This includes those who want to have parties without having to consume, they require adequate

spaces. Those who have problems need low-threshold counselling and confidential persons who are interested in their problems.

The youth workers from the outreach work organisations are active in public spaces such as parks and in appropriate rooms for children and young people. The activities they offer include group and clique work. They network with other institutions and organisations that work with youth and are financed through the central and decentralised budgets of the City of Vienna. These trained youth workers operate in a needs-oriented way and see themselves as a lobby for children and young people. The most important key elements for sustainable supervision are participation, prevention, gender-specific and gender-sensitive provision, diversity and integration.

Active organisations:

Bahnfrei!

Juvivo

Kiddy & Co

Verein Multikulturelles Netzwerk

Zeit!Raum

Streetwork

Young people or groups of young people who are in conflict with their social environment because of drug abuse, vandalism, racism, political extremism, or those who are the potential victims often cannot be reached by existing institutions. Streetwork helps disadvantaged young people through low-threshold supervision and counselling. These young people work together with streetwork staff in order to improve their situations and to develop more responsibility and self-determination.

Streetwork involves taking the side of the young people on a political and a personal level. Comparative to other actors and institutions streetworkers act as lobbyists or solicitors in order to safeguard young people's territorial and functional life spheres and spaces. Streetworkers represent the young people's interests in bodies and committees, where they are consulted as experts and advisors. However, concerning the young people, streetwork also involves honest and critical feedback on their behaviour and activities. This respect is a basic understanding of the streetworkers.

Gender-sensitive youth work is seen as a basic precondition for efficiency. Reflection on one's own gender roles and identity, girl-specific offers and anti-sexist work with boys develops self-consciousness and improves communication and cooperation between the sexes.

Active organisations:

- Association „Save the Child" ["Rettet das Kind"] with the following projects
- Streetwork Wieden
- Streetwork Wilhelmsdorf

- Streetwork Hietzing
- Streetwork Liesing
- Supra-regional: Streetwork Wien

Youth participatory projects in Vienna

- Word up! Parliament for young people in the district - Word up! (BezirksschülerInnenparlament)
- Viennese Youth Protection Act 2002 – young people create their own laws – Wiener Jugendschutzgesetz 2002 Jugendliche gestalten ihr Gesetz
- Viennese students' parliament - Wiener SchülerInnenparlament
- Nature-oriented play ground in the 13th district - Naturnaher Spielraum Furtwänglerplatz
- "Mehr Platz! Für Kinder", a pilot project to create more space for young people in the 2nd district - mehr platz! für Kinder
- Have a seat! On a sculpture in the 2nd district - have a seat! auf der „Sitzskulptur Selzergasse"
- Vienna in the children's eyes - "wien aus kinderaugen"
- Youth district representation in the 15th district - Jugendbezirksvertretung 15
- Children's and youth district parliament in the 13th district - Kinder- und Jugendbezirksparlament Hietzing
- Word up 20, in the 20th district - Word Up 20
- Children's and youth district parliament in the 14th district - Kinder- und Jugendparlament Penzing
- Children's and youth district parliament in the 4th district - Kinder- und Jugendbezirksparlament Wieden
- District students' parliament in the 16th district - BezirksschülerInnenparlament Ottakring
- District students' parliament in the 5th district - Margaretner SchülerInnenparlament
- Youth district parliament in the 15th district Jugendbezirksvertretung 15
- Children's and youth council in the 12th district - Kinder- und Jugendbeirat Meidling

Description of Word up!

The target group of this youth parliament are the school children of the 7th and 8th level (aged 12 to 14) who go to school in the 22nd district. The content of the plenum is decided through voting by the young people. The aim is to give the students the opportunity to actively co-shape their neighbourhood and to make propositions on matters that concern them. This should give the young people a better insight into political processes on the communal level and to give them the

chance to actively influence such processes, to experience themselves as a group which can express its own interests, and to get attention from decision-makers in the community.

The youth parliament meets twice a year. Parliamentary meeting are preceded by a preparatory meeting in which 6 members of the Association Viennese Youth Centres and the students prepare the content in working groups. In the parliamentary meeting itself the results are presented by the spokesmen of the working groups, who form the podium together with the principle of the district and (optionally) experts. The proposals are then discussed in the plenary. The event is moderated by one member of the Association Viennese Youth Centres and two students. About one week after the parliamentary meeting, a third meeting for reflection takes place, wherein the course of the meeting can be criticised and improvements suggested. Communication between the meetings is based on minutes which are sent out to all the schools and the private email-addresses of the students (provided that these email addresses are known).

The youth parliament is organised by the Association of Viennese Youth Centres

By order of the principal of the district; apart from staff of the Association Viennese Youth Centres the office of the district principle and the District Youth Commissioner and, if needed, experts are involved. An invitation of the District Principle goes to all the schools with the support of District School Inspector. On average, 9 to 14 schools from the district take part. The number of adults present at parliamentary meetings can range from 15 to 25 people, most being teachers of the young parliamentarians. Adults can speak up in the plenary, but they are urged to be short and not to introduce new issues.

The District Youth Commissioner is present at all meetings, functions as the contact person and gives feedback on the political impact of the young people's proposals. In addition there is a weekly office hour of the District Youth Commissioner. During the parliamentary session the primary contact is the District Principle him/herself. The District Youth Commissioner is also present and joins the discussion.

The budget for the youth parliament comes from the District Council.

French Case Study 1: Metz

Patricia Loncle & Vrginie Muniglia

Socio-Economic Context

Metz is a city in the Northeast of France, it is also the capital of the Lorraine region and of the department of Moselle. It is a medium-sized city with 322 526 inhabitants and it is the 16th French urban unit[21].

The economy of the Lorraine was based on traditional industries (textile, mining and metallurgy) which have experienced decline. Consequently, since the 1970's the region has experienced major difficulties with a rising unemployment rate that is now near the national average (9.8% in 2005)[22]. The logistics and service sectors have experienced the strongest growth in recent years, particularly in cities such as Metz.

Metz is characterized by a difficult social context, in particular in the suburbs; it suffers from an important spatial segregation. Whereas the centre is rather seen as a place of consumption reserved for middle and upper classes, the suburbs are deeply marked by high rates of poverty indicators: unemployment, delinquency, poor housing, bad health and so forth.

Borny is an area located in the suburbs of Metz. It was mainly constructed between 1962 and 1976. As with most of the areas hastily created in France during this period it symbolised an improvement in accommodation conditions but it now represents poverty and exclusion. Thus, since the1980's it is the object of all urban policy programs. The area is also known to attract a large quantity of drug dealers.

One inhabitant out of ten in Metz lives in Borny. The population is composed of a high proportion of families, particularly large families, so it is a young area. In 1990, 43% of the population was under 20 years old (compared to 26% in the whole of Metz, Dinaucourt, 1999).

In 1995, Borny concentrated a quarter of the minimum subsistence allowance (RMI) beneficiaries in Metz. The unemployment rate appears as the most significant problem. In 1990, the unemployment rate was close to 30% in Borny with 20% of Metz's unemployed dwelling in this suburb. Young people (under 25 years old) are even more affected as 38% of them are unemployed (23% in Metz); a quarter of the job seekers are less than 25 years old (Dinaucourt, 1999).

One of the most striking aspects of Borny today, apart from the buildings, is the high proportion of immigrants and of young people from a migrant background. In 1990, 27% of the households and 33% of the inhabitants had a foreign nationality. These proportions are three times higher than in the entire city of Metz and they have been multiplied by a factor of three since 1975. This trend is reinforced by practices in the allocating of social housing. In 1993 in Metz, 8% of the 'low rent social housing' (HLM) allocated concerned foreign families; in Borny this proportion goes to 26%, in comparison with a mere 4% in the city-centre of Metz (Dinaucourt, 1999).

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[21] Source: INSEE

[22] Source: INSEE.

Moreover, the population of Borny is characterized by the diversity of its geographical origins, currently; twenty-seven nationalities are represented. The nationalities are:

Country of origin	%
Algeria	13
Morocco	17
Tunisia	1
Turkey	31
Asia	23
Africa	5
EU members	5

Source: RGP, 1990

The association of these two factors, (i) the important percentage of immigrated populations or (ii) of populations from a migrant background and the diversity of the origins, turns out to be decisive in the shaping of the local public policies and of the local associations' initiatives. Indeed, questions such as the illiteracy or the reception of the foreign populations, the isolation of the housewives, the fair sharing of the associative premises, or the search for a balance between assimilation and communitarianism punctuate the entire debates on the area.

Structure of Politics and Administration and Forms of Youth Representation

Metz is a right-wing city; the mayor has been in power since 1971. The municipality is organised into seven departments and thirty-six sub-departments. Four sub-departments are relevant with regards to youth: the youth, the sports (which belong to the same department), the multimedia, and the urban/inner city policy (Politique de la ville).

Regarding public interventions towards young people in Metz, one can say that although the situation of this population seems to be particularly worrying in Borny, policies are really limited, even in this suburb. Indeed, since the 1980's, all the preliminary diagnosis for the urban policy measures show that young people in Borny encounter more difficulties than in any inner area in the Department: academic failure, unskilled school-leavers, discrimination, remoteness, poverty, unemployment, health problems, delinquency etc. However, despite these assessments and the funding related to urban policy and to other local public policies, the programs do not appear to be very ambitious or innovative.

In fact, Metz has no real tradition of intervention toward young people; the local conception of caring for this part of the population was born during the 1970's and has been based on repression and struggle against delinquency. Moreover, one can point out tense local politics which result in fragmented actions, characterised by conflicts between actors.

Youth Institutions, NGOs and Voluntary Organisations
Youth Clubs

There are five youth clubs in Borny. Four of them offer youth premises for non-supervised activities: games (football tables, billiard tables, darts and so on), a reading room, a computer room, information provision and a bar without alcohol. All these organisations are associations.

In three of them, the youth workers are primarily volunteers who are supervised by cultural animators. One of these organisations is a former youth association: 'Borny Young People Association' (L'Association des jeunes de Borny; AJB) (cf. infra); one is a multicultural association (AFILEC) that offers activities to the inhabitants of the area through the perspective of integration; another is an association based on common cultural origin: 'The Association of Turkish workers of Moselle' (L'Association des Travailleurs Turcs de Moselle; ATTM)).

The fourth youth premises are supervised by a youth work association (Association de prevention spécialisée, d'insertion et de socialisation; APSIS) that acts specifically in the field of the delinquency prevention. The employees are street-workers entitled 'éducateurs de prevention' (cf. infra).

The fifth youth club in Borny is the 'Maison des jeunes et de la culture'; MJC. It is an associative organisation that provides leisure and cultural activities to young people, but also to children and adults in order to foster their autonomy and development. This youth club belongs to a national network based on principles such as the access to culture and education for everybody. The employees are volunteers and cultural animators. There no specific premise for the youngsters of the area.

The Youth Workers

'Educateurs de prévention'

A lot of youth workers in Borny are 'éducateurs de prévention'; they are employed by an NGO and funded at departmental level (Conseil général) through the framework of childhood welfare (Aide sociale à l'enfance) and through the Municipality in the framework of urban policy. They work in the field of the delinquency prevention, especially addressing marginalised young people and young people at risk of social exclusion. They work mainly on the streets where they meet youngsters who seem to be at a loose end. Their principal tool is education through relationships, an informal relationship based on free commitment; they can use leisure activities as a support. They create social link and can orient young people toward more institutional care such as social workers, workers in the field of employment etc.

Cultural animators

Furthermore there are also cultural animators in Borny; also employed by NGOs. They work in youth clubs or social centres and mainly organise leisure time activities such as summer camps, cultural and sport activities. For several years some of them have come from the youth associations of the area. They are funded by the local State administrations and by the Municipality through the framework of urban policy.

The Mission locale

The 'Mission locale' is an associative organisation that aims towards the social and professional inclusion of the 16-25-year-olds that have left the training or educational system. It belongs to a national network and it is funded by the State, the local authorities and the European Union. The Missions locales consider that the question of employment cannot be resolved without the prior resolution of problems in fields such as housing, health or relationships with parents. The *Mission*

locale workers are supposed to use an individual and global approach with the youngsters and to use a partnership network with social workers, other youth workers, health workers and training organisations. They are also supposed to work on the local social and economical context with their different partners (public authorities, companies, associative actor); but, in reality, their approach is ma

The Youth Council

The creation of a Youth council in Borny in 2001 constituted a major rupture in a local context dominated by a negative picture of the youth and by the will to fight delinquency. One influential elected representative from the area decided to organise a Youth council a few years ago that seems to be interesting under the twofold point of view of (i) impact on the decision making process and of (ii) youth agency.

This local representative wanted to restructure the urban policy through a global intervention. It proposed to change the picture of the area and to get closer to the population of the area: to represent people from a migrant background, to develop fieldwork in order to rely on the area's resources and to support the inhabitants' initiatives. In this context, the Youth council represents an opportunity to radically change the previous methods of addressing young people's issues: although it is first of all supposed to reduce delinquency, it is also supposed to improve knowledge of young people's needs.

The experience is conducted at area level and is implemented by several youth services (integration at work and struggle against delinquency) within the framework of the application by the Municipality for a major urban rehabilitation program (le Grand Project de Ville).

The selection of young people for the Youth council was based on a preparatory fieldwork led by the 'Mission locale' employee with the help of youth associations. The selection was very pragmatic; criteria were not strictly established but the youth worker responsible for the process chose to look for young people aged over fourteen years old and who were representative of the youth of the area. She systematically met local youth organisations in order to assess their will to participate in the project. She also selected young people from various minority backgrounds in order to represent the population of the area and she gave great importance to young females who were less organised than males. As a result, she succeeded in gathering young people who considered themselves as representative and who had easy access to the youth of the area.

Most of the young councillors were already members of youth organisations so they already knew the local political game. The interviews with young people revealed that they are perfectly aware of the fact that they are involved in a project strongly linked to the political career of a local representative. Nevertheless, they have the feeling of being part of a process of bargaining: they agreed to participate in the Council with the common objective of combating violence but, in return, they expect their involvement to have an impact on the way the young people were integrated in the area (and by extension, in the city as a whole) and on the representation of the population toward young people.

If one considers the assessment of the policy-making process, one can underline that, as the Youth council is part of the Area council, the recommendations of young people are relatively effective. Indeed, in the framework of the urban policy in which the experiment is conducted, the process of participation has to be strictly followed. As a consequence, proposals emanating from the Area council have to be considered and integrated as far as possible in the local decision-making process. In addition, the Area council is competent to express its recommendations on any issue concerning the area. This meant that young people are in a position to be consulted on subjects such as the housing policy, the urban development and the policy of struggle against unemployment.

Moreover, it is important to underline that the members of the Youth council express some confidence in the process. They used to be considered as potential delinquents and as a particularly violent section of the population. The participation in the Council represents the opportunity to have this vision changed. In a city where virtually no public policies were directed toward them young people appear to have organised themselves to be able to bargain with policy makers (principally the Municipality, but also the State representative at local level). Consequently, in the Youth council, they are prepared to develop their recommendations on youth issues and far beyond.

Schools

At the beginning of the1990's, a deep evolution was introduced in the French educational system. The model of civic education courses was transformed into a model which mixes institutional knowledge together with participation experimentation. As a consequence, a twofold process took place: (i) the reorganisation of young people representation places and (ii), the affirmation of their rights.

This has assisted in the creation of the Students' Representatives' Councils[23] (1998), the Local Councils of Secondary School Life (1991), the National Council of Secondary School Life (1995) and the Councils of Students' Representatives of Secondary School Life (1998-2000).

In these councils the member's selection, the definition of the area of competence and the adoption of the functioning rules follow an opening process. These principles are supposed to facilitate the commitment of the members in the councils. Unfortunately it seems to have contributed to a weakening of the commitment (Becquet, 2005).

Concerning the Local Secondary School Life Councils, the potential interlocutors' positions in the schools (headmasters, teachers, year heads) could be qualified as very doubtful about the institution of these measures (Becquet, 2005).

Concerning the students, the weak conviction about the interest of these institutions and also the fear of the political use of these experiences can limit the commitment. Moreover, although all the members could express themselves, the councils reproduce behaviours adopted within the framework of social life; thus the equitable process pushed forward is not inevitably effective. Furthermore, these councils have a consultative vocation and a power of proposition only. Finally, the institutional configurations of these measures limit their scope of action; indeed, the Ministry of education is a much closed organisation and there are important difficulties to interdepartmental work (Becquet, 2005).

The creation of the Secondary School Life Councils is presented as a reply to young people's requests. However, young people have trouble placing themselves in relation to the prescriptive actions of these councils. Their request for listening is perhaps more a request for affiliation and recognition than a request for measures. In fact, only a minority can take up these measures. These institutional replies are carriers of an injunction to commit which can immediately limit the commitment (Becquet, 2005).

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[23] Students' representatives do exist since 1968.

French Case Study 2: Rennes

Patricia Loncle & Vrginie Muniglia

Socio-Economic Context

Rennes is a city in the West of France and it is the capital of the Brittany (Bretagne région) and of the department of Ille-et-Vilaine. It is a medium-sized city; with 272,263 inhabitants and is the 20th French urban unit[24]. Rennes is a dynamic and wealthy city, not far from Paris (two hours by train) characterized by a relatively fluid social context.

Local industries include car manufacturing and telecommunications; these industries concentrate activities in the service sector and gather the higher incomes of the region. The city seems to have been relatively spared by the economic crisis as in Brittany the unemployment rate is under the national average (7.9% in Brittany to 9.8% in France); it is even lower in the employment area of Rennes (7.2% in 2005)[25]. Rennes invests heavily in arts and culture and a number of its festivals (such as the music festival 'Les Transmusicales') are well known throughout France.

The population of the Ille-et-Vilaine is rather young in comparison with the rest of the country. In 2004, 26.2% of the inhabitants of the department were under twenty years of age (compared to 25% in France) and 55.3% are under forty (52.2% in France). Rennes is also a university city which accommodates a large proportion of students (60,000 students, 20% of the population)[26].

Brittany attracts few migrants to its territory. In 1999 only 1.6% of the whole regional population and 2.7% of Rennes population were migrant against 7.4% in France overall. However, the proportion of migrants in Brittany has grown steadily since the 1960's. While the proportion of migrants is stable in France, it has quadrupled in Brittany since 1962. 27% of the migrants of the region come from the European Union; among them 10.5% come from Great Britain (two out of three arriving since 1990), 9.6% from Portugal (78% of whom were living in Brittany before 1990). North Africans represent 17.5% of the migrant population in Brittany; this is an old migration as 75% of them were living in Brittany before 1990. In Rennes, 15.8% of the foreign migrants come from the European Union (26.6% in the region) and 45.2% are from a country outside EU (compared to 33% in the region) (Dussud, 2004).

Structure of Politics and Administration and Forms of Youth Representation

Rennes is a left-wing city and the current mayor has been in power since 1977. The Municipality is organised in seven departments: education, sports and areas; information and communications; administrative provision; technical units; networks and general means; finance, market and budgetary control; culture; health and solidarity.

There is a 'Youth mission' that is integrated in the Education, sports and areas departments it is thus linked with the urban/inner-city policy and with the community life policy. Young people

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[24] Source: INSEE

[25] Source: INSEE

[26] Source: INSEE

are also affected by the Prevention and delinquency mission which is a component of the Networks and general means department.

The Youth mission implements programs specifically addressed to young people in order to mainly encourage their participation. It also supports local actors in their formulation of youth questions. Moreover, it has a function of referent and expertise on everything related to the youth field in the urban policy.

The creation of the Youth mission in 1995 resulted from a questioning led by the Municipality on relationships with young people; it corresponds to a will to develop direct intervention in a field which has been largely delegated.

Indeed, the Municipality has a long and consensual tradition of intervention toward young people. Since the 19th Century, and more institutionally since the 1960's, it has introduced stable functioning rules with the associative sector giving it a delegation of duties in the youth caring field whilst keeping a constant control on implementation. Moreover, the local conception of caring for young people was based on care and social measures and on a traditional conception of youth work oriented by strongly coded pedagogic modalities.

In 1994, after several failures, the Municipality decided to launch a discussion about its relationships with young people based on the acknowledgment that the previous youth policies were unable to establish a constructive dialogue with this part of the population. This discussion first led to the creation of the Youth mission in the organisation chart of the local administration and thereafter to the appointment of a local representative in charge of young people. Nowadays, the actions still aim at organising youth leisure time, however they seek to also encourage youth expression 'in the public space'. There is no longer a Youth council but many consultative actions are facilitated towards young people.

More recently, the question of youth health has taken on more importance, in particular through concerns about suicides and alcohol consumption. The city is usually peaceful if one considers the question of delinquency but it is also prompt to organise protests. Nevertheless, due to a large proportion of students, it is very lively and sometimes even too lively! Since 2004, and over the next two years, the former regional prefect attempted to end to the weekly festivities which took place in the centre of the town and sent the police in to quieten the students down. The weekly festivities almost turned into weekly riots and sometimes into violent struggles between students and the police.

Youth Institutions, NGOs and Voluntary Organisations

The Youth Information Centre of Brittany (CRIJB)

The Youth Information Centre of Brittany (CRIJB) is the central structure of participation in Rennes. The CRIJB is an association integrated in a national network of information centres; it is funded by the decentralised public administrative bodies of the Minister for Youth and Sports and by the local authorities.

Its first mission consists of information actions toward young people but it also promotes a lot of initiatives toward young people. Since the 1980's, the CRIJB has developed a lot of transversal and partnership experimentations. It works, for instance, with the Mission locale on questions of employment or with the DDASS (decentralised public administrative body of the Minister of Health and Social Affairs) in the field of public health (contraception, aids, drug addiction etc.).

For ten years, the Municipality has delegated to the CRIJB the task of supporting youth initiatives and young people's expectations. The strong links existing between the CRIJB and the Youth mission (they have shared the same director) and the legitimization of the intervention of this association in the field of youth participation may explain the prominence given to the CRIJB.

For instance, the CRIJB is in charge of the Youth Initiative Fund of Rennes which offers four project grants for 16 to 25 year old young people in the fields of culture, Europe, areas and 'living together'. This fund allows the realisation of eighty projects each year. Within this framework the cultural animators of the CRIJB provide information about this program, and offer advice and support to youngsters in setting up their own project. They also ensure the organisation of the deliberations, monitoring and the valorisation of these projects.

Moreover, for ten years, the CRIJB has a produced a monthly newspaper, 'Zap', entirely run by young people.

The brand new '4 bis' in the centre of the City is a symbol of the local youth policy. It is supported through a strong partnership between the Municipality and the State, and offers a range of services dedicated to young people (health, housing, culture and so forth)

Dazibao

The CRIJB was also chosen to implement one of the main responses of the Municipality in view of the problems with the young festivities in the city-centre every Thursday night. Thus, since 2005, from September to June, the CRIJB operates a public place from 11pm to 3am one Thursday per month. All the activities (e.g. concerts, board games, juggling, dancing, presentation of an association, photo exhibitions) are organized by young people who share their hobbies. Young people can do whatever they wish (once it's legal) in this place except drinking alcohol.

(http://www.crij-bretagne.com/dazibao/)

The Youth Clubs

There are several youth clubs (Maisons des jeunes et de la culture; MJC) in Rennes. They are associative organisations which offer leisure and cultural activities to young people, but also to children and adults, in order to foster their autonomy and development. These youth clubs are members of a national network based on principles such as the access to culture and education for everybody. Moreover, in Rennes most of these youth clubs, besides their activities of cultural animation, have developed a specific field: one is specialised in theatre, another in current music, another in dance. One of the effects of this specialisation is the promotion of the area where the youth club is located. Indeed, the shows proposed by the MJC in the areas of Rennes are attractive for a population who generally stay in the city-centre. There are four MJC in Rennes;

http://www.la-paillette.net/

http://www.grand-cordel.com/

http://www.mjc-antipode.com/

http://www.mjcbrequigny.com/

In areas where there is no youth club, community centre's (Maison de quartier) provide leisure and cultural activities to not alone young people but also children and adults. These community centres aim at sustaining social cohesion in the areas. There are about ten Maisons de quartier in Rennes.

Additionally, there are four community arts centres and two traditional NGOs of popular education (one secular: 'Le Cercle Paul Bert', the other denominational: 'L'Union des Patros') which provide activities to young people in the city's areas.

Youth Workers

Cultural animators

Most of the youth workers in Rennes are cultural animators; they are employed by associative structures such as young work hostels, community arts centres, youth clubs and arts centre. They work primarily on youth socialisation within leisure time and group-related activities. They perform in associations funded by the local State administrations and by the Municipality.

'Educateurs de prévention'

There is also an association of éducateurs de prévention, Le Relais, funded at departmental level (Conseil général) in the framework of the childhood welfare (Aide sociale à l'enfance). It works in the field of the delinquency prevention, especially addressing marginalised young people and young people at risk of social exclusion.

There is also a team of youth workers in each area. They target young people between 12 and 18 years old, except in the city-centre where they target the 18-25 years old marginalized young people.

These youth workers work mainly on the street, where they meet the youngsters who are at a loose end. Their principal tool is education by relationship, an informal relationship based on the free commitment; they can use leisure activities as a support. They create social links and can orient young people toward more institutional care such as social workers, workers in the field of employment and so on.

The Mission locale

The Mission locale is a community organisation that aims at the social and professional inclusion of the 16-25 years old (cf. Metz Case study).

Youth in the Public and Youth Scenes

Youth Associations

Although youth associations are very developed in Rennes they are not recognised as public actors by the local authorities. In fact, there are two types of youth associations. The first type is rather institutionalised and operates in relation to the public authorities. It concerns the cultural, sport and environmental sectors. These associations can either be m

The second type of association is made up of young people who gather in an alternative way, most of the time in the cultural field. They have strong political positions but they remain distant from the political game. If they use the associative form, it is largely by default and they expect to have nothing or almost nothing to do with public life. In fact, these 'young people' are often not that young (most of them are between 25 and 40 years old) but they feel as representatives of a form of youth counter-culture.

For instance, The Collective (Le Collectif) is an association created in 1997 by 40 youth associations in order to promote current music. Currently, it contains nearly a thousand members from the musical sector (musicians, technicians, audience and associations). They consider together the goal of "*sustainable development, respecting everybody, of the local musical scene and, in particular, of his facilities (associative premises, concert halls…)*". The Collective is responsible for the management of a complex located in a disused factory named The Modern Garden (Le Jardin Moderne). The Modern Garden is made up of twenty premises dedicated to rehearsals and recording, concerts, associative offices, bar (with alcohol), and training etc. This complex is funded by the local authorities and private partners. However, despite adhering a very critical position towards institutions and politics the members of The Collective remain outside of the political arena and political debates. They do not seek to have an influence on the local authorities; they cultivate a forum for their expression but try not to be a spokesperson in the public space.

http://www.jardinmoderne.org/

In order to overcome to the lack of visibility of the youth associations and to give them representation, the CRIJB coordinates a network of the youth associations (young people under 30 years old) in Rennes, RéA-J. This network exists since 2006 and it represents 33 associations acting in the fields of culture, local and international solidarity, sports, environment, arts and media and so on. For the moment it seems to be chiefly made up of the first type of associations.

http://www.assojeunes-rennes.org/

The (Late) Youth Council

A youth council was created in Rennes in 2001. The implementation of the youth council was the latest stage in the renewal of the dialogue between young people and the Municipality.

The selection of the young councillors was based on multiple criteria. The list of criteria was transmitted to a large number of organisations working with young people throughout the city. The organisations were supposed, in return, to give name of youngsters who corresponded to the criteria. The young people selected had to be members of an organisation (in this case: students' associations, cultural, sport and environmental associations, migrant associations and political organisations); they had to come from various areas of the city (which, in practice, was very awkward); they had to be between 15 and 25 years old, with an equal representation of males and females.

In reality these strong demands may have contributed to the introduction of a bias in the features of the youngsters selected. The Municipality appeared to be in search of a kind of ideal young person, both representative of youth as a whole and able to understand quickly and wisely the political stakes of the experiment. As a result, during their first meeting, the young people concerned realised the existence of this bias and refused this pertinence. They had the feeling that there was a risk of manipulation in this process.

So, from the beginning, a certain lack of confidence existed between the Youth council members and the Municipality representatives.

Considering the assessment of this policy-making process, the young councillors were really not likely to have their voices heard. In fact, the local representatives and especially the mayor were not convinced of the necessity to take into account the recommendations of young people. The mechanisms of youth consultation were de facto strictly limited. Young people were supposed to directly represent the concerns of young people. For instance, issues such as student housing, student transport and mobility, cultural and leisure, and the provision of information for young people. Their advice was totally consultative and the Municipal council was free to take them into account or not. This latter needed to provide no explanation if it decided to ignore the recommendations.

As result, after one year of functioning, only five people were still involved in the process. They were extraordinarily bitter and felt they had been manipulated. This can be explained by the Youth council's lack of confidence and lack of influence. Nevertheless, the inexperience of young people in the political field can also be emphasised. In Rennes youth associations have been developed but in ways that do not help participation in public life.

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Italian Case Study 1: Palermo

Morena Cuconato & Gabriele Lenzi

Context and Socio-Economic Background

Palermo has 1,250,000 inhabitants and is the capital of the island of Sicily, in the South of the country. Traditionally it is a right-wing city.

The 1948 Italian Constitution granted a certain degree of autonomy to some regions, to ensure that services at the State level could be as decentralized as possible. Within this framework Sicily together with Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Sardinia, Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol, and the Aosta Valley achieved a special status of autonomy. This provided them with special legislative powers concerning some specific local matters based on cultural grounds, geographical location, and on the presence of significant ethnic minorities.

Agriculture still represents the main economic resource for Palermo and its metropolitan area. The sea constitutes a major economic resource for the city; it has always been a sea-trade hub due to its strategic position with extensive fisheries.

In the past number of years, an abundance of local naturalistic, historical and cultural beauties has given impulse to the tourism industry. The developments in the fields of enology and viticulture have enhanced the wine industry as a new strategic sector for Palermo and the whole island.

Another relevant economic sector of Palermo is that of the building industry, a sector where the Mafia is exercising its strongest influence (through control of building contractors and of the trade of concrete and building materials).

Sicily has about 54.7 % youth unemployment and this shows a harsh reality of the Italian economy moving 'at two speeds'. This reality holds a deep influence on youth life, in Palermo, as in many other areas of the South, for many young people undeclared work represents the most likely work future.

The rate of school dropout is also rather high among young people in compulsory education as well as during the first years of high school. To complete the picture, the following factors require mention: urban marginality, economic and social underdevelopment, extreme precariousness of income, low educational level and low motivation on the part of parents concerning the school career of their children.

A particularly threatening element for many young people in several districts of Palermo is from the enduringly strong appeal of the Mafia; on both the cultural level (behaviour pattern) and on the level of the economic perspectives. As is well known, the Sicilian mafia is a very complex phenomenon, characterized by a functional connection of different aspects: crime, accumulation of capital, power, cultural codes and social consent. The Mafia has hindered the efforts of civil society and institutions to promote reforms in the region: therefore Sicily has still an extremely low per capita income and a high unemployment rate.

26,390 migrants are living in Palermo, of which 4.761 (18%) are minors, coming from above all Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Tunisia. In Palermo's school are 2,897 foreign pupils, representing 1.3% of the school population.

Actors of Public Youth Policies[27]

Palermo has no tradition of coordinated and steady public youth policy interventions. Until recently actions have been sporadic and not connected. The youth population did not seem to be considered as a proper target of policies and services, and the conditions of young people only acquired specificity when connected with marginalising processes (mafia, drugs, deviance, violence, school dropouts, etc.). Moreover, in the recent past (as in the rest of Italy) most youth policies have been addressed towards children or adolescents aged between 11 and 18 years, there was no sign of policies for young adults.

It was only in 2006 that for the first time a Town councillor responsible for 'Tourism and Youth Policy' (Assessorato turismo e Politiche giovanili) has been created, this has led to the development of several interventions aiming at enhancing participatory forms of youth policies.

The Local Youth Plan and the Youth Forum

On the 22nd of December 2007 the city government approved the realisation of the so called 'Local Youth Plan' (Piano locale giovani), allowing the town of Palermo to participate in the National Youth Plan of the recent established Ministry for Youth Policies,[28] which designates to the Sicilian town 400,000 Euro for measures in favour of youth and their social participation (access to homes, jobs, business, credit and culture). For its part, the city administration will contribute to the Plan with a co-financing of 50,000 Euro.

Concerning youth participation at municipal level, the principal initiative of the new instituted Town councillor for Youth Policies is the planned activation (still at a very initial stage) of a Municipal Youth Forum. The first step (in the next few months) will be the mapping of the different forms of formal and non formal youth associations (presently a complete list of youth associations doesn't exist). The Youth Forum should function as reference point for collecting suggestions, planning and evaluating municipal youth policies.

In the Municipality's intention for the initial stage of activation the Youth Forum should proceed with thematic working groups that can propose ideas and projects with the technical support of the Municipality. The Town councillor for Youth Policies has the intention of making a seat and other facilities (e.g. an administrative staff for 10 working hours per week) available for the Youth Forum.

Other actors in the field of children and youth policies at local level are:

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[27] Part of the present information has been collected thanks to interviews with the City councillor, Mr. R. Russo, and his expert for youth questions, Mrs. L. Poli.

[28] The Ministry for Youth Policies and Sport (*Pogas*) was instituted for the first time in May 2006. Even though this is a Ministry without Portfolio, the first few months of activity have also been used for identifying and establishing several channels of funding needed to perform its institutional activities and tasks. *Law No 248* of 4 August 2006 enacting "*Urgent measures for economic recovery*" instituted the National Fund for Youth Policies, with an initial capital endowment provided under the recent Budget Law for the three-year period 2007-2009 (€130 million per year). The fact of attending the meetings of the Inter-Departmental Economic Planning Committee (*CIPE*) and cooperating with the Ministry for Economic Development ensures that the ministry is able to identify Funds specifically intended for youth policies and sports in conjunction with local government authorities, mainly using the instrument of *Framework Programme Agreements* (APQs) with the Regional governments and *Local Youth Plan*s with Municipal Authorities (a First Agreement, will fund 27 Local Plans in 27 municipalities, among them Palermo and Bologna).

'Organisation Unit for Minors' Rights' (Unità Organizzativa dei Diritti dei Minori). This organisation is located within the Town's Department of Social Affairs. This unit should coordinate all the recreation and socialisation activities for disadvantaged children and adolescents (13-18 year olds) that have been activated due to Law 285/1997 (Provisions for the promotion of rights and opportunities of children and adolescents). Between 1997 and 2003 this Law financed at national level several projects for the promotion of children's rights, quality of life, development, individual fulfilment and socialisation. Particularly in Palermo Law 285 allowed the activation of ca. 30 Minors' Aggregation Centres (Centri Aggregativi per Minori for children 6-12 and adolescents 13-18 years old), aimed at supplying after-school activities, street education, cultural activities especially designed to include young people coming from socio-cultural disadvantaged backgrounds. These Centres are usually managed by associations with different cultural background, many of them by catholic associations. In some districts of Palermo the Centri Aggregativi are the only entities to promote cultural and social aggregation, thereby offering an important alternative to the street.

'Centre for Juvenile Justice' (Centro Giustizia Minorile): Its aim is to coordinate juvenile justice services in order to limit measures that would restrict personal freedom, by proposing alternative interventions in collaboration with both local authorities' assistance services and voluntary organisations.

Forms of Youth Representation

As above mentioned, at the moment there is no form of youth representation but the City councillor for Youth Policies is planning to activate the process of constructing a municipal Youth Forum in the coming months.

Schools

The only form of youth representation in existence at the moment is within the schooling system in the form of 'Consulte' (Councils), a kind of representative student body at provincial level introduced in 1999. Each secondary school institute has two representatives who are directly elected by their fellow pupils. These Councils intended to provide students with opportunities to experiment with forms of government and decision-making, enhancing their chances to be protagonists in their school life. Unfortunately, thus far they have not succeeded in involving the majority of students. In Palermo the Consulta is composed of 123 young people elected in the 62 Secondary Schools of the Province. The Consulta has built nine commissions, which should deepen the following sectors: newspapers and television; school building; art and creativity; culture and entertainment; sport; students' rights; work and social policies. Over the last years, one of the most relevant goals of their action has been the protest against the inadequacy of buildings and facilities of schools, often lacking in basic equipment or even in security measures.

Youth Organisations

In recent years some youth associations have tried to react against social and cultural poverty by promoting self-organised initiatives (youth workshops, play centres for children; promotion of cultural events involving the districts etc.) through animation, networking, community work and performing arts.

Other initiatives were organized to stamp out paying 'pizzo'[29] to the mafia or to build up organizational synergies between political and cultural local actors (shopkeepers, schools, youth associations etc.) aimed promoting a culture of legality: social use of the real estate confiscated from mafia, legal education, fight against corruption, youth camps for anti-mafia education, projects on work and development, and anti-usury activities. A current complete list of youth associations in Palermo doesn't exist. We can therefore only list some of the most active organisations in the town:

1) Arciragazzi http://www.arciragazzipa.191.it/index.htm

This is a national association committed to the protection of minors' rights and to the spreading of a culture of participation of children and young people in societal institutions and society at large. Activity in Palermo started in 1991; the first interventions were carried out thanks to Act 216/of 1991 on measures in favour of minors at risk of involvement in criminal activity. It was targeted at the reintegration of young men and women coming from detention centres or from socio-culturally highly degraded areas. In 1993 Arciragazzi succeeded in obtaining a small room in the municipal centre of the Borgonuovo district, a space renovated together with local families and children and used as a children recreation centre. Today, the young volunteers of Arciragazzi work there as animators of games and aggregation activities with children and adolescents.

Between 1992 and 1998, Arciragazzi activated a series of participatory planning initiatives in which children, adolescents, young people and families collaborated to develop and improve public buildings and spaces: cleaning up and refurbishing green areas, renovating a children's recreation centre, a blind alley near the children's recreation centre and a primary school courtyard in the Brancaccio district. The project 'Contro la mafia io penso a colori' (Against Mafia I think in colour, 1995) focuses on the enhancement of entrepreneurship. The goal was to facilitate the fulfilment of entrepreneurial trajectories based on young people's skills and wishes, experimented and 'reinforced' through play.

Experiences of self-entrepreneurship have led to the creation of 'animation and training factories' that, whilst independent from Arciragazzi, work in close cooperation with them. A group of animators from Arciragazzi joined the social cooperative 'I Sicaliani', devoted largely to theatre animation. They run a municipal recreation centre for children in Palermo and coordinate and organise projects with other agencies of the Palermo area. Some ex-volunteers founded the social Cooperative 'Punto Esclamativo' (Exclamation Mark) which runs two temporary shelters for children up to 5 years of age, on the basis of a convention with the Province of Palermo. The cooperative 'Argonauti' was founded and is charged with the promotion of consulting activities pertaining to planning, operators' training, management and control of recreation initiatives.

In the last few years Arciragazzi have implemented various interventions aimed at the integration and fulfilment of its previous activities: recreation centre and recreation bus for children, animation activities for adolescents, handicrafts workshops, fairs, concerts, debates, information points for young people, meetings and assemblies with the young people to decide on project management guidelines, initiatives in career orientation and transition to work, international civil

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[29] In Sicily pizzo is called the "protection money" imposed by the Mafia to about 80% of shopkeepers and enterpreneurs.

service initiatives. With reference to the financial aspects, Arciragazzi, being a national association, is partly funded through membership dues. Other financing sources for single projects are institutions such as the Ministry of Justice, the Department of Social Affairs, the Region Sicily, the Municipality of Palermo and private foundations.

2) Association Addiopizzo http://www.addiopizzo.org/english.asp

This anti-mafia youth association, even if it is not a proper 'youth association', is worthy of mention. Thee association 'Goodbye Pizzo' (Addiopizzo) was started in 2004 by five graduates who wanted to open a pub in Palermo. Realising they would be asked to pay a Mafia tithe, they decided instead to organise against the pizzo. The movement plastered stickers and posters around Palermo proclaiming: "*A population that pays the pizzo is a population without dignity.*" The association is now operated by 50 people and is encouraging shoppers to buy products from the nine stores alone that refuse to co-operate with the Mafia. Many thousands of residents have signed up in the past years. The association is also working with schools and University to spread amongst young people a culture of legality and of civic resistance against the social control of the Mafia.

Libera. Association against Mafia, http://www.libera.it/

This national association was born in 1995 with the aim of involving and supporting all those who are interested in the fight against mafia and organized crime. Libera's educational projects engage thousands of students every year. In the surroundings of Palermo, on t lands confiscated from mafia bosses, Libera promotes the activation of social cooperatives (Cooperativa Placido Rizzotto, Cooperativa Pio La Torre, Cooperativa Lavoro e non solo, Associazione Casa dei Giovani, Coperativa NOE) managed mostly by young people running farms and producing olive oil, pasta, wine and other organic products. Libera is presently a national network of more than 1,200 associations, groups and schools. Some of Libera's concrete commitments are: The bill on social use of the real estate confiscated from the Mafia, legal and anti-mafia education with pupils and students in schools and universities, the fight against corruption and usury and job creation projects.

Youth Information

Youth access to information in Italy has been significantly improved and eased over the last ten years. The best example of such an intervention is 'Centri Informagiovani' (Youth Info centres), which constitutes of a sort of municipal help desk in the areas of socio-educational and prevention policies, a bridge between young people and (local) institutions and associations. These centres can be managed by both private and public agencies and provide access to a variety of information channels. They provide information on all sectors of some relevance for young people (e.g. tourism, vocational guidance, spare time, culture, international civil service, international and national scholarships).

In Palermo the first Informagiovani was created 1998 by Arciragazzi and then carried on by the social Cooperative Argonauti, founded in 1999 by a group of young adults from Arciragazzi. The Informagiovani functioned up until 2005 on the basis of regular funding from the Municipality of

Palermo. In 2005 this funding was stopped and since then the Informagiovani functions only thanks to voluntary work and on a digital level, i.e. through maintaining a detailed database and a mailing list.

http://www.bancadatigiovani.info/joomla/

According to the statements of a town councillor, the Municipality is set to award a contract for the management of a new Informagiovani during the year 2008.

Italian Case Study 2: Bologna

Morena Cuconato & Gabriele Lenzi

Context and socio-economic background

Bologna is the capital city of Emilia-Romagna in Northern East Italy. The town is divided into 9 districts: Borgo Panigale, Navile, Porto, Reno, San Donato, Santo Stefano, San Vitale and Saragozza e Savena.

Considering the cultural, industrial, trade, social, political, and economic perspectives, the importance of the city in Italy and in Europe is much greater than suggested by its demographic data: there are about 460,000 inhabitants in the city and about 1 million in the metropolitan area, including the over 100,000 students at the oldest existing university in Europe, founded in 1088, which gave the town the sobriquet of "*the learned one*" (la dotta) and which today has twenty-tree faculties.

Bologna has one of the highest per capita incomes and lowest unemployment rates in Italy, and it consistently ranks in the top 10 European cities for quality of life and social services (e.g. it is one of the first European towns experimenting with free public transport and free civic network of Internet connection for all citizens).

This is due to two main factors:

1. A strong industrial and trade tradition: Bologna and its metropolitan area have several important industries in mechanics, foods, electronics, and important retail and wholesale sectors. The city's exhibition area inthe Fiera District, in which the greatest international exhibitions regarding cars, motorcycles (Motorshow), buildings (Saie, Saiedue and Cersaie) and beauty culture (Cosmoprof) takes place is the second largest in the country and the fourth largest in Europe.

2. The geographical position: located in a very strategic position at the crossing of the most important communication junction of Italy, Bologna is a very important railway and motorway hub. Bologna Central Station has the fifth largest passenger traffic in Italy (about 58,000,000 passengers per year) and one of the highest traffic volume (about 800 trains/day). Moreover, the cargo station (San Donato) with its 33 railway tracks, is the largest in Italy in both size and traffic and is one of the biggest in Europe.

Though its economy and lifestyle represents one of the highest standards in Europe, Bologna, called also "*the red one*" (la rossa), has always been a symbol of left-wing cities since the end of the 2nd World War. With the exception of a centre-right mayor in 1999, the city has represented a historic leftover of the old socialist and communist parties. The centre-left again gained power in the 2004 mayoral elections, with the election of Sergio Cofferati, who though considered a radical leftist, experienced and is still experiencing strong opposition from the left-wing of his coalition, having strongly supported a 'crusade on legality' chasing away several abusive house residents, mainly irregular immigrants and squatters. In recent time, youth conditions seem to acquire specificity and mass media attention only when connected with marginalising processes such as drugs, deviance and violence.

Bologna Centre lies in the heart of the university district, a true city within a city. This proximity between students and inhabitants often creates trouble due to the different ways of life and to the different needs of time and space.

The student's community includes a great number of Erasmus, Socrates, overseas students and students coming from other Italian regions for which Bologna still represent an attractive youth scene. The 'Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies' maintains a permanent campus in the city, regularly kept under police's surveillance to prevent anti-American student demonstrations or terrorist attack.

Nowadays the 'old' inhabitants are moving towards residential areas outside downtown and rent their flats to students and immigrants at very high prices. At the same time they consider these people as a problem, i.e. regarding delinquency connected with drug dealing, in which immigrants, chiefly those coming from North Africa, are involved. They forget that Bologna's large student population has contributed and contributes to the city's vibrant and varied youth counter-cultures and movements, which in some ways could also be recognised in the left-wing tradition of supporting youth leisure time and expression 'in the public space'.

Immigrants constitute 5.91% of the population. They are chiefly of Romanian, Albanian, and Ukrainian origins. Other important groups come from North Africa and Philippines. Counterbalancing the ageing of the native population thanks to the minorities groups the number of births has risen in the past decade, contributing to the positive growth of the city. In the metropolitan Area of Bologna the Metropolitan Forum for Associations of Non-EU Citizens (http://www.forummetropolitano.org/) has been recently founded, in which over 40 associations, representing over 20 different nationalities, are represented. It aims to improve and activate migrant participation in the process of their integration into Italian society, promoting initiatives that affirm and recognize the rights of foreign citizens.

Actors of Public Youth Policies[30]

During the last thirty years Bologna has experimented with a lot of innovative public youth interventions in the field of the expressive arts and leisure time, but what seems to lack is the connection between these important aspects of soft policies measures and the socio-economic hard policies measures regarding young people. As happens in many other Italian cities, in Bologna the youth population doesn't yet represent a proper target of integrated policies and services regarding the whole youth life sphere.

The recently founded Minister of Youth is attempting through the promotion of an integrated National Youth Plan to bridge the gap existing among the different public forms of youth intervention. Up to now it has not been clear as to what the repercussions of this action on the youth policy of local governments will be.

At the moment in Bologna there is no Town councillor responsible for Youth Policy: the Mayor did not delegate the power on youth policies to another person and this is considered by the left wing of the town's government coalition to be one of his crucial authoritarian acts.

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[30] The present information have been collected thanks to an interviews with the Director of the Youth Office of Bologna City Council, Dr. Doriana Bortolini.

The principle actor responsible for the youth question is *The Sport and Youth Department*, whose activities are of competence of two separate offices.

According to Mrs Doriana Bortolini, the Youth Office aims at enhancing a concept of active citizenship, fostering the participation of resident young people and the integration of non resident students into the town's life. The first step in this direction is the development of communications between the city and young people, as well as amongst the young people themselves.

At individual level, the Office wants to help the young people in making visible their creativity, sustaining them in transforming this expressive potential into a possible transition to work. Its target is not specific, its measures are open for all young people and they don't focus on the need of particular 'problem groups' (e.g. early school leavers, unemployed young people, young migrants and young women/single mothers).

The Youth Office, which received a budget of 70,000 Euro last year from the City Council, adopts a participative approach, in so far it is trying to develop a public service made by young people for young people.

Most activities are conceived and published on line through the Portal 'Flashgiovani', (http://www.flashgiovani.it/). To those young people that are offered possibilities of 'concrete' participation activities such as those offered by the International Exchange Programme and the European Voluntary Service are available. In 2006, 2,471 students participated in exchange programmes and in the Municipality's European projects. 26 countries were involved. Moreover there are opportunities of stages and internship (for foreign young people as well), workshops about writing, information and video production for the web and participation to the portal editorial staff.

A Youth Card is also available to young people. This gives them access to special offers and discounts in shops and services relevant to them: in 2006 196,000 such cards were delivered to people aged between 15 and 29 years living in Bologna or attending schools/university in town.

The Youth Office also functions as an active incubator for youth, cultural and volunteering associations. These are active in the intercultural, technological, audiovisual, music and arts field, offering financial support and collaboration in implementing joint projects in the metropolitan and regional area.

The Portal Flashgiovani represents, according to the words of Mrs Bortolini, a laboratory, an open space for young people's creativity (writing, poetry, visual arts) and implies the cooperation of different actors, working together for the first time. The Youth Office coordinates all activities whilst the team of experts offers interactive on-line tutoring about job, sexuality, housing, associations, new technologies and the young people involved in the editorial team. 150 young people have been so involved over the last three years.

The *Portal Flashgiovani* is divided in several under sections. Each of these aims at raising the profile of young people through supporting their initiatives in the expressive fields in which they are involved (music, comics, radio or TV production) and lobbying for recognition of young people's contribution to their community and society as a whole.

Through the *Portal Flashgiovani,* the single districts can promote their youth policies, measures which generally consist in counselling interventions, promotion of youth aggregation and

expression, building and developing of local youth networks, prevention of disease and training activities.

Form of Youth Representation

At present we cannot find any form of youth representation regarding our target group (15-29 years). Mrs Bortolini told us that the last attempt at building a Youth Forum was in 1998. In every district youth representatives were elected but after the elections they met together only four or five times and then dismantled as they didn't succeed in securing the general interest of other young people. The data at our disposal is not sufficient to state the reasons for this failure or to state if the election process really was a participatory one.

In the metropolitan area of Bologna there are currently 16 youth councils involving approximately 400 pupils aged between 8 and 14. They handle subject like the environment, play, sport, health, school, communication and solidarity. It is important to highlight the fact that in Bologna there is no discussion table for the social actors of youth issues.

Youth Information

The Informagiovani http://www.comune.bologna.it/informagiovani/ represents a sector of the Public Relations Office (URP) of the Municipality of Bologna, which offers citizens information on the municipal services and the activities carried on by public and private bodies and associations in the town. The Informagiovani is a front office for young residents, visitors and foreign students, who find therein a book and newspaper-periodical library and a Public Iperbole/Internet station. They can also receive advice and guidance about issues that matter to them and find dossiers and on line databanks (Spring, Noopolis), containing information regarding education, training and work, youth rights, social Life and Health, culture and leisure time, scholarships and volunteer work in Italy and abroad. Moreover in the office a list of landlords and boarding houses in Bologna is also available.

The information offer of the *Informagiovani* and of the *Youth Office* overlap but the two services belong to two different departments of the town's administration and two different responsible persons are in charge.

Youth Organisations

Bologna is still considered as one of the liveliest towns in Italy for cultural and expressive ferment promoted by several forms of local associations, for its youth- and social centres' counter-cultural offerings and for the public premises offered to young people, especially in the field of music production.

The fostering of this socio-cultural heritage constitutes one of the declared main aims of the municipality of Bologna in the field of youth policy measures, but at the moment, what it is still missing is a qualitative census of the youth association of the town. On the web page of Flashgiovani there is a database containing a list of the associations in Bologna, which are classified according to their field of activities (health, environment, training, disability etc.), but the census of the specific youth associations (youth associations made by adults for youth and

youth associations made by youth for youth) and a qualitative analyse of their projects and actions remains undone.

Thanks to Mrs Bartolini we have identified the following associations that have something to do with youth, even if they are all not specific for our target group, or they don't adopt a particularly participative approach:

- Agesci: http://www.siticattolici.it/Associazioni_e_Movimenti_Ecclesiali/AGESCI/ Emilia_Romagna/

- Cusb: www.cusb.unibo.it

- Erasmus student Network, http://www.esnbologna.org/index.php

- AEGEE, http://www.aegee-bologna.it/

- Associazione Villaggio del Fanciullo, http://www.villaggiodelfanciullo.com/

- Associazione Sorriso, http://www.associazioneilsorriso.it/

- Polisportiva Giovani Salesiani: http://www.informagiovanidonbosco.com/files/oratorio.htm

- La luna nel pozzo, http://www.lunanelpozzo.org/

- Polisportiva Giardini Margherita: http://www.simonemotola.com/pgm/index.htm#

- Scholè futuro, http://www.educazionesostenibile.it/

- AIESEC: http://www.spbo.unibo.it/NR/rdonlyres/33161086-E3A6-4114-99BEFB655C83203B/58213/AIESECBolognasipresenta.doc

- Yourope, http://www.yourope.it/yourope/index.php

One of the most interesting experiences which adopts a participative approach in the projects and services regarding youth is that of the Association 'Nuovamente'. It was founded in 2000 by former activists of the student's movement with the declared aim "*to offer a possibility of meeting and confrontation to all people who want to engage in the building of a new vision about of the cultural, social and economic condition of Bologna*" (http://www.nuovamente.org/nuovamente/index.php).

Since its foundation Nuovamente has been promoting the discourse on participation practices in order to bridge the gap existing in town among the interests of the different social actors.

Many of its projects relate to young people and imply cooperation with teachers and pupils in secondary schools where is necessary to enhance issues regarding democracy and civil rights. In 2002 this Association announced the first public competition 'Plan your space!' targeted at pupils in Bologna's secondary schools and its metropolitan area. The project desired to give young people the possibility of becoming inventors, planners and users of public spaces dedicated to youth aggregation and social, cultural and civic promotion open to the whole citizenship. In many schools this form of social planning has been inserted in the official curriculum.

At the moment, with the financial sustain of a bank foundation (Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio), five of these projects have been concretely realized in the Province of Bologna: through a

participative process, young people, youthworkers, teachers, architects and engineers worked together, creating five youth centres and offering young people several activities in the fields of arts, video-making, music and socialisation etc.

Self-managed Youth Centres

The phenomenon of self-managed social centres in Bologna is present and undoubtedly represents an important resource (albeit conflictual and anti-institutional at times) in the process of youth participation and empowerment. In the last years several young groups have 'illegally' occupied unused buildings. These buildings soon turned into aggregation and cultural discussion centres, and have in some cases been recognised as such by the local authorities. They have thus becoming real alternative socioeconomic and cultural networks. The reality of this kind of Centres is difficult to map, because of its fluctuating nature: they have often been closed by the police because their experiments of alternative sociality and culture gets in trouble with public order (http://isole.ecn.org/baz/chi/index.html).

Irish Case studies: General Information

Pat Leahy

Youth Work in the Republic of Ireland

Youth Work in Ireland is defined as an educational activity. The national body responsible for the implementation of youth work provision until recently was the 'Youth Affairs Section' of the Department of Education (it has now been relocated to the Offices of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs). The Youth Affairs Section is concerned with the non-formal education of Ireland's young people and provides support by way of financial and other assistance to those providing youth work programmes and services.

The main aim of the youth work service in Ireland is to help all young people to realise their full potential and to become active participants in a democratic society. Youth projects and organisations present valuable opportunities for the social and personal development of young people.

The work itself is undertaken by a bewildering range of organisations and agencies which often overlap and cooperate in service provision. This can lead to confusion as political factors are also evident in the relationships between youth organisation.

The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) is the overarching body for these organisations and can be considered the *de facto* youth service in the Irish republic.

Service Development

The development of professional youth work services in Ireland has seen a number of funding schemes (usually targeted at specific groups of young people deemed to be at risk) and specific programmes developed over the last thirty years. One aspect of these schemes and projects that evidences both the lack of political urgency in relation to young people and the uncoordinated patchwork nature of service provision is the location of what are primarily youth work interventions in disparate government departments rather than under the Department of Education's Youth Affairs section. Becsky and Newman point out that;

> *"Responsibility for policies and services relating to young people in Ireland is divided between six Government Departments-Education, Health, Justice, Enterprise and Employment, Equality and Law Reform[31], and Social Welfare" (Becsky and Newman, 1996, p.27).*

In addition to these Government Departments the various Youth Organizations, Health Boards and Local Authorities amongst others also provide services directly and indirectly to young people. The net result of such diffusion has been an uncoordinated development that has tended to be a reaction to various groups of 'at risk' young people over time rather than the provision of a quality service for all young people. Recognizing the limitations of voluntary provision these schemes and projects employed professional workers to work directly with young people.

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[31] Equality and Law Reform is now part of the Justice Department.

National Programmes and Initiatives

Given the relatively small size of Ireland's population (currently 4.34 million) and historical tendency towards centralisation it is readily apparent that many provisions for young people operate on a national rather than regional or municipal level, the only difference between municipalities in these cases is the delivery agent.

A number of national youth work programmes exist; in the context of the two case study cities which are usually delivered by the various local youth work actors.

National Youth Health Programme

The National Youth Health Programme is a partnership between the Youth Affairs Section of the Department of Education & Science, the Health Promotion Unit of the Department of Health and Children, and the National Youth Council of Ireland.

International Exchange Visits

International exchange schemes are administered on the Department of Education's behalf by Léargas - The Exchange Bureau. Léargas is the Irish agent for the EU "Youth Programme" (which includes what was formerly the European Voluntary Service, Future Capital and Youth for Europe Programmes).

Co-Operation Ireland administers exchange schemes with Northern Ireland.

Causeway - the British-Irish Exchange Youth Programme is co-funded by both Governments and is administered in Ireland by Léargas.

The National Youth Arts Programme

This is a partnership between the Youth Affairs Section of the Department the Arts Council and the National Youth Council of Ireland.

The programme is dedicated to the development and advancement of youth arts in Ireland. It aims specifically to realise the potential of young people through good quality arts practice in the Youth Service and to develop appropriate policies and activities at local, regional and national level.

Garda Juvenile Diversion Programme

The first Garda (Police) Special Projects came on stream in 1996. These projects are administered and operated by youth work organizations and have the explicit aim of crime prevention (Garda Siochana, 2001). Garda projects are also concerned with enhancing the relationship of the force in disadvantage communities and can therefore be theorized as operating from a community policing model of community work (see Burgess et al, 1996). The core theoretical notion is diversion; the potential or actual delinquent young person will be diverted away from offending through a programme of activities that are theoretically located within the character building and personal development models of youth work (Hurley and Treacy, 1993).

The methods utilized by these projects are similar to those used by the VEC projects although in this instance a definite focus is placed on young people who have come to Garda attention. Therefore, a considerable proportion of the young people involved are referred to these projects

by Juvenile Liaison Officers. This situation suggests a degree of coercive power; i.e., engage with the project or face the rigours of the criminal justice system.

Bowden and Higgens's (2000) evaluation found that these projects have a positive influence on the majority of young people availing of their services. They;

> *"Target young people who are seriously at risk of becoming involved in the drugs and crime cycle already involved in crime, or are likely to drop out of the educational system prematurely in need of emotional and developmental support due to family circumstances unable to participate in other youth activities due to behavioural difficulties" (Garda Press Office).*

Technology

Young people in Ireland are prodigious consumers of new technologies, mobile phone ownership is virtually universal and the use of social networking internet sites such as facebook and bebo increasing.

We have refrained fro repeating information on common areas between the two case study cities; for example, the programme activities of the featured youth organisations are virtually identical. Likewise, in terms of youth culture their is a strong degree of uniformity across the country; the young people in Dublin will be more or less dressing in the same fashions and listening to the same music, as the young people in Limerick, Cork or indeed any area.

Irish Case Study 1: Cork City

Pat Leahy

Structure

Cork is the second largest city in the Republic of Ireland. The city is Ireland's third city (after Dublin and Belfast) and has always been an important seaport due to the excellent natural harbour. It is the premier city in the south-western region and Munster's core economic hub.

The city was founded by St. Finbarr in the seventh century and is currently home to a population of 119,418 (Central Statistics Office, 2006) within the city boundaries for whom municipal services are provided by Cork City Council. An additional 71,166 people reside in estates and suburbs outside the city boundaries; this sub-population is serviced by Cork County Council in relation to municipal needs such as refuse and water yet tends to avail of City based services in relation to other needs.

Immigration figures are not readily available; however the 2006 census reveals that in terms of ethnic origin 158,514 individuals in the Cork city area classified themselves as 'White Irish' and 12,541 as 'Any Other White background', giving a total of 171,055 white people, the overwhelmingly numerically dominant ethnic grouping. 720 people listed themselves as 'Irish Traveller' (also White), 2051 people as 'Black or 'Black Irish', and 2,420 as 'Asian'. Mixed background came to 2,030 and not stated 3,470[32].

The Cork metropolitan area (inclusive of the City) includes a number of satellite towns such as Ballincollig and holds a population of 274,000. Outside this Metropolitan area towns such as Mallow and Bandon, allied with rural dwellers, contribute an additional 100,000 people (approximately) to the population of County Cork, making a total of approximately 375,000 Corkonians.

Cork city has been designated a 'Gateway City' under the Ireland's 'National Spatial Strategy', the aim being to develop the city as a centre for national growth with the infra-structure to generate investment and sustain development.

The City features two third level Colleges; University College Cork (UCC, 16,500, full-time students) and the Cork Institute of technology (CIT 6,500 full-time students and 6,500 part-time). Both institutions are viewed as crucial components of further development and are significant contributors to the local economy. The presence of over 20,000 full-time students impacts upon the city's culture in a variety of ways and constructs Cork as a 'University City'.

The local economy is heavily dependant on foreign investment, particularly in the pharmaceutical industry with a number of major chemical companies such as Phizer located in the harbour area. Computer manufacture (Apple) and related areas (BG Turnkey) are another key economic driver in the region although the recent closure of the Motorola plant has indicated the precarious nature of foreign investment.

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[32] Figure discrepancies exist as the census statistics regarding ethnic/cultural origin are taken from the greater Cork area rather than the population within the city boundaries.

Unemployment in Cork City affects young people, especially young men. The Live Register from November 2007 gives a figure of 6,906 (12.48%) people out of a workforce of 55,296 were as registered unemployed or underemployed in the City, this contrasts with a national figure of 4.4% unemployed from the 3rd Quarter Labour National Household Survey.

In Cork city 1,572 (22.76% of total unemployed/underemployed) were under 25. Of these 524 were female (7.58% of total) and 1048 (15.72% of total) were male.

The city was European Capital of Culture in 2005.

Cork City Council

The City Council is the democratically elected governing body of the municipality; there are 6 electoral ward and 31 councillors. The Lord Mayor (currently Donal Counihan) is elected by the council and not by the electorate; this has led to a voting pact between the main political parties that effectively debars independent or small party councillors from this position. The council has responsibility for reserved functions which are divided into 8 functional groups;

- Housing and Building

- Road transport and Safety

- Water and Sewerage

- Development Incentives and Control

- Environmental Protection

- Recreation and Amenity (this functional group includes aspects of youth provision).

- Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare

- Miscellaneous

Alongside the City Council these is a City manager who is appointed by the county council or county borough corporation; he is appointed by them on the recommendation of the Local Appointments Commission and he may be suspended by them or removed from office with the consent of the Minister for the environment. The strong degree of centralisation inherent in Irish local government is evident in this instance as the city manager (Joe Galvin) possesses more decision making power than the council through his responsibility for the council's executive functions which are defined as all activities not categorised as reserved for the elected representatives. These functions include (amongst others); staffing, tenders and fixing of rents. Politically the council reflects the national parliament insofar as that centre-right parties are overwhelmingly dominant.

There is no youth department *per se* in the city's administrative system and no structural mechanism to allow for young people's participation in the city's decision making procedures. However, a number of overlapping bureaucratic mechanisms exist which theoretically allow for young people to have a say.

Services for young people are provided by a wide (and often bewildering) range of agencies dependant upon the nature of the relevant service. The city council's role is to provide recreational opportunities for the youth population; the city's' 'Recreation, Amenity and Cultural Directorate' bear responsibility in this area. The directorate's main response is the provision of

sports facilities in the shape of swimming pools, sports centres and playing pitches for football, hurling and other field sports. A recent development is the introduction of four orienteering courses around the city in various public parks.

The directorate also administrates a sports' grant scheme through which sports bodies can apply for funding; major grants of over 15,000 euro are available subject to strict selection criteria.

Under its 'Housing and Community Services Directorate' the City Council operates a homeless provision for young people, The Foyer, in the Blackpool area of the city. The Foyer provides supported accommodation for up to 18 young people aged from 18 to 25 (under 18s are the responsibility of the Health Services Executive).

Cork City Development Board

The City Development board is comprised of state and voluntary actors (including the city manager) and is charged with enhancing local democracy, combating social exclusion and fostering efficiency in the delivery of services.

In conjunction with Ogra Chorcai (see below) the board is responsible for the municipal youth parliament which meets once a year.

The development of a Youth Resource Centre was prioritized as one of the aims of the City Development Board in the review of its Strategy. This centre will provide a shared facility for the delivery of identified training to youth groups in the city and county and will enhance local cohesion among youth service providers. A number of recommendations were made following a feasibility study carried out by Exodea Europe Consulting. It is envisaged that this centre will become a flagship project for the youth sector and support the ongoing role of both volunteers and professionals working in this field.

Youth Institutions

The Vocational Education Committee (VEC)

Cork City VEC holds responsibility in local areas for the delivery of educational services in the City area. The current VEC is comprised of 9 city councillors, and 6 co-opted members who under the Vocational education Act (1930) administer such services.

This remit includes diverse spheres such as adult education, literacy support and community education. Under the Youth Work Act (2001) the VEC is also charged with overseeing youth work provision in the city.

The VEC itself does not operate a youth service although it does operate a number of specific vocational training centres. Youth work services are instead provided by a number of third sector organisations and can be broadly sub-divided into two key areas;

(i) Mainstream Youth Provision in the shape of youth clubs. Support in this area is provided in the form of funding grants for the various youth organisations to which these clubs are (usually) affiliated. Such clubs can be found in all areas of the city and are run by voluntary staff.

(ii)At Risk Youth Provision in the form of Special Youth Projects (SPY), Local Drugs Task Force Projects (LDTF) and Young Peoples Facilities and Services Fund Projects (YPFSF). The majority of theses projects are contracted to four youth organisations (see below) who report to the VEC in relation to their activities. Certain projects are operated by non-youth organisations

such as the Simon Community's Youth Homelessness and Drug Prevention Project. The VEC provides additional resources in the form of tutors to the SPY projects. There are currently 34 such projects in the city, 15 SPY, 14 YPFSF and 5 LDTF. These projects are located in communities that are categorised as marginalised or disadvantaged.

Generally, youth clubs are a voluntary undertaking by local adults in a community whereas the projects are staffed by trained, qualified and salaried youth workers.

The VEC also hold responsibility for the city's Youth Information Centre which is contracted to the YMCA and located in the city centre.

The VEC directly operates three Youthreach centres in the Cork City area, City Centre (Dean Street), The Glen and Knocknaheeny. Youthreach is a national programme targeted at early school leavers that aims to provide such young people with vocational training. A number of these centres are also operated by the Cork County VEC in satellite towns such as Ballincollig and Bandon.

The VEC is additionally responsible for the operation of the 'Gaisce' awards scheme. This is Ireland's National Youth Challenge scheme which assesses participants in four areas; skill, community, physical and adventure. It has three levels (bronze, silver and gold) and is delivered by the various youth organisations.

In addition to and separate from the VEC youth projects the Department of Justice operate a number of Garda Diversion Projects and a seven bed probation hostel whilst the Health Services Executive South funds two Neighbourhood Youth Projects.

A number of other state and voluntary agencies interact with young people in the provision of specific services; for example the Health Services Executive (South) operate a dedicated adolescent homelessness service from Liberty Street.

Cork City Partnership

Cork City Partnership is a limited company that acts as a coordinating body for statutory and voluntary bodies in the city concerned with combating social exclusion and fostering social capital and civic engagement. The intention of such partnerships (they operate on a national basis, with various geographical regions having partnership companies) is to provide a decision making space devoid of party politics that operates on a consensus model.

As part of its brief the city partnership hosts a forum grouping which is a mechanism for participation in decision making. Voluntary groups elect representatives to this forum and the various youth organisations in the city are represented in this space.

Youth Organisations

The City relies on non-government organisations to provide virtually all aspects of youth provision. The statutory requirements of the 2001 Youth Work Act are contracted to various youth work agencies in this regard.

The City and County VECs act as the coordinating body for provisions through the Cork Local Voluntary Youth Council (CLVYC), a forum that is comprised of the recognised youth organisations within the City and County of Cork.

A range of organisations provide youth work services which (as previously outlined) fall into two broad categories, mainstream provision and at risk provision.

Mainstream Provision; Youth Clubs

Hurley's research indicated that the vast majority of voluntary youth work was in youth clubs and that the bulk of activities therein were *"of the most basic nature with little or no concentration of work being done at a developmental, training or advocacy level"* (Hurley, 1994, p.28). This rather critical comment disguises the fact that for many young people (especially in rural areas) a local youth club represents the sole alternative to sports organisations. These clubs are mainly operated by volunteers with administrative support and training coming from the youth organisations (such as Ogra Chorcai) to which they are affiliated. Clubs are usually parish based and offer young people a space in which to meet, play games, become involved in activities and make friends. Membership tends to drop off when the young people reach 15/16 years of age. At a deeper level clubs operate as a further socializing agent within the community that emphasis 'good' behaviour and adherence to the community's social norms and values.

At Risk Youth Provision; Youth Projects

Youth projects are usually located in disadvantaged communities which feature all or some of the following;

- high youth population
- youth unemployment
- dependence on social welfare/unemployment assistance
- social isolation
- drug/substance abuse
- homelessness (including temporary homelessness)
- problems of juvenile crime, vandalism and truancy
- failure or non-existence of mainline youth services
- inadequate take-up of ordinary educational opportunities.

These initiatives aim to facilitate the personal and social development of participants to realise their potential and in particular to equip them with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for their appropriate integration in society. In addition, they present opportunities for young people to undertake actions corresponding to their own aspirations and to assume responsibilities within their local communities.

Leahy (2006) argues that projects although projects can greatly assist individual young people they also risk labelling these young people as deviant and troublesome. Projects tend to operate a community youth work model and typically seek to engage 'at risk' (itself a contested term) young people into services that again aim to inculcate societal norms and values. Project activities and programmes can be wide ranging and feature areas such as lifeskills learning,

personal development, drug taking prevention, crime reduction and sexual behaviour modification in a 'soft' learning environment.

Both mainstream and at risk provisions typically aim to build a relationship between young person and adult and use this relationship to foster the young person's development. A diverse range of activities that can range from cooking to international exchanges are employed in the programme structures of both forms of provision.

Youth Organisations

The main service providers are:

Ogra Chorcai. A Cork organisation they based on St. Patrick's Hill in the city centre, Ogra have numerous youth clubs run by volunteers spread across the city and suburbs. They are also responsible for the operations of a number of projects for at risk young people. Ogra's praxis base draws heavily from developmental education.

Foroige. Foroige is a national youth organisation which has expanded its Cork operations over the last decade. It is mainly concerned with the provision of project interventions for at risk young people but does also run a number of youth clubs, although they are referred to as 'Foroige Clubs'. Foroige's Cork (and regional) headquarters are located in the Sunbeam Industrial Park, Blackpool (coincidently in the same building as Cork City Partnership).

Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). The YMCA is an international youth organisation with a heavy emphasis on Christianity and global justice issues. The YMCA in Cork are responsible for the Youth Information Centre located in Marlborough Street in the city centre and run a number of interventions for young people, particularly the STEPS programme which is concerned with the provision of vocational and educational opportunities for young people who have slipped out of education. YMCA's head office in in Innishmore Industrial Estate, Ballincollig, Co. Cork.

Youth Work Ireland Cork (YWIC)) is an affiliated member service of Youth Work Ireland (formerly the National Youth Federation). The smallest youth work organisation in Cork, YWIC operates a group of projects in the Gurranabraher area of the city. These projects are respectively a SPY, YPFSF, LDTF and a specific Arts project (U4EA). This agency has perhaps the most radical orientation of any youth work organisation towards praxis in the Cork region and has been instrumental in supporting local skateboarders' attempts to have a skate park provided by the city council. YWIC has a policy of involving young people in the decision making processes and have included young people in the recruitment panel for posts in the organisation. YWIC is located on Gurranabraher Road, Gurranabraher, Cork City.

Alongside these 'volunteer led' professional youth work bodies exist a number of all volunteer youth organisations. The principal agencies in this regard are the uniformed organisations of Scouts and Guides. There are 14 Scout Troops in the City with each unit offering Beavers for 6 to 8 yr olds, Cubs for 8 to 11 year olds, Scouts for 11 to 15 year olds and Venture Scouts for 16 to 19 year olds.

Scouting is open to both girls and boys and although some troops are located in marginalised communities (such as Mayfield) they remain a primarily middle class organisation. They also tend to hold considerable resources relative to other youth organisations; Kilcully Campsite for example is an extensive property containing a large house and open spaces.

There are two Girl Guide organisations in Ireland (the two scout organisations amalgamated) reflecting political and religious divisions from the past. The Catholic Guides of Ireland have 30 units in the greater Cork area (telephone interview with Breda Healy) whilst the Irish Girl Guides have a number of units in the Cork region. As with the scouts, guides are split into age groups; 5/6 Cygnets, 5-7 brigini/, Guides 10-17 and Rangers, 15-19.

A number of other organisations operate in Cork City and are members of the CLVYC including;

- Boys Brigade

- Church of Ireland Youth Council

- COPE Foundation Gateway Youth Club (works with intellectually disabled young people and their siblings)

- UCC and CIT students unions

- Junior Chamber of Commerce

- Diocesan Youth Ministries; Cork and Ross Diocese, Cloyne Diocese (Catholic)

- Environmental Conservation Organisation

- Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

- No-Name Club

- Irish Red Cross Society

- Macra Na Feirme

- Muintir Na Tire

- St. John's Ambulance

- Unite, a Youth Club for Gay and Bisexual Young Men operated by the Southern Gay Men's Community Development Project.

Additionally a wide range of groups exist that cater for young people's needs although these groups are not specific to young people. A variety of community organisations, special interest and hobby groups are active in the city.

The dedicated youth organisations in the City have inbuilt participation structures that allow the young people to have a say in decisions that affect them in relation to the organisations activities.

Sports Organisations

A number of sports organisations offer services to young people in Cork city, these organisations tend to operate on a parish basis and are again run by volunteers. The city council employs a sports development officer.

The main sports organisations

The Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA). The GAA are a feature of community life in Ireland and can claim at least one club in every parish in the country. The main sports of this association are hurling and football. Hurling, played with an ash stick, is probably the best field sport in the world and demands considerable skill, bravery and teamwork.

Football Association of Ireland.

Basketball Ireland.

Cork City Sports (organised by the City Council's sports and recreation officer).

In addition to these main sports organisations a multiplicity of sports groups exist that cater for a wide range of sporting activities.

Young People in Public spaces

A number of public spaces in the City have been 'colonised' by young people acting without adult supervision. The area around the Rory Gallagher Plaza is particularly popular amongst young people given the profusion of cafes and its central location. Other areas such as Emmet Place and the Bishop Lucey Park (known as the Peace Park) are also popular 'hanging out' sites.

The Tesco supermarket on Rory Gallagher plaza has fitted a 'mosquito' sonic device to deter young people but (anecdotally) this particular device is not in operation as customers became irate due to its effect on their children.

Skateboarding occurs around the city centre; this activity is not illegal but young people report harassment from Gardai. Conversely, some young people who skateboard felt that the Garda presence was positive as they felt safe from other sub-groups of young people if the police were around. The council has indicated that a skatepark will be built but young people remain cynical. CCTV is now common in the city centre and the suburbs; the young people feelings in this matter were ambivalent *"it's alright 'cos we're not doing anything wrong but I don't like the thought of people watching me when I'm hanging around"* (On street interview, Dec. 07).

A number of commercial provisions such as pool halls and bowling alleys are also located in the city centre.

Schools

A mechanism exists for schools to establish a student council wherein students can raise issuers and participate in certain areas of the schools decision making process. There are at least 29 second level schools in the Cork City area; at this juncture it is not possible to state how many of them operate student councils. Anecdotally however it would seem that young people's participation in schools has not moved beyond attendance and the experience of those who do have councils is limited to minor decision making with the school principal retaining a high degree of power.

"*In practice only a small number of schools have democratic and effective student councils*" (National Children's Office, 2003).

Irish Case Study 2: Limerick City

Pat Leahy

Structure

Limerick city began as a Viking colony on an island in the river Shannon and it is now the third largest city in the country after Dublin and Cork. Located just within the border from Co. Clare the city also acts as the major commercial centre for Clare and also provides some of the commercial needs of the north Kerry area.

The Limerick-Shannon area has been designated a Gateway area for the mid-western region under the 'National Spatial Strategy', the goal being that the city and Shannon airport will act as economic drivers for investment.

The city has a population of 52,539 (CSO 2007) whilst a further 131,516 people live in the county of Limerick, giving a total of 184,055. There are 5,704 (23.29%) unemployed or underemployed persons in Limerick city out of a labour force of 24,482. This is a remarkably high figure in Ireland as the national rate has been under 5% for 15 years.

1,311 (22.98% of total) of these are under 25 with 783 (13.72%) being male and 508 being female (8.9%) (Live Register Nov. 2007).

Limerick city (as distinct from the County and hinterland) has a particularly high unemployment/underemployment rate. It contains pockets of severe disadvantage in social housing estates such as Moyross and Southill. The city is frequently portrayed in a negative light due to the criminality attached to the local drugs trade which has seen a number brutal murders, gang feuds and jury intimidation over the last decade. In one incident the police decided not to apprehend a carload of armed criminals as the police *"were not as well armed"* as the criminals and *"would have come off worst in a shoot-out"* (The Guardian, February 2nd, 2007).

Due to the association of Limerick City with *"violent drug related crime"* (RTE News, Sept. 10th 2007) the image of the municipality is exceedingly negative and indeed Limerick has gained the unwelcome nickname of 'stab city'. The projection of the city as a dangerous area is by no means a false one; in an 'off the record conversation' a worker with the primary youth work service provider (Limerick Youth Services) revealed that youth workers had been pulled out of certain areas as their safety could no longer be guaranteed.

The spatial structure of the city of Limerick has developed in a manner that has exacerbated a number of social issues. A large number of social housing estates are within the city boundaries whereas the more affluent suburban areas are located in the County area and are therefore the responsibility of Limerick County Council. The suburban dwelling population tends to shop and use leisure facilities located in these suburbs. This has resulted in the city centre area being a strongly working class area as the main local authority social hosing estates are within easy walking distance of the centre.

A key ongoing issue is the extension of the city boundaries to allow for more balanced development.

As with Cork city immigration figures are not readily available. According to the 2006 census the greater Limerick area contained 84,729 people of whom 72,933 considered themselves white

Irish. There were 386 Travellers (also white), and 6,645 other white people. There were 1,210 Black and/or Black Irish people and 1,496 Asian people in this area and 1,075 people declined to reveal an ethnic and cultural background.

Limerick has two third level institutions; the University of Limerick (10,500 students) and the Limerick Institute of Technology (9,000 students).

The local economy is services and light industries based with a strong element of foreign investment with the city itself serving as a centre for commercial interests such as banking and insurance.

Limerick City Council

Limerick City Council is the governing elected body for the municipality. The city is divided into 4 electoral areas and has 17 councillors. Ger Fahy is currently the mayor. As with Cork city the overwhelming majority of the council are rooted in centre right political parties. The Limerick city manager is Tom Mackey who therefore has responsibility for the executive functions of the council.

Limerick City Regeneration

The scale of the difficulties faced in the municipality has led to the Government commissioning a report from the former Dublin city manager of John Fitzgerald. Fitzgerald's report was issued in April 2007 and recommends the establishment of two new agencies charged with implementing a package of measures aimed at the regeneration of Limerick City (Fitzgerald, 2007). Partly on foot of this report the city is to receive two Youth Facilities and Services Fund youth projects and two Regional Drugs Task Force Projects in the near future (the city has no RDTF or YFSF projects at this time).

Youth Institutions

Responsibility for the implementation of the 2001 Youth Work Act in Limerick rests with the City of Limerick VEC. The VEC has only recently appointed a youth officer and service assessor to oversee the Act's implementation. Contrary to the situation in Cork where a multiplicity of agencies are active the majority of youth services in Limerick city are delivered by Limerick Youth Service. The VEC does operate one Youthreach centre (in O'Connell Avenue) and two Garda Diversion youth projects operate independently; one in Southill and one in Moyross.

At present, the Limerick area does not have a local voluntary youth council. One interviewee (a youth worker in the city area) critiqued the asymmetrical investment in 'at risk' provision arguing that mainstream provision requires equal investment. An unintended consequence of this is the phenomena of young people being asked to leave a youth project because their behaviour has improved. These young people thereafter see their less well behaved peers being taken on trips away and participating in desirable activities. According to our interviewee (confirmed by workers in other projects) the young person is then tempted to reoffend in order to get back into the project.

Southill Outreach Project

Note; this project's broad aim and objectives can be taken as typical of this form of intervention throughout the Republic of Ireland.

The Southill Outreach project in Limerick has a mission statement that aims to; "provide meaningful and suitable activities of an educational social and recreational nature, which will empower each individual to plan a future for him/herself" (Southill Outreach Pamphlet, Undated).

Southill is a detached youth project for young people aged 15-18 year. Young people refer themselves from the street or to outreach workers who would be working on the streets usually in the late evenings. Many of the young people would not be suitable for mainstream youth work, and would have dropped out of educational/employment structures at a young age. Some of these young people are involved in criminal activity, anti social behaviour and vandalism. Outreach would work with these young people during the daytime to introduce them back into mainstream activities .i.e. schools, workshops and so forth. Many of the activities are conducted in small groups where the young people receive personal attention.

Youth work staff in projects tend to be qualified as youth and community workers (JNC[33] recognised), hold equivalent degree level qualifications in related professions such as teaching and social work or else possess qualifications in particular vocational areas such as art. This is the general situation throughout the youth service in Ireland.

Limerick Youth Service

"To Support and Encourage Young People to be Active Participants in shaping their Futures"

 (Mission Statement).

The organisation cites the following as its core principles;

- Valuing young people and supporting their individual development

- Empowering young people and volunteers within the decision-making processes of the organisation

- Advocating on behalf of young people to enhance opportunities for equality and inclusion

- Developing the best range of services that will engage with and challenge young people

- Partnering our stakeholders and ensuring accountability at all times

The service works with approximately 2,500 young people each year in youth clubs and projects. Generally, the young people that Limerick Youth Service works with are between the ages of 10 to 25 (as per the definition of youth in the Youth Work Act 2001). Approximately 350 volunteers help and operate Limerick Youth Service clubs and projects. Limerick Youth Service has about 90 staff. The organisation was formed in 1973 under the joint patronage of the Bishops of Limerick. Over the years, this voluntary organisation has grown into the country's largest local

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[33] JNC, Joint Negotiating Committee. This was the standard recognised qualification in the British Isles and endorsed by the National Youth Agency. Ireland.

youth service, offering a range of personal and social development and recreational opportunities to young people throughout Limerick City and County.

Mainstream Youth Provision

Approximately 40 mainline youth clubs are affiliated with Limerick Youth Service with 15 being in the city. These clubs are operated by volunteers and receive support from youth officers through training, information, volunteer recruitment and facilitation of club mini-regions / networks. Young people through the support of skilled volunteers participate in a range of fun programmes at local and regional level.

Creative Programmes

Limerick Youth Service organises a variety of creative programmes often in different locations throughout the city and county particularly during school holidays. Summer programmes often include drama workshops, D.J. workshops, arts & craft and music.

A small number of projects are ongoing including: Massive Music & County Limerick Bands Programme. These music programmes give young people the opportunities to meet other young people with similar interests, attend or perform in regular music gigs around the city and county, engage in various workshops such as song writing, music production, events management etc..

Limerick City Youth Café (Lava Java's**)**

A City Centre Youth Café operates Thursday and Friday evenings and Saturday afternoons. The Café is based in the Youth Centre on Lower Glentworth Street. The café is for young people aged 15 years and up with all welcome to drop in and get involved. As well as being a space for young people to meet and chat, a variety of fun programmes re organised. The café is managed is young people with the support of a team of volunteers and staff person. A similar café style youth project is due to open its doors on the Northside of the city shortly.

Youth Participation

Young people are increasingly taking a central role in the organisation and delivery of youth work. Limerick Youth Service endeavours to ensure that young people are central to all decision–making. Young people are involved in a number of leadership groups, including:

- Limerick County Junior Leader Training Programme
- Northside Junior Leader Group
- Southside Junior Leader Group
- Limerick City Youth Forum
- Limerick County Youth Forum
- Lava Java Youth Committee

- Limerick City and County Comhairle na n-Og

'At Risk' Youth Work

Limerick Youth Service coordinates a number of projects incorporating direct / targeted approaches from a variety of funding sources within the city area. These projects are;

Southill Youth Intervention Project.

- Moyross Youth Intervention Project.
- Northside Youth Development Project
- Kings Island Youth Project
- Garryowen / Watergate Youth Project
- Outreach Programmes
- City Evening and Residential Programmes

These projects offer a number of services including: Creative Projects; Group work programmes; Indoor activities; Family support; Career guidance; Summer programmes; One-to-one provision; Outdoor activities; Drop-in facility; Holiday Provision and Outreach service.

Youth Information

Limerick Youth Service's Youth Information Office is located on Lower Glentworth Street, Limerick. Its doors are open to all young people from Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Full assistance is provided to young people to aid information research. Internet access is provided as well as information on requirements for CAO application forms, information on Australia / New Zealand Working Visas, the US Green Card Lotteries & regulations and so forth.

Community Training Centre

FÁS funds this project, which offers education and skills training to young people who have not completed mainstream education. 160 young people participate in full-time vocational training programmes that have left the formal education system without qualification.

Ballyloughran Outdoor Pursuits & Leisure Centre

This is an Outdoor Pursuits & Leisure Centre owned and operated by Limerick Youth Service which comprises of a residential centre, activities centre and health suite. Many youth groups, school tours and adult groups use the centre for residential programmes and training. The centre is located in Lisselton, Co. Kerry.

Young People in Public Space

The main 'hang-out' area for young people in the city is Cruise's Street. Cruise's street is at a right angle to O'Connell Street, the city's main shopping artery and was formerly a hotel. This

hotel (Cruise's) was demolished in the 1980's and the site transformed into an area of fast food outlets and speedily colonised by the youth population. As in Cork the suburban areas contain large shopping malls which are also utilised by young people in a reflection of American youths 'mall rat' culture.

An aspect of youth culture that is receiving significant attention at this point in time is 'car modifying' a pursuit that undoubtedly demonstrates the overall rise in Irish living standards. Young people, usually male aged 17-22, are investing considerable time and money into customising their cars (young people with their own transport was virtually unknown until recently). Known as 'boy racers' this particular sub-group tend to drive around city centre and urban areas, congregating in the car parks of shopping malls.

Schools

Limerick city is served by around 15 second level schools and again there is little evidence to suggest that student councils are active participants in school decision making. As with schools in Cork city student participation is viewed as subscription to the rules and ethos of the school, application of the young person to studying their particular subjects and participation in extra curricular activities. Below as an example (applicable also to Cork schools) is a selection of such activities from Villiers School, (this is a fee paying school) North Circular Road, Limerick City.

Art Expression

Beauty, Skin Care & Make-up

Calligraphy

Computer Advanced

Cooking

Counselling

Craft & Needlework

Creative Writing

Dancing

Decoupage

Fashion Design

First Aid

Frame Making

Health & Nutrition

Hindi

Horse Riding

Interior Design

Italian

Martial Arts

Media Studies

Metal work

Philosophy

Photography

Poetry

Politics & Debating

Pottery

Punjabi

Russian

Sculpture

Self Defence

Spanish

Speech & Drama

Tai Chi

Typing

Vegetarian & Vegan Cooking

Japanese   Video Production

Journalism   Woodwork

                                      Yoga

Conclusion

Limerick City would appear to require significant investment in youth provision at this point in time, a fact recognised by both the municipal and state authorities. One or our interviewees (Youth Work Team Leader Damien Landy) informed us that the situation in Limerick at this juncture is very dynamic and that "any report you write now will probably be out of date in six months as we are expecting big changes and more resources" (interview, Dec. 2007). The spatial aspect of the city has concentrated disadvantage and marginalisation within the city centre and disguises the underlying reality that the broader Limerick City area is on par with the rest of the country in regard to general socio-economic conditions.

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Slovakian Case Study 1: Prievidza

Alžbeta Brozmanová Gregorová and !uboš Vrbický

Basic characteristic of the city

The metropolis of the upper Nitra region, Prievidza is a city with a rich history which started in ancient time on one of hills (Mariansky vrsok) near the current city. The city of Prievidza has five parts: Staré mesto, Píly, Necpaly, Kopanice. The city wards are; Hradec, Malá Lehôtka, Veľká Lehôtka. These city wards have a village-like atmosphere.

Prievidza is currently the administrative centre of the region and plays a role as the seat for state offices, headquarters of important businesses and company boards. The city is also the residence of banks, financial institutions, schools and universities. Prievidza is also the centre of cultural, educational and social institutions and different groups.

Prievidza has the lead position in the Trencin region in regard to cities with a high concentration of important institutions. With the mass of greenery and green spaces Prievidza is also one of the greenest cities in Slovakia.

Prievidza is the city with the biggest trade space per citizen and has a well-developed shopping network, emphasising its important economic space in the region and in Slovakia as a whole. There are numerous sporting areas and new neighbourhoods, with a high concentration of young people. Therefore an orientation on youth is vitally important for the future of the City of Prievidza.

The 2001 census (May 26) showed that Prievidza had 53,097 inhabitants; 25,917 men and 27,180 women. The ratio of women residents is 51.19 %. The number of economically active inhabitants is 27,317; 13,783 men and 13,534 women. The ratio of economically active inhabitants is 51.4 %.

From the last census we can see that the overwhelming majority of the population (96.7%) of the city are of Slovak nationality. 1.0% are Czech, Hungarians comprise 0.5%, Roma 0.3%, German 0.3%, Polish, Ukrainian and Moravian 0.1%.

Data from register shows a population decline; by January 1, 2007 Prievidza had 51,646 inhabitants. Prievidza is in Slovakia on 11th position by number of inhabitants.

Local self-government and youth

The local self-government of Prievidza is represented by the mayor; Ing. Ján Bodnár. The mayor is the highest executive of the statutory body of the city and Municipal Corporation. The Municipal Corporation has 31 members, only one elected representative is less than 30 years of age.

There is a Committee for Youth and leisure time activities which is an advisory body to the city parliament. The committee has nine members, comprising of two male deputies, two female deputies, two male representatives and two female representatives for young people. One woman is an expert on youth affairs.

Four members are under 30 years of age including the chair of the committee. The committee has the role of co-coordinator for children's and youth activities in Prievidza. It also serves as the supervisory body for associations from the youth field that got financial support from city budget.

The committee prepares suggestions and solutions for important issues regarding the youth area and also for information, materials and conceptions in the field of youth and leisure time.

The youth committee is working on city activities for youth and is responsible for tasks set by the Municipal Corporation in the field of work with children and youth. The committee is gives support for children and youth organizations, associations and individuals targeted for work with children and youth and on accomplishing tasks from Conception of Protection and Support of Children and Youth in Prievidza until 2007 and an evaluation process.

Local self-government is focused on youth in several conception documents. The city prepared a document titled 'Conception of Protection and Support of Children and Youth in The City of Prievidza till 2007'. This document was prepared and approved by city parliament in 2004 and includes objectives regarding youth in four main areas; (i) informal education, (ii) youth information, (iii) participation of youth on public life and (iv) support for children and youth with lacking opportunities. Each of these areas has its own general goal and specific objectives and proposed activities to achieve these goals. The strategic document is evaluated every year, thereafter the year action plan is prepared. Preparation of the conception included young people, primarily through school parliaments, the Young Parliament c. a., civic associations of children and young people and different informal groups. The conception is published on the internet site [www.mladez.prievidza.sk.](http://www.mladez.prievidza.sk)

Opportunities of local self-government to support youth

The support for young people from the local self-government is clear and visible. In the areas of informal education, participation and information young people can be supported financially, by using spaces free of charge, through information about prepared activities in city media, and also by cooperation on the different activities in the city. In the field of voluntarism activities are supported by using spaces free of charge and by propagation only.

Financial support of youth activities is possible through a grant mechanism with the goal of supporting activities and proposals which can help to achieve the objectives of the Conception of Protection and Support of Children and Youth in The City of Prievidza 'til 2007 and the tasks from its action plans.

Grant mechanism - areas of support:

- Activities for children and youth in the process of informal education:
- Activities for children and youth
- Initiatives of youth groups
- Information activities for youth:
- Projects of information and advisory activities
- Creation of information materials
- Participation of young people on local public life:
- Project of formal representation of young people
- Information campaigns projects

- Projects with specific contents
- Fulfilment of city priorities:

Projects of institutional support for children and youth institution in Prievidza

City Office and Youth

City Office represents the executive part of local self-government. There is one employee at the school department who is designated to work with youth and youth policy.

Employees of the city claim that cooperation with youth in the field of youth policy is excellent. The City of Prievidza is actively cooperating with young people and trying to create conditions for the personal development of young people and better inclusion into society. Local self-government is realising activities focused on the prevention of negative phenomenon in society. Prievidza is supporting many organisations working in the area of youth through the conception.

According to the local self-government the youth in Prievidza are participating in public matters through their presence at city parliament meetings and personal meetings with deputies, by membership of the youth parliament and different civic associations, through internet communication and through activities in youth centres.

Young people

Young people in Prievidza often organise public events and are members of the city committee. Conversely, young people are rarely using their option to speak at public hearings and never use petitions and organised public meetings.

Young people are usually informed of the local self-government through internet site of the city, where they have their own section www.mladez.prievidza.sk. Self-government is also using the print media and radio broadcasts alongside television, posting information, and information on public hearings.

Organisations working with young people

The City of Prievidza disseminates information through a website about youth organizations working with the city in partnership on the achievement of the strategic goals regarding youth policy. The listed organisations are:

- Leisure Time Centre SPEKTRUM, Prievidza
- Youth Information Centre Prievidza
- Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Family (DPCF)
- Slovak Scouting, 14th. corps Watomika Prievidza
- Smile as Gift – friends of children from foster home
- Club Pampúch Prievidza

Leisure Time Centre SPEKTRUM

Spektrum is an organisation with a long tradition in the city. The main activities are clubs focused on musketry, modelling, computers, photography, natural sciences, majorettes, languages etc. The centre also organises daily or summer camps and occasional events like parties, sport days, cultural and educational activities. The organisation will be transformed with the goal to enlarge its 'flat approach' activities focused on informal actions for children and youth, which reflects their interests without the influence of adult thinking. The centre will need to find a way to improve the quality of work in the new financial situation. They have ambitions to fulfil this by increasing the use of voluntary work using young people, closer cooperation with parents and educationalists in schools. Leisure Time Centre will try to attract students to gain praxis experience and later became the leaders of young groups.

The organisation has an option on how to finance activities through the realisation of a Youth Hostel project. This project will create opportunities for accommodation and meals with a capacity for 100 people. Possible recipients of the service are young people on different sport events, exchanges, meetings etc. Incomes from service can be used for self-financing of the Leisure Time Centre.

Youth Information Centre Prievidza (YIC Prievidza)

The civic association Youth Information Centre Prievidza started work after registration in 1997. After a break they re-started in 2000 in new offices on 25 Tenisova Street, Prievidza. The organisation is trying through the realisation of specific objectives to provide information for young people, to intervene through advisory services using experts, and to support the production of information materials and information sources for young people.

The centre is focused on effectively collecting, processing and providing information and advisory services for young people according to their needs and demands. Young people can access information through personal contact in consultation rooms, by phone or e-mail.

The centre provide also services like photo-copying at a reasonable price for students and young people, internet access, computer services, printing and binding of documents. They can also provide information about experts providing advisory services, free of charge advisory services, different address books etc. YIC Prievidza is a member of the Association of Youth Information Centres in Slovakia. YIC is cooperating also with other institutions and organisations in the region which are working with children or public services.

Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Families (DPCF)

This organisation is active in Prievidza through the Centre for Families working under Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Families in Banska Bystrica Diocese. The centre is trying to discuss different issues concerning family life in Slovakia with other pro-family and pro-life organisations. They are using different methods such as lectures, educational programs, advisory services, articles in papers etc. The centre is organises training for family planning for churchgoers and newly married couples.

Slovak Scouting, 14th Corps Watomika Prievidza

Slovak Scouting contains more than 8,000 boys, girls and adult volunteers. In Slovakia it is one of the largest membership organisations. The organisation is creating options for realisation of all age groups and membership is growing. This success confirms the basic values and the modern and attractive type of program. The scouting movement in Prievidza has a long tradition.

Smile as Gift

Smile as Gift is the oldest and biggest voluntary organisation working with children living in foster homes. They also have a branch in Prievidza. Activities are realised with 40 volunteers. Smile as Gift focuses on children in foster homes and attempts to give them the chance of a dignified and full-value life and to create safety and a consistent environment of human background and love. They are helping these children to prepare for independent life, preparing substitute families, providing social advices and general support. The organisation is active in conceptual work, but also in concrete help for children and families, education, charity events and public financial collections.

In 2006 the Prievidza branch organised 106 one day events for 2,099 participants, 4 longer events with 460 participants, 5 developing stays with 571 participants and 4 concerts and other specific events with 4,547 participants.

Club 'PAMPÚCH'

Club Pampuch was founded in 1998. This organisation is building on the experiences of the Club for non-traditional sports in Prievidza, which has been active since 1990.

The Goals of this civic association can be expressed in one sentence "*movement against lounge, laziness and boredom*".

The main goal of the club is to support and promote activities which help prevent negative civilisation phenomenon like lounge, laziness and boredom. They are focused on movement activities and non-traditional games like ringo, indiaca, lakros, stilts etc. The organisation is trying to support mobility and international youth contacts. To fulfil its goals the organisation members are active on summer camps, weekend meeting, and trainings of youth leaders or on public events like international children day, sport days, Christmas events, youth meetings etc.

Young Parliament

This is a civic association active in Prievidza for more than 10 years. In 2004 they signed a mandate contract with the City of Prievidza. The subject-matter of the contract is the organising of activities and events for children and young people that will motivate young people to participate in city life. According to the contract, Young Parliament is responsible for supporting the participation of young people in public life in accordance with the Conception of Protection and Support of Children and Youth in The City of Prievidza until 2007 and implementing the European Charter on the Participation of Young People in city and regional public life. The city of Prievidza delegated direct responsibility for youth participation and other activities to the Young Parliament.

Civil Society and Non-governmental Organisations

According to the register of civic associations under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, by November 19, 2007 in Prievidza there are 216 civic associations. The activities of civic associations in Prievidza are mixed; sports, maternity centres, youth initiatives, parents associations, social and charity associations, breeder and grower associations etc. the most numerous are associations of sports, sport clubs and school organisations. Also present in Prievidza are two foundations; one is in a winding-up process. There are 15 different organisations providing community services in areas like education, charity and social help.

The Official website of Prievidza claims that in total the capacity of social services is 300 people. The list of different social organisations (with their capacity and contact information) is as follows:

- Retirements homes/home for pensioners, 6 J. Okáľa Str., Prievidza (capacity: 150 persons, from that 60% are in pension.

- Home for lone parents, 12 Ľ. Štúra Str., Prievidza (capacity 16 persons),

- Casualty Ward, 15 Košovská cesta Str., Prievidza (capacity 20 persons),

- Harmónia, non-governmental organisation, 14 Námestie slobody, Prievidza,

- Station for Day Care and Crisis Centre, 8 Včelárska Str, Prievidza,

- New Home, non-governmental organisation, 1 Energetikov Str., Prievidza (capacity 25 persons),

- DOMINO - Centre for Social Care, centre for disabled (Intellectual disability)children, day care and pension, 11 Veterná Str., Prievidza - (capacity: 36 persons),

- HUMANITY – Centre for Social Help, 17 Viničná Str., Prievidza,

- Pension for intellectual disabled women, 17 Viničná Str., Prievidza (capacity 44 persons),

- Home for Lone Parents, 6 Odbojárov Str., Prievidza (capacity 4 rooms for mothers with children),

- Casualty Ward, 15 Nábrežie sv. Metoda, Prievidza (capacity 15 persons).

In Prievidza there are just 71 minders who take care of 210 older clients, despite an increasing interest in day care there are only four such clients from 1,000 inhabitants. There is strong potential for home care with the help of relatives or other close persons.

Schools

In Prievidza there are eleven kindergartens, ten elementary schools (eight schools founded by the city, one church school and one 1 special school), eight high schools (two secondary grammar schools, from which one is church, one is a business college, two are united high schools, two specialist high schools and one special school) and a few other institution for university and lifelong education.

Prievidza has also founded one art elementary school and leisure time centre. There are two private art elementary schools. All elementary schools have their own school clubs. From school year 2004/2005 three centres for spare-time activities based at elementary schools have become active.

In Prievidza we can find some detached offices from various universities. There is at present the Faculty of Management Science from the University of Zilina and the Faculty of Social and Economical Affairs from Trencin University of Alexander Dubcek, based in Trencin. There is also the Bank Institute University from Prague, but they do not posses accreditation in Slovakia. In the area of lifelong education the Business Innovation Centre Prievidza and the Club of Education Economist are active.

Youth in Public Space

Young people in Prievidza are actively participating in the public decision-making process. There are different projects focused on specific goals. At some schools young people are members of student and youth boards. Projects in schools are supported mainly by the Slovak government and coordinated from same (e.g. INFOVEK, Open School etc.). Rarely do we find projects supported from other sources such as foundations and private donors, businessmen and companies. Those projects are low cost. Quite often projects consist of different student magazines, eco-projects, sport and leisure time activities and different competitions.

Projects presented on school websites and in different official reports mainly come from the initiative of adults and teachers. In many cases ideas are realised which are considered as good and valid from an adult point of view. The participation of young people is also possible via school self-government which exists in classes at elementary and high school in similar forms. Students elect the school self-government at the beginning of the school year. Information on official school websites show that school parliaments exist in three out of ten elementary schools and from two out of eight high schools. Representatives from school parliaments or student boards are usually members of Young Parliament in Prievidza.

With the help of young people from elementary and high school many interesting events for different target groups and the public have been organised in Prievidza (e.g. Earth Day, Open Doors Day, benefit concerts and event, financial collections like Day of Narcissuses in cooperation with the League Against Cancer).

Successful young people meet with the mayor of Prievidza once a year to receive different awards.

Sources of information for case study

Information from research Self-government policy of regions regarding youth in Slovakia, realised in 2007 by civic association Centre for Voluntarism in co-operation with the department of social work at PF UMB.

Program of the Social and Economical Development of the City of Prievidza for years 2007 – 2013, approved by Municipal Corporation in Prievidza

Mandate contract between the City of Prievidza and Youth Parliament about direct realisation of youth participation in accordance with the Conception of Protection and Support of Children and Youth in The City of Prievidza till 2007, signed on December 4, 2004

Conception of Protection and Support of Children and Youth in The City of Prievidza till 2007, approved by Municipal Corporation on April 27, 2004

Annual Reports Youth Information Centre 2004, 2005, 2006

Annual Report, Smile as Gift 2006

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Slovakian Case Study 2: Zvolen

Alžbeta Brozmanová Gregorová

Basic characteristics of the city

Zvolen is a significant city in central Slovakia. It is an important rail and road junction. The nearby airport of Sliač and its daily service between Prague and Sliač serves as an additional outlet to the rest of the world.

Zvolen is an administrative, economic and cultural centre of Pohronie in the Hron River Valley. It is a district seat with an area of 759 square kilometres, with almost 68,000 inhabitant and it borders seven other districts of the Banská Bystrica region. It is the twelfth most populous town in Slovakia and in 1923 was for five years the seat of Zvolen County and has been the district seat since then. The oldest part of the town is Námestie SNP (SNP Square) at an altitude of approximately 295 metres above sea level. In 2001 reconstruction started. Nowadays it is a modern pedestrian zone and the centre of social life.

Contemporary Zvolen is a seat of several prosperous businesses, quality elementary and secondary schools and also the Technical University; the only one in Slovakia that educates experts in timber-processing.

Zvolen and its surroundings provide rich opportunities for relaxation, cultural, sport and social life. There are a number of important cultural institutions such as the Theatre of J. G. Tajovsky, the Slovak National Gallery at Zvolen castle, the Forestry and Timber Museum and so forth. The centre of summer recreation is mainly the city spas, Neresnica swimming pool and nearby spas in Sliac and Kovacova. The centre of winter sport is located in the sport and recreation complex Kralova. Other options for sporting activities are represented by the ice-ring and mobile ice area located in the main square. There is also a renovated multi-sport facility used throughout year. The surrounding of the city is used for walking-tours, cycling, water sports, fishing and hunting.

Situation of minorities

Roma people represent a very special minority in Zvolen. The last census (May, 2001) shows that the official Roma minority is made up of 410 people. Other statistics regarding Zvolen's Roma minority are not available. The estimated number of Roma residents is 3,000 or 7% of the entire population of the city. Accurate numbers is untraceable regarding the high level of Roma migration in the community. It is estimated that average rate of long-term unemployment among the Roma people is 95%. 80% of the Roma people in Zvolen live under the poverty line.

Three civic associations working with Roma people based in the City of Zvolen:

- Club of Roma Entrepreneurs of Slovak Republic;
- Roma Parliament in Slovak Republic;
- Roma Women's Club.

A community social work program of support and development also runs in the city of Zvolen. Its main goal is to support groups and individuals faced with long-term social exclusion problems.

Besides the Roma minority, people in Zvolen pay attention to refugees. Two organisations are working in this field:

- The 'Integration Centre' in Zvolen is the facility of The Migration Office under The Ministry of Internal Affairs, with the capacity for 50 persons this is the sole facility in Slovakia offering temporary accommodation for asylum seekers.

- The Slovak Refugees Council is a non-profit organisation whose main activity since 1995 has been co-operation with the National Office of UNHCR in the Slovak Republic in regard to the project 'Integration of Asylants in the Region of Central Slovakia'. The main goal of the project is to provide the help necessary for asylum applicants in this region.

Local self-government and Youth

Local self-government of the city of Zvolen is represented by the mayor Ing. Miroslav Kusein; the mayor's office is the highest representative, executive and statutory body of the city and Municipal Corporation.

The Municipal Corporation has 25 members of which 3 are under 30. Self-government in Zvolen is devoting attention to young people in a conceptual plan called 'Program of the Social and Economical Development of the City of Zvolen by the year 2006 with a perspective until 2010'. The local self-government does not have an independent conception for work with youth. The Program of the Social and Economical Development of the City of Zvolen is paying special attention to the youth in the analytical part of the plan only; in the strategic part of the document youth as a separate age category is not represented. During the preparation work for the document representatives of youth were included in a workgroup named 'Human Sources'.

In the self-government there is a separate Committee for Youth, Sport and Culture. This committee consists of nine members of whom five are municipal corporation members, one is a City Office employee, one represents secondary grammar school, one is a representative of the business sector, and one member was recently unemployed.

There is nobody under 30. As Informal group of young people 'Young Zvolen' (Zoom Info) represent's young people in the city. Members of the group are present at regular meetings of the committee, proposing activities and making statements around issues concerning young people in the city (see details in part 2).

The City Office of Zvolen represents the executive part of the self-government, it does not have any employees designated for youth policy and/or youth work.

Self-government support in the field youth participation consists in particular of providing space for meetings, promoting activities in city media and co-operation on specific events and activities.

In the self-government of Zvolen we find a system of direct financial support for youth activities facilitated by local city law. The law is not specific about support to young people per se but for citizens' activities in general.

In last few years Zvolen cooperated in the area of youth projects with 'The Healthy City Community Foundation' based in Banska Bystrica. In 1998 the local office of 'The Healthy City Community Foundation' was opened and a specific fund for Zvolen was created. Zvolen

supported this fund between 1998 and 2002 to the tune of 1,050,000 Sk. From this financial source the foundation supported small community projects, including youth work, in the city.

From the local self-government's perspective young people are participating in public life through organising public events and by being actively present at the meetings of the committee for youth, sport and culture, and by meetings with the city parliament members.

The local self-government is collecting information about organisations working with young people through personal contacts and from members of the civic associations. The information level regarding young people and their needs from self-government perspective is low.

The most frequent method of informing young people about activities concerning them is on the city' website at; www.zvolen.sk, others, television and radio broadcast, and through mailing materials to the youth organisations involved.

Youth organisations and initiatives

There are several youth organizations and initiatives in Zvolen. The most important and active are:

- Initiative Young Zvolen (Zoominfo),
- Univesity Patoral Centre of Emauz disciples,
- DOMKA,
- Slovak skauting group,
- Magnet,
- Leisure Time Centre Domino,
- Private Leisure Time Centre,
- Centre for Educational and Psychological Prevention and others.

Initiative Young Zvolen (Zomminfo) was founded in September 2006 on the basis of a self-government initiative supported from The Ministry of Education under the program for the support and development of youth participation in public life.

A project called 'Young Zvolen, Vote in City Parliament' was launched in partnership with the Slatinka Association, one of the most active organisations in Zvolen. The main goal of the project was to increase the participation of young people in active public life in their city and in local elections and to help them to get experiences and skills to be able to influence public matters.

During the project a group of young people received training on topics such as local self-government and youth participation. On basis of this initiative a group of young people was formed and remained active in support of youth participation after the official end of the project in 2007. With the support of the Slatinka Association the group obtained financial support from The Ministry of Education for the realisation of a partnership project with the city named 'Zoominfo: what we need'.

Young Zvolen (Zoominfo) is a group of young people from Zvolen aged between 16 and 30. The main interest of the group is issues concerning youth. In autumn 2007 they founded the civic association Zoominfo. The association adopted as their goal the creation and improvement of the

social and cultural life of young people in Zvolen, collecting and providing information from different areas. Within this main goal the current activities of the association are focussed on the creation of an Information Centre of Youth in Zvolen (ICY).

According to the Slovak Government an ICY should be located in all district towns. ICY is a facility for collecting and distribution information concerning young people. The creation of an information centre is to be realised in co-operation with the city of Zvolen, particularly with the new department for youth, culture and sport. This new department currently serves as an information centre for Zvolen. The local self-government has supported the basic needs of the future ICY; space free of charge, computer equipment, basic assets and internet connection. The main aim of the Zoominfo group and their new information centre is to be a member of the Slovak Information Centres Network.

They also have an ambition to be the representative of young people in Zvolen through their present at meetings of The City Committee for Youth, Culture and Sport. Furthermore, the group is active in organizing different activities for children and youth.

Members of the group have been trained in the area of self-government, they have successfully completed projects and their current direction is to formalise this group, with the ambition to represent and advocate for youth interests in Zvolen. The group has the support of some of the local self-government, consisting of the members of some school boards and volunteers from NGOs.

University Pastoral Centre (UPC) has been active in Zvolen from 1998. The centre was founded by the Roman Catholic Church Bishopric as a specific facility. The main target group are young people aged between 18 and 25 years old, primarily university students. The organisation works on a voluntary basis, organising lectures, discussions, concerts, exhibitions, small group meetings, holidays and weekend camps, sporting events, charity activities, student messes, international exchanges and publishing activities.

The organisation is active in Dom Phorum at M. R. Štefánik Str. No. 20 and two colleges.

DOMKA; The Association of Salesian Youth is a voluntary national organisation with activities in Zvolen. Domka is one of the major children's and youth organisations in Slovakia. It serves up almost unlimited options for children and young people to use their leisure time purposefully and to unleash their inner potential and energy. It is really a voluntary organisation as the basic structure of the organisation for the work comes from voluntary animators. Domka provides a wide range of activities and events (sports, cultural, educational and international). They are attempting to offer young people what they are interesting in.

Slovak Scouting is national organisation which has 120 members in 3 different divisions in Zvolen. The movement is totally voluntary. Their priorities are to serve the community, the environment and nature. Their main work is directed on activities for children and youth. The mission of scouting is to contribute to the full development of young people, understanding, tolerance between people and love of their own country. Regular activities of scouts in Zvolen include different meetings in their club, trips to surroundings of Zvolen, eco-activities, organising of the Country Fest, active help with the organising of The Bethlehem Light and The Day of Narcissuses. The top summer activities are summer camps.

MaGNeT. One other city youth initiative is the group named MaGNet. MaGNeT (young active grantees, aktívni grantisti, resourceful effective team) was founded in May 2004 in Banska

Bystrica as a grant program of The Healthy City Community Foundation concerning issues of youth. The Program is built on the British model of the 'Youthbank', operating since from 1999 (www.youthbank.uk.org). The basic idea of the program is that young people support the realisation of youth through youth projects.

Through this program young people have possibilities to enlarge their knowledge and to make decisions about their usage of money under the program. They have an option to work with adults and have the power to influence and change their environment. The main goals of the Magnet project are the personal development of young people, the development of their skills in the area of community services and the building of relationships to philanthropy.

Building philanthropy between young people means supporting their active interest in solutions to community needs, and to support different citizen activities which help to increase the quality of life in communities. The roles of young people in Magnet are the following: creation of criteria for grant applications, calls for proposals and related PR, the agenda of grant applications, consultations for grantees, making decisions about supporting applicant projects, monitoring of projects in realisation, final financial statements, and evaluation of their activities for The Board of Trustees. The group also has an active Advisory Committee which makes decisions about projects applying for support.

Leisure Time Centre Domino provides options for children and young people to have meetings after school classes and offers space for the improvement of intellectual and manual skills under the leadership of experienced educationalists. Domino offers children, youth and all interested people ideal conditions for self realisation in different clubs.

Private Leisure Time Centre; Besides Domino the city leisure time centre also exists in Zvolen. It has different clubs and activities in the Sekier Neighbourhood.

Centre for Educational and Psychological Prevention (CEPP); This is specific educational facility that helps children and youth with education problems, it also assists their parents and schools. The centre provides such services as: diagnostics, consultations, specific programs, training in prevention and also research of privations.

Civil society and non-governmental organisations

According the Ministry of Internal Affairs (as of 30/9/2007) there are 334 non-governmental organisations in Zvolen, the majority of these are civic associations (93%).

From this total of NGOs the following represents the significant categories:

- Sports clubs and sport cooperatives;
- Association for hunting, forestry, timber, agriculture and ecology;
- Cultural associations;
- Parental associations in schools.

The most active NGOs in Zvolen are:

- CEPTA, civic association (environmental);
- Dolphin c. a. (improvement of life quality for mentally-ill people);

- Euro Live, c.a. (help for destitute people, working with children whose come from less privileged environment);

- Movie Club Zvolen, c. a. (culture);

- Humanitarian Centre Narovinu, s. a. (dissemination of ideas about tolerance, non-violence, peace, and development);

- Consumers Association Club in Zvolen Region, s.a. (consumer protection);

- Healthy City Community Foundation (improving quality of life);

- MARTA, s.a. (help for people in destitute);

- Maternity Centre Rodinka, s.a. (women, mothers and children);

- Local Club of Women in Army of the Slovak Republic (ochrana ženských práv);

- Návrat, c. a. (alternative family care);

- OPORA, c. a. (improvement of life quality for mentally-ill people and their families);

- Quo Vadis, c. a. (help for vulnerable groups and minorities);

- PREMENY – Association for Mental Heath (improvement of life quality for mentally-ill people)

- Slovak Refugee Council, non-governmental organisation (help for refugees);

- Association for Sustainable Development, c. a. (environment);

- Súlad, o.z. (community programs);

- Association Borová Hora (preservation of natural and cultural values);

- Association Lesníček (preservation of nature, youth education);

- Slatinka Association (environment);

- Association of Women in Slovakia (women);

- Women Club in Zvolen (women).

Active non-governmental organisations in Zvolen are connected through an informal platform of NGOs (26 organisations) that actively represents the third sector in relations with the local self-government. Members of the platform are actively present on all city parliament meetings and also on meetings of city committees as advisors and observers. On June 11, 2007 an agreement with local self-government concerning co-operation was updated.

Members of NGOs belong to active citizens of Zvolen and they are also members of some city authorities. There are also several informal groups in Zvolen which are active in public life and in finding solutions to problems. These active citizen groups are coming from the actual needs to comment or to influence issues concerning people.

Young people in Zvolen are active not only in youth organisations but they are also as volunteers in different types of NGOs.

As a part of Healthy Cities Network Zvolen has from 1996 its own Healthy City Project. More than 800 cities all around the world are working together in the fields of health prevention, health education and environmental issues.

Youth in Public

There are several successful activities with the goal of increased youth participation in decision making process and public matters. There are projects in specific areas (environment), meetings of school boards and an eco-parliament organised by Leisure Time Centre DOMINO and the informal group Young Zvolen.

These activities have been partially successful in achieving their goals and of reflecting youth needs. Groups holding the ambition represent all of the young people (including marginalised groups) are conducting activities that reflect the personal priorities and preferences of their membership. Similar defects are also evident in other youth projects run by NGO`s and the local self-government. Pprojects concerning aspects of young people's lives that are mainly built on the opinions of adults regarding young people's needs are also evident. There is no relevant research about the preferences and the needs of young people.

The most important tool which allows participation of young people on decision making process is the presence of the Young Zvolen (Zoominfo) group at the meetings of the Committee for Youth, Culture and Sport, and the presence of other NGO representatives on meetings of the other committees and the city parliament.

Schools

Elementary schools are located in all part of the city with a high density of inhabitants. The distribution of schools is proportional, accessibility is good and the current capacity of all schools is higher then the real need. There is tendency to move children from schools in peripheral parts of the city to the central zone.

In Zvolen from the school year 2004/2005 Gandhi`s school has been in operation. It is the first Slovak eight-year grammar school for talented Roma children and for children from socially disadvantageous environment. The school's sponsor is the regional self-government of Banka Bystrica region.

The main direction of the school is to teach languages and informatics in order to preserve Roma identity. The children are taught Roma language, history and culture. The goals are (i) to improve the interest of Roma children, and children from socially disadvantageous environments, in education, (ii) to prepare talented students for further educational process and university study, (iii) to deepen mutual contact of minority and majority groups in Slovakia, and (iv) to build international contacts and facilitate the participation of student in international events.

Several schools are active in this venture and their teachers are working voluntary with young in organising special programs for children. They are creating a fair pitch for the next levels of education and competitive environment between schools.

The City of Zvolen also provides adequate options for secondary education, from secondary schools to vocational schools.

Above the standard school facility is the Technical University of Zvolen with a specialization in forestry and the timber industry. It is the only such specialized course in Slovakia. Specific school parts are locations in the central city zone.

In all types of schools it is possible to see different forms of youth involvement in school life. Student boards on the basic and grammar schools are not developed in Zvolen. Students only rarely have representatives (usually one or two) on school boards. University students also do not have a separate parliament, but in different numbers are a part of faculty senates and the university senate.

In all school we can find examples of participative possibilities which allow young people to be involved in the decision making process. We can document three examples of these activities in the different levels of school.

The basic school Hrnčiarska is working to the so-called 'Hrnčiarska Concilium', in which we find students from classes 4 to 9. The goal of the concilium is to prepare different events, find solutions to problems, conduct evaluations and hold discussions about the ideas of students. At the first meeting of the concilium students decided to use 10,000 SK from old paper collections to buy radios which will be placed in the corridors and allow students to listen to broadcasts during breaks. They also decided that is necessary to prepare a storage room for bikes and other transport used by students.

In the Secondary Grammar School of L. Stur a student group is active in the area of waste separation. Called 'Green centena' it is organises separated waste collection for the school. The group was formed by students according to the teacher`s ideas around separated waste collection. Students were present at lectures on separate waste collection and they then prepared containers for separated waste and became active in promoting this idea.

The opportunity to participate in activities concerning environmental issues at the technical university allowed the organising of 'Ecocentre' discussions clubs around different topics such as what to do with waste, transport options aside from travel agencies, the alternative economy, forestry, ecology, big carnivores in the forests, community life in Zajezova and so forth. Activities include working together on cleaning spaces around the colleges, separating waste and building composting sites. Ecocentre has its own study room in one of university colleges.

Information Sources for this Case Study

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