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Formal, Non formal and informal possibilities of young people's participation in European cities

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PARTISPACE

SPACES AND STYLES OF PARTICIPATION

WP2 – National Contexts

Comparative Report

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Table of contents

Introduction **4**

Research Methodology and Report Structure **11**

Social Conditions of Youth **16**

Introduction *16*

1. Demographic trends and household conditions *16*

2. Health and well-being *19*

3. Lifestyle, culture and leisure *21*

4. Education and training *22*

5. Living conditions and labour market *26*

Concluding remarks *30*

Youth policies, Welfare and Educational systems **33**

Introduction *33*

1. Main traits and actors appointed in the youth policy *36*

2. Actor-defined youth policy *46*

3. Key areas and measures including participation *49*

4. Measure-defined youth policy *58*

5. Educational system *60*

Concluding remarks *70*

Discourses on Youth and Youth Socio-political Participation **72**

Introduction *72*

1. Method and aims of the discourse analysis *73*

2. Discourses on youth *76*

3. Discourses on youth socio-political participation *83*

Concluding remarks *89*

Youth Socio-political participation: a state-of-the-art **92**

Introduction *92*

1. Statistics on youth socio-political participation *93*

2. Styles of youth socio-political participation *96*

3. Spaces of youth socio political participation *98*

4. The role of education and youth work in youth socio-political participation *101*

Concluding remarks *105*

Local Areas **108**

Introduction *108*

1. Bologna *108*

2. Eskişehir *111*

3. Frankfurt *113*

4. Gothenburg *115*

5. Manchester *118*

6. Plovdiv *121*

7. Rennes *123*

8. Zurich *126*

Conclusions **129**

References **139**

Introduction

Young citizens are at the heart of what many observers define as a 'crisis of representative democracy'. The concept of *representation* (introduced in the 18th century) reduces the direct participation of citizens implied in the concept of *democracy*, separating professional politicians from the general population. This particular form of democracy creates the risk of fostering an elite class of politicians (Loncle, Thomas and Hinkle, 2015). Over the last decades, the supporters of the theory of the crisis have reported worrying accounts regarding a perceived distrust of political systems, institutions, and social elites by European citizens in general and young citizens in particular (cfr. Newton, 2001; Mishler and Rose, 1997; Seligman, 1997; Kaase, Newton and Scarbrough, 1996). More generally, social scientists have documented what they almost unanimously perceive as a growing impression of 'dissatisfaction' of citizens towards what the European Union and its national member states can offer them as democratic citizens (Norris, 1999; Torcal and Montero, 2006).

According to them this complex phenomenon is not only related to the outcomes of the political system, but also to the perceptions regarding the political context.

From recent researches conducted in Finland (Bengtsson and Mattila, 2009) and in Spain (Font, 2012) it seems that political disaffection is related to deep beliefs on the meaning of politics, the conditions for trusting politicians and parties, and the ways people see the society as a political actor.

Trying to motivate youth to engage in society, the *Treaty of Lisbon* explicitly assigns to the European Union the task of 'encouraging the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe' (2007: Article 165, sub-section 2). In the same vein, the 2009 EU *Youth Strategy* prioritizes supporting youth engagement, both in terms of *breadth* (the number of people engaging) and *depth* (the range of forms of participation in which young citizens can engage).

Indeed, the involvement of the Commission in increasing youth participation and involving young people in policy-making dated back already to the last Eighties. Since 1988 the EU has been focusing unequivocally on youth programs and the 2001 white paper on *A New Impetus For European Youth* formalized and embedded the

participation of young people in EU policy-making. The Commission's goal in terms of youth participation is to:

> "Ensure full participation of youth in society, by increasing youth participation in the civic life of local communities and in representative democracy, by supporting youth organizations as well as various forms of 'learning to participate', by encouraging participation of non-organized young people and by providing quality information services". (European Commission, 2009: 8)

However, some critics remarked that the concrete measures to enhance this right were 'very much focused on providing guidelines for the behaviour of the institutions of the Union and less so on empowering the citizens' (Closa, 2007: 1053). Lister (2008) noted that traditionally in the political discourse participation had been interpreted more as *status* than as *lived practice* (cf. Smith *et al.,* 2005). To counteract this trend, the Council Resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018) expresses the intention of surveying and approaching young people and youth organizations on a regular basis trying to interlink policies, needs and changing circumstances. In other words, according to this resolution youth policy should be evidence-based. Better knowledge and understanding of the youth living conditions, values and attitudes should be gathered and shared with other relevant policy fields enabling the adoption of adequate and contextual measures for promoting practice of youth participation (2009b: 7).

At national and local level, the policy context in relation to youth participation is highly diverse across the European Union and tends to integrate a variety of issues such as training and higher education, transitions from education to employment, opportunities for volunteering and youth work. There are increasingly common trends across Northern, Southern, Eastern, Central and Western European countries with relation to the ways in which young people's social inclusion could be promoted. More pro-active welfare strategies are implemented in Northern Europe and more of an emphasis is put on family and school in post-Socialist states, on work and family in Center Europe and family and religious institutions in Southern Europe. In most countries, the efforts to increase training opportunities for young people at risk of exclusion, to provide a counter-balance to their weak socioeconomic backgrounds via educational initiatives and youth work enabling disadvantaged young people to participate in sport, volunteering or the arts are pursued through support's policies for Third Sector organization. Therefore, these last are more aimed at a *compensatory* work with these cohorts of young people rather than to a *universalistic* and systematic intervention regarding all young people. Consequently, they are perceived as stigmatizing by their natural target group, and therefore refused (see Walther et al. 2006). Although in the academic debate the exclusion from democratic life is uniformly considered as depending on economic and social exclusion, this is not always the case in national policy contexts. In fact, many national governments are still reluctant to follow the Council Resolution of 27 November 2009 suggesting to

the EU member-states to adopt evidence-bases youth policy. The attempt to promote a general concept of youth participation without paying any attention to the youth life conditions that enhance or hinder the participation's possibilities is a dead-end way (Pleyers, 2014).

It is with these concerns and within this broader policy context that the project PARTISPACE, Youth Spaces and Styles of Participation, has been financed through the EU Horizon 2020 program. Corresponding to the work program topic YOUNG-5a-2014: *Societal and political engagement of young people and their perspectives on Europe*, PARTISPACE starts from the assumption that social and political engagement and participation develop through practice in everyday life contexts and in relation to issues of biographical relevance. This means that it needs to be reconstructed from the biographies of the actors as participation emerges where actors ascribe subjective meaning to it in the context of their biographies (cf. Isin and Wood, 1999; Schwanenfluegel, 2014). Theorizing that all young people do participate while not all participation forms and context are recognized as such in the European and national discourses, the project aims at giving a transnational contribution in contextualizing and updating the core concept of participation, especially for what concern the *styles* with and the *spaces* in which young people experience it. According to recent EU researches (LSE, 2013; Gretschel et al., 2014), young people are far from apathetic but participate mostly in non- conventional ways: "surveys and analysis underlining a poor participation by young people are often the product of an overly formalistic definition of political participation, too focused on very limited measures of engagement, exclusively in the arena of formal politics" (LSE 2013: 45).

Participation represents for social and political scholars an 'essentially contested notion' that should be constantly negotiated as it never achieves a complete closure in terms of what it actually means (Laclau, 1996: 36). In fact, it is continuously incorporating multiple meanings in order to integrate the need and the interests of specific social actors who give it their own interpretation of citizenship. Therefore, participation is discursive used as a way of strengthening democracy, addressing community deficit, promoting social cohesion, or fighting social exclusion and poverty. This plurality means that the project of developing the participatory 'good citizen' foresees several roles for individuals such as becoming volunteers, taking part in deliberation processes, voting, becoming members of committees, being partners in the delivery of services, participating in educational programs and citizen panels, respecting the law and more rarely protesting or campaigning. To make an example, recent youth protest movements – in France, Germany, Italy, the UK, Sweden and Turkey – reflect conflicts both between young people and society in relation to different issues but also with regard to recognized forms of participation. Some conflicts relate to tensions between majority and minority groups, others to experiences of discrimination in school, lack of jobs and life perspectives, between conservative, authoritarian state and modernized life styles, welfare cuts and activation policies, while in most cases several factors intersect. However, in the political discourse these protests are rarely accepted as forms of participation being

instead criminalized and delegitimized as ‘riots’ (cf. Lagrange and Oberti, 2005; Pleyers, 2014) or illegal activities, such as happens for instance in the case of squatters.

Existing research suggests that political participation of young people depend *whether* and *on how* they succeed in influencing and being involved at local level in the issue of the community in which they are embedded (see Jamieson and Grundy, 2005; Spannring et al., 2008). This consideration means that if individuals make the experience of self-efficacy, they will be more inclined to engage in wider communities. Further analysis reveals that only few young people - mainly the best-educated ones - participate in formalized settings (parties, trade unions, or youth councils). This seems to happen also because these last are too rigid and normative oriented for satisfying individualized concerns, biographies and life styles, while reflecting patterns of social inequality (cf. Kovacheva, 2006; Spannring et al., 2008; Vromen & Collins, 2010; Diemer, 2012; Eurobarometer, 2013; Martelli, 2013).

As mentioned at the very beginning, the focus on participation is due to the widespread perception both at European and at national level that there is a growing lack of participation among young people. Questioning this assumption in the PARTISPACE project, we presume that there is a relation between this apparent lack, on the one hand, and the prevalence of ideological and discursive limitations of *what* is participation, on the other (cf. Inglehart, 1977; Verba et al., 1978). According to Giddens (1991), the individualization of young people’s biographies and the pluralization of the choices at their disposal also assumed a political perspective, as it gave them more options regarding the styles and the spaces of their involvement. He differentiates between the 'emancipatory politics' of modernity and the 'life politics' of late modernity. While the first is about people’s struggle to get out from under any form of domination or hierarchical relations, be it gender, economic or ethnic inequalities, life politics is about opening possibilities for self-realization, decision making and choice of lifestyle. Despite the persisting need of emancipatory politics in front of unsolved dynamics of inequalities concerning social inclusion and redistribution, both the increase of individualized ways of thinking and living and the widespread distrust in the traditional political actors have caused a shift from traditional politics towards forms of engagement corresponding to young people’s individual values and worldview. According to their empirical findings, Gretschel et al., (2014: 32) warn that young people perceive the political *status quo* as a “placebo democracy”. Consequently, they might skip away from traditional politics to issues connected to the development of their own identities and biographical self-determination (cf. Walther et al., 2006; Spannring et al., 2008; Loncle et al., 2012).

As in the prevailing neo-liberal rhetoric the integration of modern individualized societies seems to be more and more grounded on choices and decisions of individuals, both life satisfaction of citizens and social cohesion should increasingly depend on individuals’ participation. At the same time, individualized identities are difficult to reconcile with collective issues and as a consequence the meaning of

participation is undergoing a process of pluralization (Muxel & Cacouault, 2001). Among others, Pfaff (2007) outlines the importance of youth cultural styles for the development of civic competencies, underlining the distinction between *lifeworld activity* (lebensweltliche Aktivität) and *institutional-referred activity* (institutionenbezogene Aktivität). According to her, the first one represents a symbolic style of taking part by for example wearing outfits as a lifestyle and also subcultural statement, while the second one is a participation that aims for political institutions, like for example protesting directly. However, both represent participative forms of youth engagement in the public. The awareness of the complexity in the reshaping of participation in times of social change, especially for a broad 'mainstream' of young people who are "neither deeply apathetic about politics nor unconventionally engaged" (Laine, 2012: 52) has brought to a burgeoning interest in new forms of (sub)cultural participatory practices. In the same vein of Pfaff and at the other side of the world, drawing on a research with 970 Australians young people, Harris et al. (2010), suggest that many young people are disenchanted with political structures because they are unresponsive to their needs and interests. However, they remain interested in social and political issues and continue to seek recognition from the political system. At the same time, their participatory practices are not oriented towards spectacular (institutional-referred) activism or cultural politics, but take the form of informal, individualized and everyday (lifeworld) activities. In this perspective, the possibilities offered by the development of the new means of communication should not be underestimated. Indeed, the Internet and the social networks have renewed the repertories of civic and political participation offering to the young people new ways to express their voice though tools that erode the boundaries between private and public, micro and macro, local and global.

The changing nature of participation for young people is framed by the fragmentation of traditional institutions and the increasingly unpredictable nature of life trajectories. The increasing complexity of new mechanisms of governance and society require new forms of legitimation of policy-making and societal institutions beyond formal mechanisms of participation like voting or membership in parties and organizations (Willems *et al.*, 2012). This sounds as a powerful justification to the trend of activation in welfare, including labour market and health policies, as well as in education (lifelong learning). As a matter of fact, where societies fail in providing young people sufficient jobs, education or training opportunities, social security and social services while making individuals accountable for their 'choices', participation is a discourse prioritizing individual over collective claims. The focus on youth participation seems therefore a captivating attempt of policy makers to demonstrate that they are concerned about youth problems without binding governments to implement substantial policies for solving them. Participatory settings are often used by policy makers to provide a sense of participation or channel dissent, but with no real impact on decisions and policies (Gretschel et al., 2014). Despite the common rhetoric, in many European countries youth policies remain mainly underfunded, subject to changing political will, and unequally implemented.

The PARTISPACE study aims at undertaking a comparative analysis of youth participation or their involvement and engagement in decisions 'which concern them and, in general, the life of their communities' (European Commission, 2001a: 8). The central research question of the project is *how* and *where* 15- and 30 year-old young people do participate differently across social milieus and youth cultural scenes and across eight European cities (framed by different national welfare, education and youth policies). What *styles* of participation do they prefer, develop and apply and in what *spaces* does participation take place? Answers to these questions could improve the understanding of the complexities and contradictions of youth participation – on the side of policy makers as well as on the side of young people – and thereby help empowering young people in participating in society, renovating also concepts, definitions and discourses on what (youth) participation is, could and should be.

The eight European cities in which we conduct the study are Bologna (IT), Eskisehir (TK), Frankfurt (DE), Gothenburg (SE), Manchester (UK), Plovdiv (BG), Rennes (FR) and Zurich (CH). They do not represent but secure contrasting contexts of young people's growing up as well as differing orientations towards Europe. Although embedded in different national and local contexts, these eight cities are comparable in terms of dimension and relevance in the respective country. This ensures a sufficient provision and diversity of participatory settings without being too close to representative national government institutions and umbrella structures.

The design of PARTISPACE entails:

- A *desk research* including national research literature reviews and policy analysis (WPs national countries reports;
- A *glossary* of key concepts aimed at bridging the different national and disciplinary backgrounds of the researchers producing a shared conceptual framework for what concerns the topics of the project;
- A *comparative analysis* of European Social Survey data on young people's participatory orientations in the eight involved countries. This should enhance the generalization of qualitative findings and test the hypothesis that experiences of participation 'at home' are a necessary precondition for orientations towards participation beyond the local level – including the European one;
- A *qualitative research* conducted through local case studies in the eight cities mentioned above including expert interviews, focus groups discussions, city walks and biographical interviews with young people, ethnographic case studies of formal, non-formal, and informal participatory spaces reconstructing individual biographies and elaborating local constellations of youth participation.
- A *participatory action research* conducted by young people themselves with the support of the national research teams.

The analysis relates local constellations with national and European patterns and discourses of youth participation. Findings will be on going discussed with representatives of the youth sector at local and European level.

The present WP2 comparative report stems from the eight national reports written by the national team in order to provide an analytical description of national and local structures of youth policy, participation programs, participation discourses, review existing research on youth participation in the countries and describe the urban areas in which the local case studies are located. Its aims are to highlight both peculiarities, and connections and similarities between cities across borders.

Research Methodology and Report Structure

In this first section of the report we seek to retrace the main steps of WP2's research activities and to present the methodological structure of the comparative report WP, focusing in particular on the procedures we applied, the difficulties we encountered, and the goals we achieved. The report structure will be also presented and the main contents of each chapter will be briefly discussed.

This report represents a significant part of the state of the art concerning:

- *Literature review* on youth participation of existing quantitative and qualitative analyses of youth participation across relevant disciplines;
- Production of a conceptual *glossary* framing the topics of the project;
- *Policy analysis* including elements of *discourse analysis* of documents, programs and legal framework that frame, shape and limit youth participation including how European discourses are interpreted and implemented at national level;
- Examples of formal (youth councils, youth parliaments), non-formal (youth work, youth organizations) and informal (youth cultures/scenes, youth protests and youth consumerism) forms of youth participation.

As transnational research on youth, PARTISPACE requires a comparative perspective for two main reasons. Firstly, it enables scholars to ask *how* and *to what* extent different institutional structures, discourses and policies perform differently with regard to youth participation in the different countries involved. Secondly, it enables analysis of *how* local, national, and supra-national levels interact, either converging or diverging, and *how* EU's intention to promote participation in democratic life policy is interpreted in the national discourse and implemented in the youth policies across Europe. It also allows for interpretation of the differences and similarities between participation's concepts and policies implementations in relation to the systemic functions they play, and the socio-cultural meanings that are conveyed by the different societal contexts.

In the attempt of securing European coverage, the PARTISPACE consortium gathers countries according to a model of welfare and 'transition regimes' (cf. Esping-Anderson, 1990; Walther, 2006; 2012a). France, Germany and Switzerland represent the conservative or employment-centred regime type; the UK stands for the liberal regime type; Sweden represents the universalistic regime type; Italy represents the under institutionalized or familistic regime type; Bulgaria is a case of a post-socialist

state in transformation, while Turkey stands for a developing country with a relatively small welfare state, focused on family structure and characterized by traditional gender roles. Switzerland and Turkey are two non-EU-countries with different relations towards the EU and this permit us to analyse the relevance and impact of EU policies and discourses on local youth participation's settings in two countries respectively refusing and looking for the entrance in the EU area. Apart from this, the country sample includes different interpretations of representative democracy and different levels of influence of local youth policy versus national governments. This heuristic model contributes to an understanding and interpretation of comparative data by providing analytical dimensions that can relate concrete findings to overall societal structures (cf. Schriewer 2000; Walther et al. 2006; Walther & Pohl 2005; Walther 2012).

According to Bereday (1964) comparative analysis implies four steps: description (or data collection), (context-immanent) interpretation, juxtaposition and comparative analysis. Also the comparative research framework in PARTISPACE involves different phases in which the international comparative analysis is systematically prepared in order to allow for the thematic analysis of the empirical data collected in the different working packages of the project.

Preparation began with a *descriptive phase*, resulting in the production of a *glossary* of key concepts aimed at a shared theoretical framework for what concerns the topics of the project and in

eight country reports (desk research) that served as a foundation to develop further research questions. The core leaders of this work package (WP2) proposed a detailed structure of the country reports whose applicability to the several national context has been discussed with the other partners of the consortium in order to grant the future comparability. All the data have been collected in relation to this PARTISPACE overarching research question and the particular cities chosen for the empirical work. The findings of this first phase also serve to prepare the empirical fieldwork by highlighting the many local specific differences, which could then be taken into account when designing the data collection instruments for the case studies.

Following a comparative rationale, the second phase involves the *interpretation* and *juxtaposition* of the data and conceptual information gathered in the single national reports, especially with regard to the formal dimension of participation as the data regarding other spaces and styles of youth participation resulted scarce in the existing literature.

In this perspective, the present comparative report combines aspects of a review of the state of art with a comparative juxtaposition of information, providing a contextualizing basis for the analysis of empirical data gathered during the next stage of the PARTISPACE research project, which will involve transnational comparative data analysis.

The work on this comparative report began with the feedback to the national reports given by the core leaders to the national teams, in some cases asking for complementing the missing data. A comparative structure was then proposed and discussed with the partners after the second project meeting in Plovdiv (10-13th November 2015). This structure partially reproduces that of the country reports, foreseeing six chapters respectively on (1) youth conditions, (2) youth policy, welfare and educational system, (3) national discourses on youth and youth socio-political participation, (4) statistics and literature on youth participation, (5) description of the local areas, (6) conclusions and emerging issues.

The writing process started with the extraction of national data from the country reports, which have been then juxtaposed. Therefore, the main parts of the report represent more a juxtaposition of data, rather than comparative analysis. Juxtaposition of findings allows identifying patterns of differences and similarities between the local areas, using national contexts as first and transnational contexts as second level of contextualization. The information in it will only allow for comparative analysis, where data from each national research team can be positioned within the wider European social context. Comparative analysis in a broader sense applies to the perspectives of levels (local, national, transnational), settings (formal, non-formal and informal) as well as practices (individual, collective and institutional).

Due to the heterogeneity of the information available in the countries reports and to the main aim of the project, i.e. reducing some knowledge gaps in the existing research on spaces and styles of participation, this reports should be intended more as a starting point and background for the future empirical work and not as an outcome and result in itself.

Following the aforementioned structure, the report is organized in six sections.

The *first section* of this report provides a portrait of the living conditions of youth in the eight countries included in the PARTISPACE project, offering a comparative description of selected changes in demographic dynamics, housing conditions, health and well-being, leisure and lifestyle, education and labour markets. To obtain a clearer picture of how these changes have affected young people's lives over the last decade, this section illustrates a set of indicators collected from Eurostat's website and its online databases. The core leader collected the data available for each country involved and asked the partners to check them.

The *second section* presents the essential characteristics of the national youth policy describing its main actors, the relationships between them, the responsibilities' distribution between different institutional levels, the main areas of interest, the more important measures and the budget allocated to each area/measure. Further attention is given to the welfare system 'around youth' and its main services with a special focus on the relation between education and welfare and on any emerging change, open problem, and on-going development concerning the national youth policy.

The *third section* focuses on national youth policy, on the national interpretation and implementation of European discourses and measures and the relationships between national and European discourses and measures especially from 2001 (year of EU's White Paper on Youth) until nowadays. More specifically, we have analysed a sample of national documents (such as laws, official political statements, reports) applying the method of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Robertson 2007). CDA is a particular variant of socio-linguistics that conceives discourse as 'a form as social practice' (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997: 258) and takes particular interest in the relation between language and power, affirming that cultural and economic dimensions are essential in the creation and maintenance of power relations that are mirrored in discourses, and that can be studied through discourses. In this perspective, through the application of CDA to 4/5 key texts of national policy documents that each country was asked to select, we have sought to shed light on the discourses and rhetoric's on youth and youth political-participation emerging in the different countries. In order to grant the comparability of the findings, core teams developed a joint grid to be used both for the analysis of the relationships between national and European discourses (WP2) and that of key documents, programs and legal framework of the EU and the Council of Europe (WP3). After their feedbacks to the grid, the partners were also asked to send indications on the key European documents on youth policies and discourses to submit for the discourse analysis. The main contents of the national discourses and measures on youth (topics, ideas, and supported values, considered actors, problematized issues, suggested/offered solutions, used vocabulary, proposed argumentation and definition) have been described on the basis of the following questions:

- Which European discourses and measures have been implemented in the country?
- How have they been interpreted and how have they been practically implemented?
- What kind of relationships exists between national and European discourses and measures?

The *fourth section* presents the demographic and socio-economic description of the eight urban areas, in which the empirical research will be conducted with the aim of retracing youth participation's developments and main events from the end of World War II until nowadays. An overview of the urban youth policies (actors, relationships between them, main policy areas, relevant measures, etc.), youth work structures and youth participation's settings complete the interpretations' picture of youth participation at the local level.

The *fifth section* provides an overview of the main national literature, research reports, and policy documents on youth socio-political participation and engagement. Its aim is to highlight their prevailing emerging definitions (e.g. youth participation in electoral turnout; youth involvement in parties, political organisation, trade unions,

voluntary associations, etc.), detecting where possible the influence of the demographic, socio-economic and cultural variables. Partners have also looked for classifications and explanations of settings of youth participation characterised by different levels of institutionalisation in order to identify the styles and spaces of participation preferred by youth. A special focus was given to the relations between education and socio-political participation and between youth work and youth socio-political participation in order to illustrate the role of the formal and non-formal educational institutions in proposing experience of participation's learning and practicing.

The *sixth section* is aimed at presenting the main characteristics of the eight urban areas where PARTISPACE's empirical activities will be carried out, paying particular attention at highlighting the main traits of local youth policies and youth participation opportunities.

The *seventh concluding section* proposes a reflection on the national framework of youth participation with a special focus on the main emerging issues regarding some core topics as styles and spaces of youth participation and the role of youth work and learning in enhancing youth participation as lived practices.

The aim of this first section of the report was to explicit the process behind the main steps of WP2's research activities and present the methodological approach of the comparative report WP with a special focus on the procedures we applied, the difficulties we encountered, and the goals we achieved. After that, we presented and discussed the main contents of each chapter in order to show the overall view of the present report.

Social Conditions of Youth

Introduction

Over the last decades, youth conditions in western societies have changed rapidly and quite significantly. To obtain a clearer picture of these changes, this chapter illustrates a set of indicators collected from Eurostat, providing a comparative description of the living conditions of youth at the aggregate level in the eight countries included in PARTISPACE. Data gathered includes information on demographic trends and household conditions, lifestyle, health and wellbeing, as well as education participation and youth economic and working conditions. The aim is to give a general overview of youth conditions from a comparative perspective, highlighting similarities and differences among countries and age groups, as well as detecting the prevailing trends over time.

1. Demographic trends and household conditions

This first section presents a collection of demographic statistics on population, age structure and family transitions in the eight countries included in the PARTISPACE project. All the information reported in the paragraph comes from Eurostat data source.

Population. Population exhibits a great variation in our sample. The most populous countries are Germany and Turkey, with around 80 million of inhabitants, followed by Italy, France, and the United Kingdom with around 60 million. Sweden, Bulgaria and Switzerland count less than 10 million of inhabitants. The current demographic situation is characterised by continuing population growth. Switzerland and Turkey have recorded the most significant positive change (respectively +10% and +8% in the period 2003-2014). The number of inhabitants has decreased in two countries: Germany (-2%) and Bulgaria (-6%).

Average age of population. In 2014, Turkey has the lowest average age, with a value of 30 years. By contrast, Germany result the country with the oldest population (45.3 years), followed by Italy (44.4 years). Among the other countries, France and the United Kingdom are those relatively younger (around 40 years). In the last decade, all the countries have lived a generalized process of increased longevity. This tendency mainly affected countries with a large presence of elderly (Italy, Germany), but also

Turkey, the youngest in the sample. In Germany the average age rose from 39.8 years in 2000 to 45.6 in 2014. This ageing of population was particularly relevant also in Italy (from 40.1 to 44.7).

Life expectancy at birth. A rapid greying of society is one of the most important effects of demographic change in EU, reflecting a consolidated stabilization and improvement of life expectancy at birth. In most of the eight countries, in 2014 life expectancy converged at around the age of 83-85 years for women, and of 80 years for men. From 2002, there was an increase of more than 2 years in all the countries. Life expectancy results significantly lower in Bulgaria for men (7-10 years less the average value) and also for women (with a difference of 3-6 years less). Women reach an age higher than men in all the countries.

Population age structure. In 2014, the share of young people in the age group 15-29 years old accounts for less than a fifth of the whole population in the most of the countries. Only in Turkey their impact is significantly higher, reaching a forth of population (24.8% in 2014). The countries where young people have a relative minor weight are Italy (15%, 9.3 millions) and German (17.0%, 13.7 millions). Among other countries, the demographic impact of the youngsters is significantly higher in Sweden and United Kingdom (19%). This ranking remains the same taking into account the 15-24 age group. The presence of young people in the population has decreased in most of the countries, largely in Bulgaria (-25% between 2003 and 2014). In Sweden, the United Kingdom and Switzerland the trend was, instead, positive with an increase higher than 10%.

As the share of young people in the EU's population decreased, the relative importance of the elderly (aged 65 years old or more) grew. In 2014, those aged 65 or more accounted for almost one in five (18.5 %). Percentages vary from a minimum of 7.7% in Turkey to a value three times higher in Italy (21.2%) and Germany (20.8%). While the relative prevalence of elderly over young people in Italy was already a consolidated characteristic, Germany has registered the highest increase in the population aged 65 or more (+19% between 2003 and 2014). Italy and Germany, together with Bulgaria, are the only countries where the share of elderly people in the EU exceeded significantly the share of young people. In Turkey as well, the age structure is changing quickly, even though it remains largely different in demographic terms (because it remains younger).

Young-age and old age dependency ratio reflects these demographic configurations. The former measure is the ratio of people aged 0–14 (or 0-19) years old divided by the number of persons in working age (15–64 years). The latter indicate the ratio of the number of persons economically inactive (those aged 65 or over) divided by the number of people in working age (15–64 years). Age dependency ratios may be used to analyse the potential support that may be provided to young people and to the elderly by those of working age. Young-age dependency ratio is low in countries with a minor component of young people (it accounts for 32-34% in Italy, Bulgaria, Germany), whilst it remains very high in Turkey (59%). Over the last decade,

Bulgaria has registered a significant reduction in the component of young age dependency (-20%). Conversely, old age dependency ratio is higher in countries like Italy and Germany (31%), where percentage has increased more in the last decade, overcoming the young-age dependency ratio. The most impressive change over the last decade has occurred in Turkey under the effect of a massive demographic transition. In this country young dependency has significantly decreased between 2001 and 2014 (from 77% to 59%), followed by a massive increase (+36%) in old-age dependency.

Foreign-born population: country of birth is another key variable for studying populations. People born abroad (outside EU or in another EU state) who have established their residence in the EU state are a relevant group in many of the targeted countries. In 2014, they account for almost 10 million in Germany, 8 million in UK, 7.6 million in France, 5.7 million in Italy. In Switzerland, the foreign-born are more than 2 million and correspond to a fourth of the population, whilst in other big countries percentages reach 10-12%. Foreign-born are a huge minority of population only in Bulgaria, where they count only for 1.5%[1]. The number of young foreign-born (15-29 years) is higher in UK (1.8 million), where they are overrepresented, accounting for 23% of the whole population in that age group. Young immigrants in France are 1.1 million (14%), 1.7 million in Germany (17%), 1.3 million in Italy (22%), whereas they reach (proportionally) lower levels in other countries. The number of people living in a Member State that is not their country of origin is becoming higher. In the very recent period with complete statistical trend (2011-14), percentage has grown more in Bulgaria (+40% of foreign-born in general, +15% in the 15-29 age group). Differently, young component of immigrant has reduced in Italy (-12%).

Family transition. Timings of transition into adulthood in Europe are strongly different, reproducing cultural and historical cleavages and diversified models of family formation and family obligations. In 2013, median age at leaving home in EU-28 was estimated in 27.2 for males and 25.0 for females. In Italy, transitions occur 4 years later for males (31.0) and females (28.7). In Bulgaria, age at leaving home reaches the highest value of 31.3 for males. In Turkey, too, males (more than females) tend to postpone the transition (median age: 29.6). Living arrangement of young people is completely different in Sweden, where males and females leave parental home at 19 (more than 10 years earlier than Italy). Age of familiar transition is quite low and similar in France, Germany and UK (25 for males and 23 for females)[2]. As effect of these differences, the share of young people (age group: 18-34 years) living with parents is very high in Italy and Bulgaria for males: 72% against 27% in Sweden, 38% in France, 41% in the United Kingdom. The correspondent percentage for females is particularly high in Italy (60%) and Bulgaria (52%). Only 20% of Swedish young females live with their parents.

[1] Data are not reported for Turkey.
[2] Data are not reported for Switzerland.

Tab.1 – Main demographic trends in targeted countries. Year 2014

	BG	F	D	IT	SE	CH	TR	UK
Population (in million)	7.2	63.9	80.8	60.8	9.6	8.1	76.7	64.3
Median age	43.2	40.8	45.6	44.7	40.9	42.1	30.4	39.9
Life expectancy at birth, males/female*	71.3/ 78.6	79.0/ 85.6	78.6/ 83.2	80.3/ 85.2	80.2/ 83.8	80.7/ 85.0	75.4/ 81.1	79.2/ 82.9
Population, 15-29 in million (% on total)	1.2 (17.1%)	11.8 (17.9%)	13.7 (17.0%)	9.3 (15.3%)	1.8 (19.1%)	1.5 (18.2%)	19.0 (24.8%)	12.6 (19.5%)
% of population > 64 years old	18.5	19.6	17.7	20.8	21.4	19.4	17.6	7.7
Young age dependency ratio	20.6	29.3	19.9	21.5	26.9	22.1	36.3	27.2
Old age dependency ratio	29.3	28.4	31.5	33.1	30.6	26.1	11.3	27.0
Foreign-born population (in thousands)	109.2	7661.7	9818.0	5737.2	1532.6	2183.2	:	8035.6
Foreign-born population. 15-29 years (in thousands)	17.1	1101.0	1713.8	1255.1	307.7	369.3		1850.9
Average age of leaving home. males/females (males/females)	31.3/ 26.8	24.5/ 22.8	24.8/ 22.9	31.0/ 28.7	19.9/ 19.3	21.0	29.6/ 24.9	25.0/ 23.1
% young people 18-34 living with parents (males/females)	72.4/ 52.4	38.7/ 29.9	49.7/ 34.5	71.8/ 59.6	27.5/ 20.1	48.0/ 39.5	:	40.6/ 27.8

Note: *2013
Source: Eurostat

2. Health and well-being

This section presents a collection of statistics on health conditions and perceptions, and styles of consumption in the countries included in the PARTISPACE project.

Health conditions. According to Eurostat data, high percentages of young people aged 16-29 in EU (average of 27 countries) declare to feel good: from 2004 (90.5%) more than 90% say they feel "Very good or good" (92% in 2012). All PARTISPACE countries show an increasing percentage across time and are beyond 90% in 2012, except for Turkey, whose most recent data (88.2%) however refer to 2007. The highest percentage of young people feeling good in 2012 is in Bulgaria (96.7%), followed by Italy (94.3%) and Switzerland (93.5%), while the United Kingdom, Germany and France register the lowest ones (respectively 90.2%, 90.6%, 90.7%). Except for Bulgaria, males feel slightly better than females.

The previous situation can be in a sense controlled through the following observation. Young people 16-29 having a long-standing illness or health problem are in EU the 11.4% of the whole population in the same age group (average of 27 countries, 2012, Eurostat). The percentage is stable since 2005. Among PARTISPACE countries, the highest percentages are registered in Switzerland (20.4%), Sweden (19.9%) and France (15.9%), the lowest in Bulgaria (2.7%) and Italy (5.9%), with a prevailing trend of slightly worse conditions for women.

If we observe the number of people aged 16-29 reporting unmet needs for medical examination for reasons of barriers of access, it is possible to notice in 2012 an average of only 4% in EU (27 countries), with PARTISPACE partners ranging from 12.5% in Turkey (year 2007) and 12.4% in Sweden, to less than 3% in Switzerland, Italy and the United Kingdom (and Germany at 3.1%). The general trend over the years from 2004 results in a decreasing percentage of self-reported unmet needs. No relevant gender differences are registered.

Tab. 2 – Percentage of the population rating their satisfaction as low, 16-24 y.o. Year 2013 ("Satisfaction with...")

	Financial situation	Accommodation	Job	Commuting time	Time use	Overall life	Recreational and green areas	Living environment	Personal relationships	Meaning of life
EU (28)	35.3	15.9	20.2	22.0	20.4	12.3	22.9	18.8	7.6	12.1
BG	75.9	50.3	58.3	53.2	40.6	47.0	54.2	55.5	38.7	33.9
CH	13.8	7.1	9.0	14.9	29.5	4.0	11.3	14.6	1.5	8.5
D	34.8	16.2	19.9	24.9	30.1	11.8	19.8	16.3	8.7	17.3
F	27.7	11.7	19.9	21.8	19.5	12.2	21.5	8.5	5.9	17.9
IT	34.1	15.7	19.4	17.8	19.3	14.3	35.3	34.3	8.6	10.0
SE	19.0	12.8	21.7	23.2	17.6	7.9	12.9	18.2	5.4	13.9
UK	46.5	15.5	23.3	23.2	24.5	12.9	21.1	13.8	9.7	14.3

Source: Eurostat

Well-being. The amount of young people being "rarely" or "never" happy (in the last 4 weeks) in 2013 (only available data) is of 6.9% among 16-24 years old and of 9.5% among 25-34 years old at the EU level (EU-28). Among PARTISPACE countries[3], the situation for 16-24 years old is more positive than the EU average in Switzerland, France, the United Kingdom and Germany, with the others around the average, except

[3] Data are not reported for Turkey.

for Bulgaria, where the percentage raises to 17.4%. A similar trend is registered for 25-34 years old.

As regards "overall life satisfaction", in 2013 PARTISPACE countries[4] follow a pattern similar to the previous one, and Bulgaria stands out for its high percentage of low satisfaction both for 16-24 (47%) and 25-34 (51.6%), against an EU average of 12,3% and of 16,3%, respectively. In general, as to happiness and satisfaction, young adult (25-34) show a more critical condition.

Tab. 3 Percentage of the population rating their satisfaction as low, 25-34 y.o. Year 2013 ("Satisfaction with...")

	Financial situation	Accommodation	Job	Commuting time	Time use	Overall life	Recreational and green areas	Living environment	Personal relationships	Meaning of life
EU (28)	36.9	19.7	18.5	21.1	33.9	16.2	24.1	19.6	10.6	13.5
BG	71.9	46.7	47.3	47.6	54.6	51.6	56.7	57.3	45.0	36.6
CH	18.9	10.9	12.5	13.8	36.0	7.4	10.8	11.8	2.4	7.5
D	38.7	24.9	22.1	21.9	43.1	15.9	23.0	19.7	14.5	20.3
F	28.9	15.6	15.2	22.1	36.1	12.0	22.1	10.6	9.6	15.7
IT	39.3	17.8	17.1	22.2	30.9	20.1	33.4	33.7	10.7	10.7
SE	21.9	17.5	16.1	23.5	33.3	8.1	11.4	13.2	7.2	11.1
UK	39.7	17.8	20.6	21.4	37.4	16.4	19.9	13.6	9.2	12.8

Source: Eurostat

3. Lifestyle, culture and leisure

Data on participation of young people in informal voluntary activities (year 2006[5]) show a relevant difference between Sweden and Germany on one side, where 1 out of 3 among 16-29 participate (in line with the EU average), and Bulgaria on the other side, with only 2% of them. Italy and France account for 18.7% and 14.2%, respectively.

Concerning activities such as going to the cinema, live performances, cultural sites or attending live sport events, the most popular in EU (2006) among 16-29 years old is the cinema (only 23.3% of them report no attendance at all), followed at a distance by

[4] Data are not reported for Turkey.
[5] Data for Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and Turkey not available.

the theatre and concerts (46.3% never attending), cultural sites (historical monuments, museums, art galleries or archaeological sites) at 53.2% and sports events at 53.7%. Among PARTISPACE partners (data for Switzerland and Turkey not available), in Germany the least popular are theatre and concerts, in Bulgaria and Italy cultural sites, in France, Sweden and the United Kingdom sports events. If concerning cinema gender differences are not relevant, sports activities are evidently more usual for male, while theatre, concerts and cultural sites are more attended by females.

Moving to the use of information technologies, in 2014 we see in EU (27 countries) a widespread daily use of computers (80% of 16-29 years old). Among PARTISPACE countries[6], only Germany is well above the EU average (87%) and only Turkey is significantly below (46%). From 2011 to 2014, in Sweden we can see a decrease of 16-29 years old daily usage of computers: from 92% to 80%.

The frequency of daily Internet access of 16-29 years old in 2014 is higher[7]: 87% in EU (constantly increasing since 2011). Beyond this average we find Sweden (94%), Germany (93%) and United Kingdom (93%), while the only PARTISPACE country far below the average is Turkey (51%), with Bulgaria at 76%, and France and Italy close to the average. The use of Internet is mainly for sending/receiving mails (EU-27 average: 90%); then for finding information about goods and services (80%); playing/downloading games, images, films or music (71%); reading/downloading online newspaper/news (63% - year 2012); banking (50%); telephoning or video calls (48%); listening to web radio (41%).

4. Education and training

This section presents a range of statistics covering young people's education and training situation in the eight countries included in the PARTISPACE project, with the intention of both detecting the prevailing trends over time and showing similarities and differences among countries.

Participation and attainments. In Europe, positive trends are registered in the field of education and the growth of school participation is a consolidate phenomenon. The participation rate in formal and non-formal education of the young people aged between 15 and 29 y.o. has grown by 3.3% on average across the EU-28 countries in the last decade, reaching 52% in 2014. Among PARTISPACE countries, this phenomenon followed different trends. Turkey, for example, undoubtedly shows the highest progress, with an increase of 15% since 2006 (earliest year available), followed by France (7.5), Italy (5.5), Sweden (4.2), Switzerland (3.1), Bulgaria (1.9) and Germany (0.9), whereas the UK reveals a notable decline (-2.6).

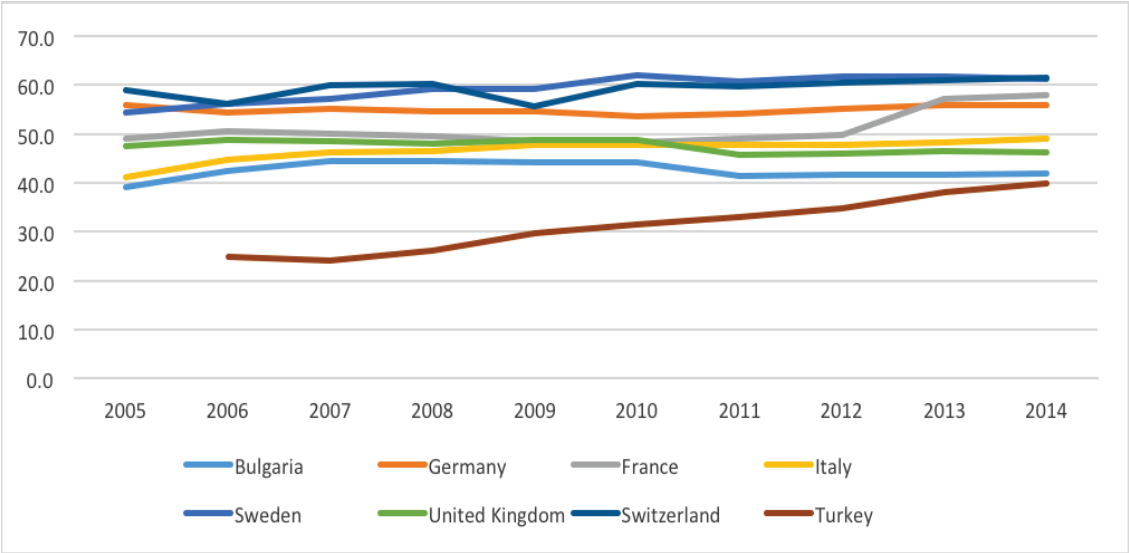
These recent dynamics have not annulled differences between countries in 2014: in France, Germany, Sweden and Switzerland the share of young people aged 15-29

[6] Data for Switzerland are not reported.
[7] Data for Switzerland are not reported.

attending formal and non-formal education was superior to the EU-28 average (52%). In particular, Sweden and Switzerland stand out as the European countries with the highest levels of participation in education. By contrast, Italy, the UK, Bulgaria and Turkey are positioned below the EU-28 average. However, whereas Italy differs slightly from the European average (-2.7%), the other three countries are much more detached.

In addition to the participation growth in formal and non-formal education, in the last decade the European Union has also seen a considerable increase in attainment levels achieved by young people. Indeed, at European level (EU 28), the proportion of young people aged 25 to 34 with upper secondary or higher educational attainment increased by almost 5%. As concerns PARTISPACE countries, Turkey, Italy, the UK, and France register a growth higher than the increase at EU level; Germany and Bulgaria are slightly above, while Sweden reveals a decrease (-3.2 %). In spite of this decrease, however, Sweden is still among the countries with a very high share of at least medium-educated young people. Indeed, Sweden, Switzerland, Germany, France and the UK are the PARTISPACE countries where young people aged 25 to 34 with upper secondary or higher educational attainment exceed the EU-28 average (83.1%). Conversely, Bulgaria is positioned slightly below the European average and Italy reveals a more considerable gap (about 10%) while Turkey – the country with the highest increase in the last decade – registers a share of young people aged 25 to 34 with at least secondary educational attainment still lower than 50%.

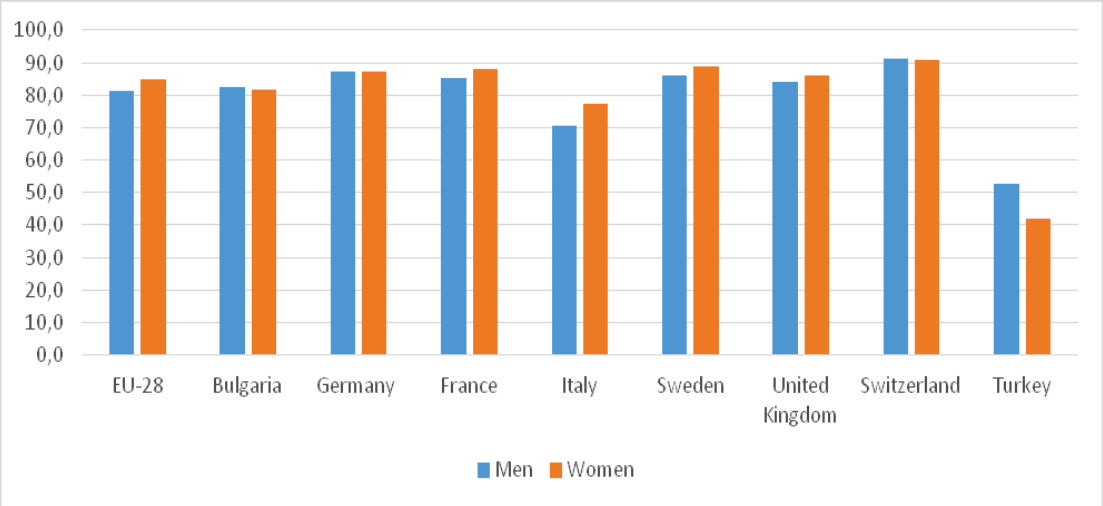
Figure 1 - Participation rate of young people aged 15-29 in education and training by country (years 2005-2014).



Note: data regarding Turkey refer to 2006-2014.
Source: Eurostat

In general, young women tend to participate more in education than young men, except for Turkey, where – in a context of generalised lower participation in education – young men still tend to attend school more than women. As concerns young adults' educational levels, the pattern in 2014 is about the same. As Figure 2 shows, in the EU-28 on average 84.9% of young adult women aged 25 to 34 completed at least upper secondary education, while the percentage of men with the same attainment level is 81.3 %. This gender gap in favour of women characterises Italy (the PARTISPACE country with the highest gender gap: 6.8 %), Sweden, France and the UK. By contrast, Germany and Switzerland are the countries where gender differences in educational attainment does not occur, while in Turkey young men with at least upper secondary educational attainment is 14.4% higher than that of women.

Figure 2 - Young people (aged 25-34) who have completed at least upper secondary education, by country and sex (2014).



Source: Eurostat

Early school-leavers. Despite the positive increase in the educational attainment level of young people in almost all PARTISPACE countries over the last decade[8], a share of young people continue to leave the education system prematurely. For example, the percentage of the population aged 18 to 24 having attained at most lower secondary education (so-called early school-leavers) is about 11%. As concerns PARTISPACE countries in particular, two different groups come to light. In one group, there are countries placed above the EU-28 average: the UK and Bulgaria, in particular, register a percentage slightly above the European average, Italy differs by about 4% and Turkey has about 40% early school leavers. In the other group, there are

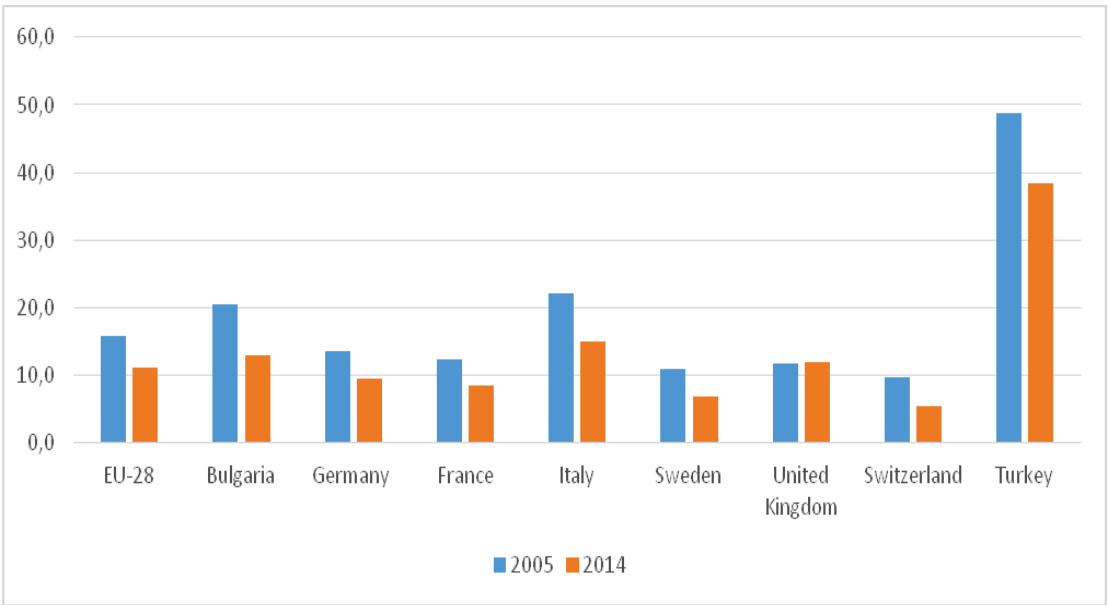
[8] Indeed, the Swedish decrease has to be interpreted in relation to its high educational attainment levels registered in the first half of the previous decade.

Germany, France, Sweden and Switzerland, who register the lowest share of early school leavers with 5.4%.

In the last decade, in PARTISPACE countries there has been a general decline regarding the proportion of young people leaving school early, except for the UK, where the rate has remained substantially stable. As shown in Figure 3, the countries with the highest proportions of early school leavers (Turkey, Italy and Bulgaria) are also the countries that have shown the most relevant improvement (-10.5, -7.1, -7.5 percentage points respectively).

From a gender perspective, at the European level, the probability of leaving education early, with low qualification levels, is higher among men than women, with a difference that in 2014 reached 3.2 %. In PARTISPACE countries, this pattern holds true for Italy, which registered the highest gender gap in favour of women (5.5%), the UK, France, Germany and Sweden, where the difference is undoubtedly less marked – just 1.3%. Bulgaria and Switzerland show similar percentages for men and women, while in Turkey the percentage of young female early school leavers is higher than that of men.

Figure 3 - Early leavers from education and training (population aged 18-24 with lower secondary education at most and not in further education or training), by country (years 2005 and 2014).



Note: data regarding Turkey refer to 2006-2014.
Source: Eurostat

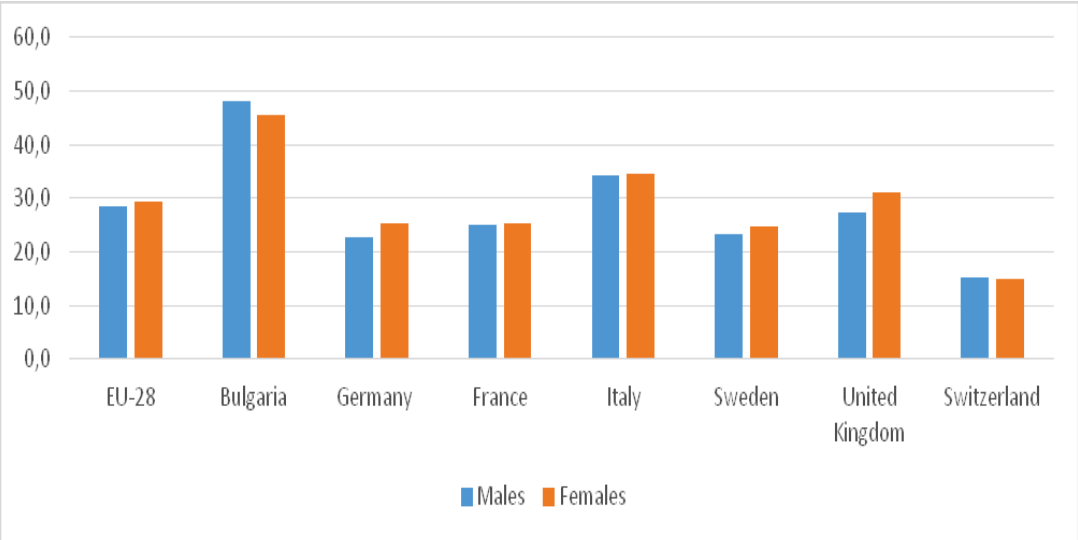
Student mobility. In the last few decades, the European Union has also seen an increase in student mobility, namely students studying in another EU or candidate country. In 2014, 3.5% of higher education students (ISCED 5-6) experienced

learning mobility, with a growth of 1.4 % over the previous decade. Within PARTISPACE countries, Bulgaria is the country with the largest proportion of students who have experienced student mobility (9%), followed by Germany (3.9), Sweden (3.6), Italy (2.9), France (2.6) and Turkey (1.6). The lowest share is registered in the UK (0.9)[9].

5. Living conditions and labour market

This section presents a range of statistics presenting information related to the risk of poverty or social exclusion among young people and their situation in the labour market across PARTISPACE countries, thus describing some general trends affecting young people.

Figure 4 – Young people aged 15-29 at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate by sex. 2013



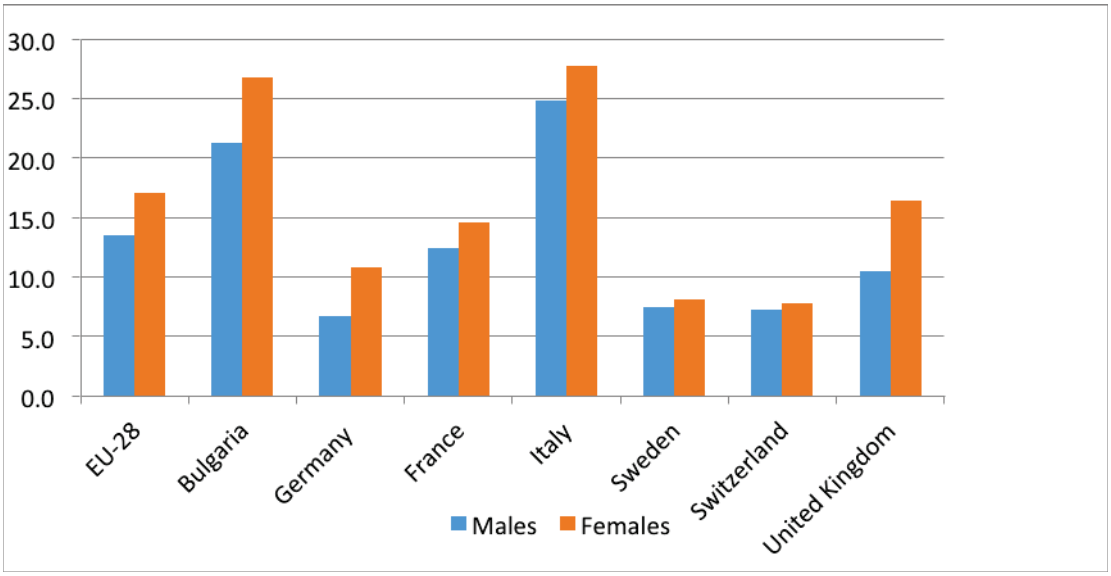
Source: Eurostat

Levels of poverty and deprivation. The recent global financial and economic crisis hit young people very hard in the European Union, influencing many aspects of their lives. First, young people's levels of poverty and deprivation – always higher than that of the total population – recorded a further increase at EU level in the years following the crisis and the subsequent recession. Young people's at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate[10] was already quite high in 2007, affecting slightly more than one youth out of four (26.3% against 24.4% for the total population). However, it rose further, reaching almost 30% in 2013. Since the total population's rate has remained constant, the poverty gap between young people and the total population is

[9] As regards Switzerland, data are not available.
[10] This indicator is based on three sub-indicators of poverty: the at-risk-of-poverty rate, the severe material deprivation rate and the rate of living in a household with very low work intensity.

broadening. At country level, however, the situation differs considerably. In Bulgaria, the country with the highest young people's at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate among PARTISPACE countries[11], the rate reaches about 50%, while in Switzerland it is 15.1%. Germany and Sweden are positioned just below the EU-28 average, while France, the UK and especially Italy are over. From a gender perspective, the difference at the EU-28 level between young women and young men is not large. As shown in figure 4, significant differences exist in the UK, Sweden and Germany, where young women are more disadvantaged than young men, while in France and Italy the gender gap is very small.

Figure 5 - Young people aged 15-29 not in employment, education or training (NEET rate) by sex. 2014.



Source: Eurostat

Young people not in employment, education or training. A further important indicator of the social condition of young people is the NEET rate, which measures the number of young people who are neither in employment nor in education and training. The NEET group includes not only disadvantaged young people. However, to a certain extent this indicator can be considered a sign of vulnerability, especially with reference to young people detached from the labour market and not looking for a job due to the difficulties faced in entering the occupational market. In the last decade, at EU level the NEET rate has had a fluctuating evolution, decreasing until 2008 (13.0%) and rising gradually from 2009 due to the recession following the economic crisis. In 2014, the NEET rate was 15.3% among those aged 15-29. The highest share was registered in Italy (26.2%), a percentage nearly double compared to the EU average,

[11] As regards Turkey, data are not available.

followed by Bulgaria (24%); the lowest are in Switzerland (7.5%), Sweden (7.8%) and Germany (8.7%)[12]. In almost all EU countries, NEET rates are higher for women than for men. However, Figure 5 shows significant variations in gender differences: in UK and Bulgaria it exceeds 5%, in Germany it is 4, in Italy and France it is slightly lower than 3, while in Sweden and Switzerland it does not even reach 1.

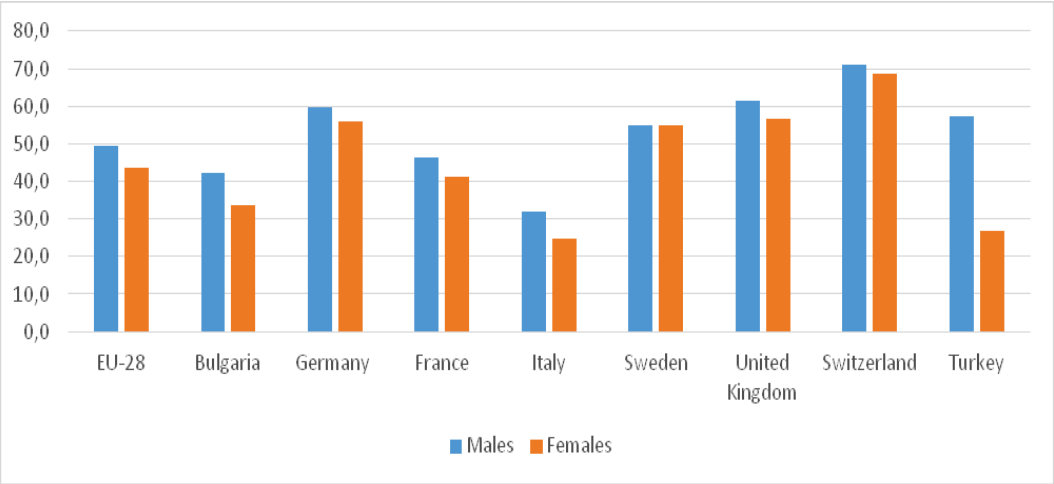
Employment. The recent global financial and economic crisis also hit the youth labour market in the European Union, revealing a significant contraction in employment. In fact, from 2008 to 2013, the youth employment rate for people aged 15-29 decreased by 3.1 % (EU-28), showing a slight tendency to inversion only in 2014 (+0.6 percentage points), when it reached 46.5%, although it still has not returned to pre-crisis levels. Nevertheless, there are large differences among EU Member States and PARTISPACE countries. The youth labour market suffered a substantial blow during the recent global financial and economic crisis, especially in Italy (-11.4% from 2008 to 2013), the UK (-5.3) and France (-1.6), while in the other countries youth employment rates increased. In 2014, the highest employment rate among PARTISPACE countries was registered in Switzerland (70.0%), followed at a large distance by the UK (59.2%), Germany (57.8%) and Sweden (55.0%). The lowest rate (28.3%) was recorded in Italy, followed by Bulgaria (38.0%), Turkey (42.1%) and France (43.7%).

Figure 6 shows that employment rates were generally lower among women. Nevertheless, the gender gap is present in PARTISPACE countries to different degrees. The highest contrast between men and women is present in Turkey; followed by Bulgaria and Italy, while in Sweden it is fundamentally absent.

Unemployment. As a result of the global financial and economic crisis, European countries have experienced not only a decrease in employment levels, but also an increase in the unemployment rate for youth, signalling the difficulties faced by young people in finding a job. At the European level, slightly more than one young person out of six was unemployed in 2014 (17.5% EU-28). The unemployment situation of young people varied largely across PARTISPACE countries: only Italy (31.6%), France (18.2%) and – to a very small extent – Bulgaria (17.7%) exceed the European average, while Switzerland and Germany are below it at 10 %.

[12] As regards Turkey, data are not available.

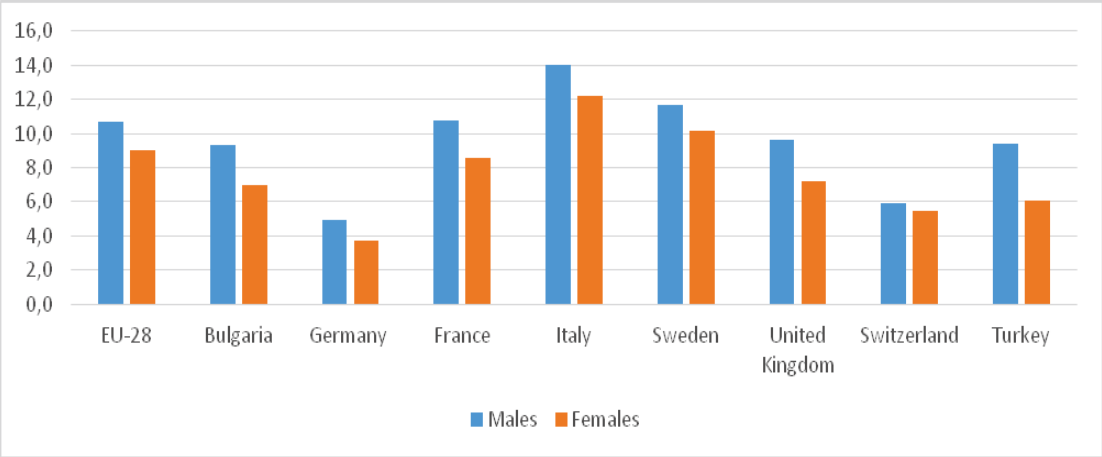
Figure 6 - Employment rates of young people aged 15–29, by sex, 2014



Source: Eurostat

The differences among countries remains fundamentally the same also as concerns the youth unemployment ratio, namely the percentage of unemployed young people compared to the total population of that age group (employed, unemployed and inactive) and not only to the young labour force[13]. Indeed, Italy stands out as the worst country regarding young people's chances of finding a job (13.1%). Nevertheless, in second place there is Sweden (11.0%), with France in third place (9.7%), just below the European average (9.9%). Germany and Switzerland are confirmed as the countries with the most comfortable labour market for young people because unemployment affects only a small minority.

Figure 7 - Unemployment ratio of young people aged 15–29, by sex, 2014



[13] Indeed, the unemployment ratio offers a more complete picture of the employment difficulties of young peoples because it is calculated considering also those still studying full-time, which is a large share of the young people neither working nor looking for a job.

Source: Eurostat

Temporary contracts. The youth labour market is also characterised by a high percentage of temporary contracts, which can be considered on the one hand a stepping stone in the early career towards a more stable employment position, but on the other, a threat of insecurity for young people's transition to independent life. At the EU level, the percentage of young people aged 15-29 in temporary employment has reached 30% over a decade. Although in the early years of the economic recession (2008 and 2009), a reduction in the number of young people employed on temporary positions occurred (since employers pursuing quick cost cuts did not renew many fixed-term contracts), in the following years there was an increase. Indeed, temporary contracts have become the best way for employers to cope with a climate of economic uncertainty. Different factors, however, affect the evolution and spread of their use in European countries, such as country-specific regulations on fixed-term contracts, the level of social protection attached to such contracts, and differences in national school-to-work transition systems relating to traineeships and probationary periods. It is not surprising, therefore, to observe marked differences among PARTISPACE countries: the proportion of young people working with temporary contracts in 2014 was highest in Sweden, Italy, France, Germany and Switzerland, varying from 42.1% to 36.6%. By contrast, in Turkey and the UK, the percentage is considerably lower (respectively 15.9% and 11.3%), while in Bulgaria only 9.1% of the young people aged between 15 and 29 are temporary employees.

At EU level, difference between the rate of young women and young men aged 15-29 with temporary contracts is very small. Nevertheless, in PARTISPACE countries with the highest share of temporary work contracts, women are more likely to work with fixed-term contracts than men are.

Concluding remarks

In this chapter, we have collected a wide range of statistics on population, health condition, participation in social and leisure activities as well as in education. Our aim is tracing a detailed profile of youth and societies in which young people live. As regards demographic characteristics, the PARTISPACE countries exhibit a great variation. The median age of the population varies from a very low level in Turkey (30 years) to a significantly higher level in Italy and Germany (44-45 years). In general, all the countries included in the project have lived a generalized process of increased longevity and, as direct consequence, the share of young people (15-29 years old) accounts for a huge minority (less than a fifth) of the whole population. The impact of migration is another relevant trait that characterize the social profile of population. People born abroad who have established their residence in the EU state are 10 million in Germany, 8 million in UK, 7.6 million in France, 5.7 million in Italy; only in Bulgaria, they represent a huge minority (1.5%). Among this population, the

relative weight of the young component (15-29 years old) is higher in UK. A further information on national peculiarities derives from the statistics on transition to adulthood and, in particular, on the timing of leaving home, which reproduce cultural and historical cleavages within Europe. In 2013, median age when children become residentially independent in EU-28 was estimated in 27.2 for males and 25.0 for females. This transition occurs 4 years later in Italy, while young males and females leave parental home almost ten years earlier (at 19) in Sweden.

Regarding health conditions, high percentages of young people aged 16-29 in Partispace partners declare to feel good, especially in Bulgaria. Also feelings of well-being and overall life satisfactions are quite high (mainly for 16-24 years old than for 25-34 ones), except for Bulgaria, where a more critical condition emerges.

Data on participation of young people in informal voluntary activities show relevant differences among Partispace countries, where 1 out of 3 among 16-29 participate in Sweden and Germany, and on the opposite only 2% of them in Bulgaria.

The most popular leisure activity is going to cinema. In this case gender differences are not relevant, while sports activities are more usual for male, and theatre, concerts and cultural sites are more attended by females.

The frequency of daily Internet access is high and non necessarily driven by personal computer (smartphones rather), with Bulgary and especially Turkey under the EU average (87%).

Although their starting points were different, the eight countries included in the PARTISPACE project have in general registered positive trends in the field of education over the last decade. With a few exceptions, the eight countries have shown growth both in the participation rate in formal and non-formal education (except for UK) and in the proportion of young people aged 25 to 34 with upper secondary or higher educational attainment (except for Sweden). At the same time, these countries have registered a general improvement in the rate of young people leaving school early, with the exception of the UK, where the rate has remained substantially stable.

These recent dynamics have not annulled differences among the countries: Sweden, Switzerland, France and Germany continue to be the countries with better performances in the field of education in Europe. By contrast, Italy, the UK, Bulgaria and Turkey are generally positioned below the EU-28 average. Moreover, with the exception of Turkey (where – in a context of lower participation in education – young men still tend to attend school more than women), young women have a higher level of participation in education. Nevertheless, only Italy, Sweden, France and the UK show a gender gap in favour of women regarding young adults' educational levels.

The recent global financial and economic crises have severely hit the European labour markets in the last few years. Nevertheless, there are large differences in the way in which young people have been affected. Significant contractions in employment have been registered especially in Italy, the UK and France, while in the other countries

youth employment rates have slightly increased. In addition, the unemployment situation of young people has also varied largely across PARTISPACE countries: only Italy, France and Bulgaria exceed the European average, while Switzerland and Germany are considerably below it. Along with Turkey, Italy, Bulgaria and France are also the PARTISPACE countries with the lowest employment rate among young people. Therefore, just as observed in the field of education, considerable differences can also be observed in the youth labour market: Switzerland, the UK, Germany and Sweden in general have more inclusive labour markets regarding young people. Moreover, Turkey, Italy, Bulgaria and France show not only worse performances compared to other PARTISPACE countries in employment and unemployment rates, but also a more severe gender gap penalising young women, namely a persistent sign of deficiency in fairness and equal opportunities.

Youth policies, Welfare and Educational systems

Introduction

Participation by young people is a way to act and affect a social sphere framed by a socio-, economic-, cultural- and political landscape. Depending on the context, participation may have different meanings, connotations and content. In PARTISPACE's eight countries defining contexts are to be on different levels, from the general international policy making, idiosyncratically at national level, but also at regional and locally. In this chapter some of the main characteristics of the welfare systems, how youth policy is articulated and shape of the educational systems of the involved countries are depictured and brought together in some aspects.

The eight PARTISPACE countries' approaches to youth policy, welfare and education vary significantly, depending on the different historical and political realities they have faced: from the post-USSR landscape of Bulgaria, to the well-padded institutions of Sweden. To compare and analyse them directly is not an easy task since a phenomenon does not have a fixed meaning and relates to the same actors between the national contexts. In order to attempt a comparison that respect the diversity of youth policy landscapes existing across Europe and in particular in the countries and cities involved in the PARTISPACE study, it seems therefore necessary to cluster similar countries in some main "regimes" of welfare. In this way, it is possible to recognize that institutions and policy are the consequence of conflicts and interests, values and interpretative patterns developed during the country's history. This evolution has produced different normative concepts of "normalcy" in the different contexts, this also includes the relationship between individual entitlements, and collective demands (cf. Walther et al., 2006).

In this project, we refer to the most influential welfare state regime theory formulated by Gösta Esping-Andersen in the book "Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism" (1990). The use of this particular model helps to understand how welfare is realized in a division of roles between the state, the market and the families. This can indicate what demands are translated into societal responsibilities and thereby to show some of the hindrances or promotion of youth transitions and their participation in society. Esping-Andersen describes welfare regimes as: "…The institutional arrangements,

rules and understandings that guide and shape concurrent social policy decisions, expenditure developments, problem definitions, and even the respond-and-demand structure of citizens and welfare consumers. The existence of policy regimes reflects the circumstance that short term policies, reforms, debates, and decision-making take place within frameworks of historical institutionalization that differ quantitatively between countries" (Esping-Andersen 1990, p. 80). He finds three key factors are especially important when it comes to defining modes of different welfare systems: de-commodification, stratification and employment, where the first refers to the extent citizens are left or protected from market forces to guard for social protection, the second how social groups are organised in status hierarchies and the last how the labour market is organised, including social security measures connected to it.

- Social-Democratic (Nordic) regimes, which are characterised by generous universal welfare benefits, independent of individual contributions. De-commodification is high while stratification is low.
- Conservative (Continental) regimes on the other hand are defined by more traditional gender roles and family structures, with moderate de-commodification, where state welfare will only act once the family's capacity for care has been exhausted, thus discouraging married women from participating in the labour market. This type of welfare regime is highly stratified.
- Liberal (Ango-Saxon) regime, which is characterised by means-tested welfare, with benefits aimed generally at the most destitute, while the population generally enjoys very little help. This regime has a low level of de-commodification combined with a high level of stratification, given that the state provides few opportunities for social mobility.

No country belongs purely to one welfare regime. Each country has its own unique blend of characteristics from each regime, although some adhere more fully to the "ideal type". Germany, for instance, can be seen as a typical Conservative regime and Sweden is Social Democratic, while Switzerland is less easy to place. However, though influential, Esping-Andersen's theory has not passed unscathed through history. One important criticism is the limited scope of the theory, whose Eurocentric perspective does not seem to accommodate to the rest of the world, and even to some parts of Europe. This issue concerns countries participating in PARTISPACE as well; neither Turkey nor Bulgaria fit smoothly into any regime. While Turkey seems to fit best with the Conservative regime, due to its focus on family as support provider and traditional gender structures, and Bulgaria's bare-bones approach seems to belong to the Liberal group, neither country has the political trust or the comprehensive support system available in for instance Germany and the UK.

To amend this perceived oversight, many researchers have suggested additions. A common suggestion is to include a separate category to the Conservative regime for the Mediterranean countries, citing their particularly fragmented and half-hearted

approach to welfare, in particular as it relates to families and gender (cf. Trifiletti 1999 for a discussion on Italy, or Arts and Gelissen 2002 more generally). Fenger (2007) investigates the argument for a separate category for central/eastern European countries, based on their status as "transitional" post-communist regimes. This scholar points out that the significantly lower levels of trust, social programs and social situation set them apart from other countries. However, he does not identify any definite approach that associate all post-soviet states, noting that they mix freely between Conservative and Liberal welfare regimes, but at a much smaller scale than the European countries outside of this area.

The welfare regime theory is useful for understanding welfare policy making in different parts of Europe, however it falls short in explaining youth transitions policy to adulthood. Walther (2006) emphasises how youth transitions touch on many policy areas that are not traditionally included in welfare regimes, such as education and training, employment and gender. Walther identifies four overarching rationales in the European context. As regimes refer to ideal types and to general trends rather than to specific contexts. Briefly, they are as follows:

- Universalistic, with non-selective education providing many opportunities for social mobility, and relying on the state for welfare provision. Universalistic regimes have organisational rather than occupational labour markets, focusing on activating rather than employing, high female employment and a representation of youth as an asset rather than as a problem. There is furthermore a focus on individual development in each young person. According to Walther, Sweden is an example of a Universalistic regime.

- Employment-centred regimes on the other hand have selective educational systems, where only a smaller amount of students continues on to further education. Focus is instead on vocational training. The labour market is closed and high-risk for vulnerable people at its periphery but stable for those at its core. Employment is central for these regimes, with high levels of compensation for members of the regular work force but only rudimentary support for those outside of it. Female employment is under-represented compared to other regimes, and transitions are driven by a vocational training rationale. Youth is seen as a group to be moulded to fit social positions. Both Germany and France are identified as employment-centred transition regimes.

- The Sub-protective regime has a non-selective educational system and relies heavily on the family for provision of social security, which means that the informal work sector is very big, particularly among women. The labour market is a closed, high-risk area, where young people have a long transition period and are not entitled to benefits of their own. Labour market segmentation and lack of training leads to very high youth unemployment. Young people tend to study at University in order to get a status during the waiting period for the labour market entry. Most policies aim at providing

youth with institutionalised status – in employment, training or education. Italy is a clear example of this regime. However also Bulgaria and Turkey present some common traits with it.

- Liberal regimes have non-selective educational systems and rely on both the state and the family to provide support. Jobseeker's allowance is universal, however, much of it is tied to income, and is small and conditional on job search. Youth unemployment is seen as based in a culture of dependency rather than the result of external forces. Therefore the youth is seen as a problem. The labour market is open and fluid, and this leads to high female employment, but also to high risks for the most vulnerable groups The focus of transition policy is to ensure employability. The UK is a Liberal regime.

There are some possible implications for youth participation in relation to the different transition regimes. One is the basic perception of youth as a resource to be accounted for or a problem to act on to prevent future problem. In regimes where young people are held as possible resources, one can expect there to be more of pro-activity from the system to actually bring them in to discussions and opening of decision making arenas. In combination with a more comprehensive, universalistic principle a broad array of youth related issues could be understood in terms of potential participatory arenas. System where youth mainly is understood as problems, until proven otherwise, there would likely be more of reactive responses. When no signs of disturbances are seen, there would be less cause to take action. In systems where youth transition are more of an affair for the family, young people's participation would likely first have to be put on the societal agenda if there will be any public actions and responses in this area. In sub-protective but also liberal systems there could possibly be this kind of problem; it's not just about to find ways to promote youth participation, but also to construct an arena in which this issue is seen as a legitimate object of action. Employment-centred models might be well suited to deal with selective groups of young people's participation, those who are invited to the labour market, but can be at the risk of being blind-folded of the multiplicity of young persons' partaking in societal life, especially for those left out of the organized employment.

1. Main traits and actors appointed in the youth policy

One important aspect of policy formation is that stakeholders and responsible actors are defined and connected to each other. Another is to distinguish key areas from other topics and appoint strategies to them, perhaps in some phase determined plan (Bacchi, 2009). In the youth policy field this could be realized as how the central state relate to local actors, how actors in the civil society relate to the public system and what resources, regulations and incentives are to be used in the implementation

process. Policy formation is in this manner a way of distributing and regulating power relations and also steer attention to what issues are to be high on the stakeholder's agenda and thereby gain resources (March & Olsen, 1976). In the following the responsibilities and actors of the youth policy field in the different countries are described together with a interpretation of what welfare system these refers to. After that, a comparative model of actors and policy character is suggested. The sources for the description of the national contexts are the national reports from the participating countries.

Bulgaria[14]

Bulgarian youth policy is implemented via multiple state institutions, and although the Ministry of Youth is officially responsible for youth policy, many questions concerning youth, such as unemployment and low fertility, are neither addressed by the youth ministry nor are the actions of the relevant state institutions synchronised with it. The National Assembly adopt the National Youth Strategy and ratify a National Youth Report, to be implemented through a structure from central state authorities to regional and local level. The National Youth Advisory Council denotes the multi-sectorial institutional involvement. Established under the auspices of Ministry of Youth and Sports and headed by the Minister, this Council includes deputy ministers of 11 ministries, representatives of the National Association of Municipalities and the National Representation of the Students' Councils as well as representatives from each nationally representative youth organization.

The 2012 Law on Youth is the key legislative document in Bulgaria in the sphere of youth policy. It traces the parameters of national youth policy, fixes its institutional arrangement and provides for some basic definitions of concepts. According to the law, the aim of state youth policy is the "establishment of favourable conditions to complete personal growth of youth and their participation in social and economic life as well as their involvement in the governance at local, regional and national level through activities encouraging youth's development in the country".

Bulgaria's social welfare system was created after the fall of the Soviet Union, and aimed to mix different welfare regimes to achieve a fair and equal society (Kovacheva, 2000; Petkov, 2008). However, much of the responsibility to pick up the slack when Soviet social associations dissolved fell on the families as the replacements failed to grow as fast as necessary (Kovacheva, 2010). At that time there was no discourse on youth participation – instead, the focus was on low fertility and slow economic growth. Though the legal structure is now in place, Bulgaria's struggles continue, in particular for the country's youth. They frequently face poverty and lack the resources to cover even basic needs such as heating and food. Furthermore, according to Eurostat data, Bulgaria has a relatively large amount of "NEETs", while self-employment and entrepreneurship among young people is low. The combination of

[14] Source for the information on Bulgaria: Popivanov, B. & Kovacheva, S. (2015). PARTISPACE National report Bulgaria.

Bulgaria's slow recovery from the financial crisis, late labour market entry, low fertility and high degree of emigration has put the country's young people in a tough spot.

Bulgaria, like Turkey, does not quite fit in with Esping-Andersen's welfare regime model. Welfare levels are low, and rely strongly upon families. However, this was not intentionally planned – there was simply no one else around to support youth. Like Turkey, Bulgarian youth policy appears to be a low priority and is fragmented due to the hesitant cooperation over Ministries to ensure a cohesive youth policy. Since a sizeable number of Bulgarian young people struggle to meet even their basic needs, there can be no talk of any actual welfare regime. To signalize there is a general leaning towards Liberal in welfare questions – high stratification and reproduction of roles, low in general social security provision, and a leaning towards Conservative in labour policy, with a closed, rigid system effectively hobbling young people in transition.

France[15]

The main institutional actor of youth policy in France is the Ministry of Youth. The minister is rarely solely the ministry of youth as it is always associated to one if not several other topics, such as sports. The Ministry works both as a single unit and across the board with other Ministries who develop policies that concern youth, for instance education and employment. Employment, health and education have in later years been the top priorities of the youth policy of different regimes but it has to different extent also addressed leisure, citizenship, and social affairs. Despite the common understanding of the youth policy in aims for entry into the labor market, autonomy and citizenship, later administration put emphasis on social justice and youth poverty. Youth appears in different clothing in the policies: as a resource (for the future), an object for protection, and as a threat to society, and overall more of an individual being than a member of a social group.

From 1982, local authorities gained considerable power through a decentralisation process. Since then, various reforms have led to an increased influence of the local authorities. Local authorities have progressively developed frameworks for their own youth policies, adapted to their local situations. The 2004 law of decentralization increased the budgets of local authorities. The State Agency for youth affairs is still quite powerful in terms of human resources, but no longer in terms of financial means; local authorities, in particular regions, are contributing more to the funding of youth policies, but agencies remain small, which means that only few specialists are allocated to youth policy-making (Loncle, 2014).

[15] Source for the information on France: Becquet, V.; Hinkle, L.; Larmagnac, M.; Loncle, P.; Mainfray, A. & Martin, C. (2015). PARTISPACE National report France.

Many NGOs support young people in leisure, culture and citizenship education. However, while youth policies in France have gained in strength, NGOs seem to have become weaker. They are in a way so vital as before, since public authorities remain highly dependent on them. However, they have become less influential in policy-making and agenda setting.

France's welfare system shares similarities with the German system in relation to the moderate de-commodification and some important social benefits traditionally linked to the employment. There is however several examples for an attempt to go for a more general, universalistic system, but in practice limited budgets and austerities have been counteracting this trend.

Germany[16]

Germany is a federal state, which leads to a complex youth policy system relying on actors with different responsibilities on several levels: local, regional and national. These include on the national level federal ministries (Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth), on the regional level state ministries and Land of Hesse, and on the local level children and youth services. The "subsidiarity" principle is substantial for the understanding of the relationship between public and private institutions and organisations in the field, meaning that the responsibility for different issues are given to the "lowest" level as possible, giving a mix of public and private sector actors.

The notion of youth policy is only marginally used in Germany and mainly covers national pilot programs and youth organisations organised on the local and regional level in youth councils. It does not cover the areas of formal education, which is governed by the 16 federal states, and the whole area around training and employment, which is a national competence mainly of the centralised Employment Service.

The national level is responsible for youth public policies, as well as for the legal framework. The regional level is the main responsible agent for education, while having less impact on youth welfare and policy. The local level is responsible for youth policy and administering funding for the mandatory state policies. Youth organisations also operate on the local level, cooperating in youth councils, which provide an actor of youth policies. Youth council members are also members of the youth statutory services committees, which in turn consist of representatives from youth organisations, public administrations and local elected officials. This model is typical for corporatist system where young people are represented via youth associations and welfare organisations. The same structure is to be found on each level, on the regional mirrored by regional Child and Youth Services Committee

[16] Source for the information on Germany: Lütgens, J.; Mengilli, Y.; Pohl, A.; von Schwanenflügel, L. & Walther A. (2015). PARTISPACE National report Germany.

going alongside the regional Youth Office and on the federal level with the Federal Youth Board advising the work of the Federal Ministry.

Germany's Conservative welfare and in Walther's terms employment-centred system, are explained by such as the emphasis on subsidiary principles relying on families and also on the labour market regulation giving lots of safety for those included in the labour market and very much less for the others. Thus the conservative welfare system is highly selective, reflected not only in the labour market but also in the educational system in which the three-tier school system upholds a social stratification from early years.

Italy[17]

Italy's governance has been progressively decentralised, and now regions and municipalities wield a lot of power. This tendency is remarkable in youth policy that is marked by fragmentation and a lack of cooperation on different levels. However, as is the case in Switzerland, strong regional power means that though inventiveness increases, it does not do so across the board. In Italy, there is a sharp divide between the wealthier northern and the poorer southern regions, where the lack of resources limits the ability to coordinate and create coherent and integrated projects. Furthermore, in a struggling Italian economy, youth policy has received substantial cuts, including on the municipal level, making the situation still worse in poor areas.

In 2001 through the Constitutional Reform, the regions gained executive power over everything not explicitly governed by the national government, including youth policy, which is a considerable power. Italy got a national Ministry for Youth and Sport quite late, in 2006, which represented an 'unprecedented innovation' for Italy in the field of youth policy (Campagnoli, 2010). The putting up of the Ministry for Youth in 2006 was shortly afterwards followed by the establishment of the National Fund for Youth Policy in 2007. Within the new institutional arrangement emerging from the combination of the devolution of power to Regions and the existence of a specific Ministry, a new widespread governance programme in the field of youth policy was promoted through the Framework Programme Agreements (FPA). The FPA implements the principle of vertical and horizontal subsidiarity and specifies the national priorities in youth policy areas identified by the Ministry. On the basis of these priorities, resources from the Fund for Youth Policy are distributed among the local Authorities for the implementation of the duties assigned to them in the field of youth policies.

But still, the youth policy area continued to be marked by poor coherence between levels, with overlapping responsibilities and an inability to cooperate and synchronise the efforts. Furthermore, it still lacks any general national legislation or strategy on

[17] Source for the information on Italy: Cuconato, M.; De Luigi, N.; Martelli, A.; Pitti, I.; Tuorto, D. & Zannoni, F (2015). PARTISPACE National report Italy.

youth, which severely impairs any efforts in youth policy, and contributes to the impression of youth policy as an underdeveloped, low-priority field. The reasoning behind the creation of a Youth and Sports ministry was the urgency to create a youth policy similar to those of other European countries. The pressure from the EU is thus instrumental, both as an economic incentive and as peer pressure.

As typical of other parts of the Italian welfare policy, youth policy is characterised by a reliance on the family for social security (Esping-Andersen 1999; Sgritta 2005; Ascoli 2011). The Conservative model espoused by the country emphasises on family, fails in creating a cohesive national policy, while the frequent budget cuts caused by the financial crises has robbed local authorities of the ability to create working policy on their level. Italy is a prime example of Walther's Sub-Protective transition regime. The lack of social security provided by the state has led to a reliance on family and informal work, while the long transition period for young people, and the high unemployment, makes self-sufficiency impossible for a long time. Considering the policies oriented to the participation, the active engagement in the life of the community and the personal growth of young people, it seems that the more committed actors and the more interesting experiences are located at local level

Sweden[18]

Sweden's Social Democratic welfare regime, whilst originally focusing mainly on providing the individual citizen with independence through a comprehensive state-run welfare structure, shows also a long tradition of strong local government on the municipal level, where much of the decision-making takes place. The educational system is traditionally not selective and is compulsory during nine years, but most youth continues upper secondary school and about half go further into tertiary education. This system is free of charge for Swedish people and also for EU citizens from start and includes most tertiary education. The free choice of schools has however contradicted somewhat this policy, leading to a greater divide between schools better off and the worse. The labour market and employment training and support are general and focus mainly on the improvement of individual capacities, but even so Sweden have experienced historically high levels of youth unemployment in the recent years. The marginalisation of young people, especially those living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and with immigrant background represents a great challenge to tackle.

The National Youth Policy guides institutions on several levels, from state bureaucracy such as the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society, which are directly governed by the central state. The history for this actor can be traced to the middle of 20th century and has gradually got expanded responsibility from at start being focusing on leisure activities and financial support to different associations to

[18] Source for the information on Sweden: Forkby, T.; Andersson, B.; Becevic, Z. ; Liljeholm Hansson, S. (2015). PARTISPACE National report Sweden.

the present situation where it is the main actor in a holistic national youth policy. Its task includes follow-ups, advisory to local and regional actors, economic incentives to youth projects, international collaboration in the field (including some EU programs) etc. The importance of civil society actors has in later years been emphasized even stronger. At the municipal level, institutions (including schools) have more free rein, although still guided by the policy, due to for instance political and economic interest – you may gain more from staying in line than from rebelling. The policy also affects a third line of actors – those engaged in youth associations etc. They are by no means bound by the policy but might still refer to it in association guidelines etc. The aim of a government policy like this is thus to influence a wide range of actors in a subtle way (Hooghe & Marks, 2003; Pierre, 2011). Public local and regional actors are responsible for the actual welfare provision in most areas such as health, social and pastoral needs, education and some leisure activities. Different associations and their umbrella organisations play the most important role when it comes to sports and providing opportunities for hobbies.

The Social Democratic welfare regime Sweden subscribes to universal benefits and includes the chance for the individual to have a second chance, not at least through adult education. In Walther terms the system is universalistic because its focus on general, citizens' rights-based welfare system.

Switzerland[19]

Switzerland stands out to the other participating countries. Not only because it is not a member of the EU: It has a unique, heavily decentralised model of governance, based on the subsidiary principle, that creates a complex youth policy situation. Youth policy is shaped and implemented by a multitude of actors on the municipal, cantonal and national level. The subsidiary principle adopted by the country implies that municipalities take precedence over cantons, which take precedence over the national level, which means that the responsibility for shaping and implementing youth policy falls mainly on municipalities and cantons, while the federal government provides support and coordination. Against this background, cantons are granted a high level of independence in their decision-making. This means that the situation for children and youth/youth policies might differ quite a lot between the cantons. Although the Federal Council formulated a national strategy report on Swiss child and youth policy (2008), there are no binding standards for cantonal youth policies or an independent national child and youth act or a national "framework law".

As in the case of other youth policy areas, the responsibly for child and youth promotion lies primarily with the municipalities and cantons. However, the Federal Council is able to exercise some control through providing financial resources to

[19] Source for the information on Switzerland: Reutlinger, C.; Wigger, A.; Zimmermann, D.; Roth, P. & Reiner, J. (2015). PARTISPACE National report Switzerland.

public and private actors in the field of extracurricular youth work. Youth associations and youth work organisations and their respective umbrella organisations are among the most important actors in the field of child and youth promotion. Another relevant actor is The Conference of Cantonal Commissioners in Charge of Child and Youth Promotion (KKJF), which is responsible for communication, contact and inter-cantonal affairs in relation to youth policy. The KKJF has developed standards for child and youth promotion that all cantons have to use as guidelines.

In Switzerland, youth welfare services are administered by different actors (federal government, cantons, cities and municipalities, private organisations). There is still no overview of all specific programs for children and youth assistance. Measures to ensure the well-being of children are focused on providing subsidiary support to parents.

In the field of youth participation, civil actors play a major role, including for instance the umbrella organisation of the Swiss Youth Parliaments, the Swiss National Youth Council and the Child Rights Network. Another important actor is the Federal Commission for Children and Youth Issues (EKKJ), which has an advising and monitoring position and is supposed to safeguard central issues to youth.

The cantons have the overarching responsibility for the education system, while the municipalities have the operational responsibility. However, general curricula and financing are determined and voted on by the federal government. As the cantons have a great scope of action, the school system varies to a good deal within the country; even basic regulations like the duration of compulsory education are decided on the cantonal level. Since 2011, the federal level has the power to pass regulations to prevent discrepancies. The Swiss Conference for Cantonal Ministers of Education is attempting to harmonise education policy in the cantons, albeit slowly and with much resistance of various political actors.

Switzerland's welfare system is difficult to categorise due to its complexity. It is considered either as a hybrid liberal-conservative regime (Bonoli and Häusermann, 2011) or as a liberal regime (Siegel, 2007). This means that social welfare is a less prioritised area on the governmental level, however, as we've seen above, it lies primarily with the cantons and municipalities. On the national level however, its approach fits Esping-Andersen's Liberal model due to its bare-bones approach to welfare policy, leaving decision-making to the cantons and municipalities. According to Walther's youth transition model, Switzerland might fit best the employment-centred model, but the Switzerland system is as said quite diverse and come in different shapes over the country.

The UK/England[20]

The responsibility for the different areas of youth policy falls on a variety of departments, including the Department of Education and the Department of Health, the Home Office and the Cabinet Office, the Department for Work and Pensions, and Business and Innovations. The most important are the Department for Education; Department of Health, with the Home Office as the key department for youth justice issues. In the youth work field there are bodies that work in partnership with the government, such as the National Youth Agency, National Council for Voluntary Youth Organizations and the British Youth Council. Local Authorities have been the most significant actor for a long time.

During the coalition government (2010-2015) significant changes were made in the youth policy by putting more emphasis on youth service provision to be undertaken by non-profit, voluntary associations and private businesses. This was a major part of the "The Big Society" agenda, which is described as 'a call to action' where citizens, communities and civil society providers were required to play their part in reducing the deficit (Positive for Youth, 2010). While civil society has been recognised as a key player in the British welfare system for a long time, its role became increasingly crucial after the 2008 economic crisis, being seen as a vital ingredient to maintain the welfare system without necessarily burdening the budget, minimising as far as possible the government influence in order to cut costs.

Psychological needs and counselling are provided by the National Health Service (NHS), and regionally by Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service teams (CAMHs). Local authorities are responsible for providing a school nurse and social protection services, which are frequently delivered through the NHS. Although not required, many schools provide extra services such as childcare, and head teachers may budget to employ for example a speech therapist or a social worker for their school. Outside of school, mental health clinics and social workers are able to provide support, however the system is severely strained in some areas after many years of austerity measures. Even young people who have been previously confirmed to need extra support might not get any after they have turned 18, if they do not participate in education. In addition to healthcare, other parts of welfare are disadvantageous to the young people as well. Both minimum wage and jobseeker's allowance are significantly lower for those under 25.

UK/England's welfare regime can be identified as Liberal according to Esping-Andersen, combining means-tested social security for the most vulnerable citizens and an individualistic approach to welfare, not necessarily providing much for young people in general. Instead, much of the welfare offered is up to the individual head teacher's decision. Walther's youth transition model explains UK/England's strict job seeker's rules for young people, where youth unemployment is seen as a result of a

[20] United Kingdom with the connection to England is used because the text mainly refers to this part, even if it also covers some other parts of the UK. Source for the information on UK/England: Batsleer, J, Païs, A. and Rowley, H. (2015) PARTISPACE National report United Kingdom.

culture of dependency rather than any external obstacle to employment.

Turkey[21]

Turkey distinguishes itself from the other member states for several reasons; it is not yet a member of the EU and it is still a developing country, not least for what concerns democracy (www.partispace.eu/glossary). As a contrast to most of the participating states, Turkey is a highly centralised country, which necessarily leads to a top-down approach to youth policy. The centralised governance also leads to state influence down to the local level, although not necessarily an absolute power. But, some recent attempts at the local level in terms of youth work, especially following the EU candidacy process, might be considered as indicator of a new trend. Turkish youth policy structures and actors can be divided into three levels: national, local and associative. Because of the highly centralized politico-administrative structure and antidemocratic legal-institutional configuration, there is some sort of state control over the local and associative structures and actors. But in light of political competition and other factors, this controlling influence is not absolute. At each level there are structures and actors specific to youth.

The Turkish welfare state relies heavily on the traditional nuclear family, where the (male) breadwinner works as insurance for the wife to have access to social funds such as a pension and healthcare. The state is limited to regulate and administer these funds as appropriate. The welfare regime does not essentially inspire independence and self-sufficiency; rather it promotes a tight-knit, interdependent kind of community (Okman-Fisek, 1982). Since there is a lack of comprehensive and empowering youth policy, the responsibility falls on the families, and this represents a heavy hinder for youth social mobility and positive life changes. Compared to other countries included in PARTISPACE, Turkey is still a developing country, which was heavily rural with an economy largely controlled by the state until the 1980s. Since then liberalization processes followed that together with increasing urbanization and population growth has resulted in a growing economy but also greater inequalities. Reformation of the social security, family support provisions into more of a universal system from 2012, realized for example in that young people who chose to study at University can benefit from this until the age of 25, during the waiting period for the labour market entry. However the welfare system is still relatively limited compared to European countries.

The main institution responsible for creating youth policies at the national level in Turkey is the Ministry of Youth and Sports. However, given the development level of the country, the education policy centrally directed by the Ministry of Education, has been for a long time and is still perceived as a priority, if not the sole, in terms of

[21] Source for the information on Turkey: Demet L., Osmanoglu B., (2015) PARTISPACE National report Turkey

public policy influencing youth in Turkey. The Ministry for Youth and Sport was founded in 2011, although similar institutions have been in place since 1972. Prior to 2011, the focus was primarily on sports, with the youth section added more as an afterthought, and did not produce any youth policy. An important factor leading to the founding of a Ministry for youth was Turkey's EU candidacy. This could be also the reason why many EU discourse's keywords on youth can be found in Turkish founding documents of youth policies. It is therefore important to investigate the implementation of policy as well as the document (see the expert interview with Kurtaran, Istanbul, 27 November 2015). The Ministry was founded after a two years collaboration of a mixed group of representatives from civil and public institutions including public officers, academics and youth NGOs, coming together to determine its mission and objectives. Although the group was not democratically assembled, its work represents an attempt of a more inclusive procedure. There are two main institutions linked to the Ministry of Youth and Sports: the General Directorate of Sport and the Higher Education Credit and Dormitory Agency (YURTKUR). This latter financially support economically disadvantaged students in higher education through the granting of scholarships and student loans. It is also responsible for the management of student dormitories.

Turkey's welfare system according to Esping-Andersen terminology is somewhat tricky to figure out. While definitely sharing some characteristics with conservative regimes, with the emphasis on the family and traditional structures, Turkish youth seem left largely without safety net due to poor cohesion and the low priority of youth policy at national level. The level of welfare policy aimed at young people in Turkey is fragmented and lacking, especially in implementation. According to Walther's model of youth transitions, Turkey would be best explained by the Sub-protective transition regime, where family and informal work plays a major role in the provision of social security. Young people have little security outside their family. Together with a closed, high-risk labour market with high youth unemployment, in particular among young women who are frequently relied upon to take on informal work, making an independent career difficult, this leads to long transition periods.

2. Actor-defined youth policy

The responsible actors in formulation and execution of the youth policies can be (roughly) sorted in two dimensions: The vertical division attaining the relation between the central state and the actors at regional and local level and the horizontal division referring to the responsibility over the policy between institutional actors and civil society (NGOs, churches, sports associations etc.). Since some policies heavily rely on it as the kernel of the "welfare provision" to young people, the nuclear family could also be considered as an actor in the horizontal division. Even if there is in all countries a great similarity in the responsibility of the actors working at state, regional and local level, different focuses can be obscured. The table below shows the

differences in the main focus of the involved countries in relation to the appointed actors.

Tab.1 Youth policies in PARTISPACE's countries: appointed actors

	Vertical division **Central state – local actors**	**Horizontal division** **Focus: public actors – civil society – family**
Bulgaria	Centralised (multiple state institutions)	Partnership (combined efforts)
France	Split (former centralised increased de-centralisation, multiple policies)	Partnership (gradually weaker NGOs)
Germany	Split (de-coupled national, regional, local) through the federal system and welfare areas	Partnership (negotiated between public actors and civil society associations)
Italy	Regionalised (attempts to more centralisation)	Nuclear family
Sweden	Split (linked, local self-governing)	Partnership alliance (publicly led and financed)
Switzerland	Decentralised (overlapping multitude of levels and actors and areas of competence)	Negotiated order (about influence resp. responsibilities, duties and finances, in part unclear demarcations)
The UK/England	Split (national, regional, local) through competence (specialized). Overlaps in health, pastoral needs (pupils/citizens)	Partnership (big society, additive contribution)
Turkey	Centralised (top-bottom), attempts to include other than state actors	Nuclear family (male breadwinner)

In UK/England, Sweden, Germany and France we find splits in the vertical division between actors of the central state, regional level and local actors. In some countries these includes a split grounded on areas of competences meaning that the health service is mainly a matter for central ministries, while local actors hold the responsible for social service etc. The division in Sweden and Germany equals somewhat this competences' split, but this depends also on the governance structure of these countries, letting an extensive power to self-governing at regional and municipal actors. There is more of a free standing position for these in relation to more centralised systems, and thus the policy must be coordinated by some kind of negotiation and/or incentive system (cf. Pierre, 2011). France has undergone a fundamental change in its governance system, also reflected in the youth policy, from a more state controlled top – bottom system towards more decentralisation. This means that there are multiple youth policies working at different levels of the country. Turkey and also Bulgaria share more of a centralised system in which different or multitude of departments and ministries are the actors of the youth policy, which have not a long tradition as the influence from other countries and with the EU policy as a

strong influential factor. The complexity of the welfare system in Switzerland is also reflected in the youth policy in which the cantons have a lot of influence. There doesn't seem to be that more clear-cut split between different areas of competence as in some other countries, but a kind of multitude of actors in an on going negotiation about influence, responsibilities and duties of various actors. This concerns especially the demand from various actors that the Federal Council should take over more responsibilities, which it has neglected to do. Italy has not traditionally had a well-developed youth policy, but attempts to formulate such as been made during last decades. Instead of an active state in this field formulating areas of intervention and ideological grounds, the different regions could and can still be judged as the primary actors.

When it comes to the horizontal relations, all countries recognise the contribution of stakeholders from both the institutions and the civil society. However, just as previously some differences in the main focus and relations can be obscured. The partnership idea is the most common, meaning that different freestanding stakeholders work together towards a common goal but that they in the process anyway manage to fulfil their own (Glendinnig, Powell & Rummery, 2002). In UK/England, this is recognized under the 'Big Society' meaning: Everyone's contribution is needed and should be counted for: Similar is the idea in Bulgaria: youth policy is the result from the combined efforts of various stakeholders. Sweden is known for its tradition of the 'Great or (Strong) Society', mainly referring to the state and public actors. In the youth field there is also a long tradition of collaboration between the state and civil society actors. Important to this is the strong incentive system. Economic compensation is allowed to associations for youth activities. A critique of this kind of partnership model is that it has the flavour of cooptation, in which can be questioned the freestanding role of associations. Also in Germany and France one can find some kind of partnership idea. In Germany this is achieved through negotiations and agreements between stakeholders, in which the public actors, youth associations and councils have different roles. France shows a somewhat paradox development, the partnership idea is omnipresent but while strengthen the role of actors outside the state in line with the decentralisation process, the NGOs' position have become weaker. This can be explained through the austerity measures and strive for finance resulting in a more executing role than a policy formulating one for NGOs. Two countries seems to rely so much on the nuclear family as the basic kernel of society that it is hard to define them as following the partnership's idea: Turkey and Italy. In both these countries actors of civil society, such as the church and others are important; however the main focus of the youth policy still resides on the family. Switzerland's policy in this regard clearly identify a lot of actors, but the deviation from the partnership's idea is the unclear positions and demarcations for influence, responsibilities and authority that seems to be going on, turning it to a more continuous situation of negation between different stakeholders. Decentralised power seems to lead frequently to greater experimentalism but also to great disarray, even within countries. The varying wealth and political realities of regions with a lot of

independence leads to situations like that in Switzerland, where youth policy is incredibly complex due to all the different decision-making institutions. It also leads to injustice, where citizens of certain regions may be afforded more opportunities and rights than citizens of others.

The standing of youth participation in the different countries is more discussed below. However the vertical and horizontal division between different stakeholders indicates that the policies to high degree is a question of bringing different parties at the table and negotiate over its meaning and relevance to the actual practice. Different jurisdictions and traditions about the connections between the national state, regional and local actors will be important aspects to account for when to understand the result of these. In countries with a strong centralization, such as Turkey, the implementation of one national policy in the country, maybe influenced from the EU and council of Europe, could be easier than in more decentralized ones. A prime example of the latter would be Switzerland where the implementation of a youth policy would show great variation. But then again the implementation could be countered from other mechanisms, such as the possible lower degree of broad agreement at the grass root level for top to bottom policies or if those are seen as more of a play for the gallery and not really made important into practical politics.

3. Key areas and measures including participation

A policy doesn't just appoint stakeholders, but also propose actions, measures and interventions. Since these activities are targeted towards the social category "youth", they will more or less directly reveal the social representation of young people and what are held as their most prominent challenges to meet with societal responses.

In some of the included countries youth policy seems to be neglected in the national agenda. It could be that governments have set a structure in place, but they not follow through. Many describe a whittling away of the budget allocated to youth policy, even in countries where the topic is supposedly popular, such as in the official discourse in France. One typical sign for the lacking of political will to implement youth policy seems to be the unwillingness to fully grasp that youth policy is a question that overlaps several Ministries' duties. Instead of cooperating and working in synchrony, each of them works on their little slice of competence, creating no meaningful change.

Bulgaria

There is no explicit national youth policy framework, but there has been a Ministry for Youth since the end of totalitarian rule in 1989. The year 2001 was a turning point, due both to EU processes and to a growing political consciousness of the necessity of youth policy. In 2002, the government decided to produce annual youth reports, including an overview of the youth situation and suggestions for improvement. From 2003 to 2007, a national youth policy strategy was developed, and the current legal framework has been in place since 2009. Despite these structures, youth policy is

given low priority; national policy documents are not updated, annual reports are haphazardly done, making a real comparison with previous years impossible, and no meaningful changes of the goals or analyses of the proposed measures are at hand.

According to the key document National Youth Strategy 2010-2020, the main youth policy areas in Bulgaria includes promoting economic activity and career development of young people, improving access to information and quality services, enhancing a healthy lifestyle, preventing social exclusion of young people with fewer opportunities, developing youth volunteering, increasing civic activity, improving young people's life conditions in small towns and rural areas, developing intercultural and international dialogue, and increasing the role of young people in crime prevention. The position of economic endeavours at the head of the document is not coincidental as it is seen as the one key obstacle for young Bulgarians. In order to change this, a number of programs are suggested, but their strategy favours a top-down approach, which limits the youth influence. In addition to this, bureaucracy makes youth participation cumbersome and unattractive, and the natural platforms for youth participation, such as schools, are inefficiently used. The lack of funding poses an important problem, in particular for sustainable, long-term efforts. Despite the efforts, information on the opportunities provided through the youth policy is inefficiently disseminated.

There are problems with participation also related to youth policy as well, connected both to a lack of opportunity to partake in volunteering etc. and a perceived apathy among young Bulgarians, who rarely participate in civic life apart from fan- and sport clubs. The only form of political activity deemed as meaningful by young Bulgarians is voting, although anti-democratic and anti-party attitudes are also present. This lack of interest poses an important problem, since traditional forms of youth participation might not be enough to engage them, even if the opportunities should be available.

France

Currently, the most important value in French public policy is employment and this regards also the youth policy. This concern is so central that it overshadows most other objectives; above all young people have to find a job. The individualized perspective is also telling that the failure in finding employment is a failure of the individual rather than a structural problem. As in Sweden, the issue of youth policy is something that unites politicians across colours:

> "In terms of guiding principles and goals in French youth policy, both presidencies seem to be coloured by the same themes. Three have featured very prominently: entry into the labour market (insertion), autonomy (autonomie) and citizenship (citoyenneté). These are by no means new concepts and it is striking how all three have appeared and reappeared on the French youth policy merry-go-round over the past 20 to 30 years." (Pickard, 2014)

Since the arrival of François Hollande as President in 2012, youth has been presented as the main priority of the French government. A cross-sectorial youth committee was founded to draft proposals and follow their implementation. The "Priority: Youth" report of 2013 defines four fundamental French priorities: (1) give priority to universal benefits; (2) encourage youth empowerment and autonomy; (3) attack social injustice; and (4) encourage the participation of young people in public affairs, as well as 13 'priority objectives' and 47 'concrete measures', which would be divided between 24 ministers. According to the then- minister of Youth Valérie Fourneyron, one half of these measures were intended to improve youth's employment, while the other half concerned youth's integration and citizenship.

Nicolas Sarkozy initiated an 'emergency plan' in April 2009 when youth unemployment peaked at 24%. The goal was to get 700,000 young people into training or a job before mid-2010. This was to be achieved through a series of specific social inclusion and job accompaniment schemes aimed at different sets of young people having difficulty entering the labour market. Companies received financial incentives to take on young people either as trainees or as workers. The Jobs of the Future scheme was launched in October 2012, with the aim of giving unqualified young people a second chance to train and get a job. The emphasis was on personalised career advice and guidance, followed by a State-subsidised permanent contract or a three-year contract with local and regional authorities or associations.

Created in 2010, the Civic Service allows young persons between ages 16 and 25 to engage in a collective action. They generally join an association or national and local public administrations and establishments. 32,000 young people were engaged in a civic service in 2013, 35000 in 2014. One of President François Hollande's 2012 campaign declarations was to give a bigger budget to the Civic Service Agency in order to have 100,000 young people in engaged in 2017. The main aim of this policy seems nonetheless to help young people to find a job.

Coordinators for sociocultural activities focus their actions mainly on leisure, cultural and sports activities; special needs workers intervene generally in critical areas and help disadvantaged young people, such as youth suffering from family violence or at risk of delinquency. However, the budget allocated to youth policy is not very high. The state agency for youth affairs is losing employees and their funding is rapidly diminishing. Very few specialists are allocated to youth policy-making. It is more an evolution of the perceptions of youth rather than a real change in the situation of young people.

Germany

Youth policy in Germany is frequently limited to youth organisations and extracurricular activities, separating it from education/training and employment. However, the welfare system includes a wider variety of aid specifically targeted for children and youth, which is the most important aspect of youth policy in Germany. It is regulated by the national Child and Youth Aid Act from 1991 and funded and

implemented largely by the municipalities. The areas covered by the Children and Youth Aid Act include public childcare, which has become one of the areas with the most investment in the past ten years due to a new guarantee to childcare for children between 3 and 6 years of age. Youth Work has two branches: The law distinguishes between Open Youth Work and Youth social work. While the first is more preventative/promotion oriented and supports measures such as youth centres and associative youth work, mainly provided by youth associations like the scouts, church- and interest-related groups, the second are more problem focused and consists of support measures for social inclusion such as outreach work or guidance and training measures. Public care covers measures from community-based preventative family support foster care. Child protection covers care for young offenders and the regulation of adoption.

The scope of youth policy thus encompasses welfare for all citizens and specialised care for individuals in need. However, German youths are disadvantaged by labour market policies, in particular those concerning unemployment benefits. A basic problem to this can be traced back to the educational, where the trinominal shool system leaves a distinct group without necessary qualifications to get a job and makes them into applicants of social benefits. But there many young unemployed Germans lack the necessary requirements for the means-tested job-seekers allowance, they must rely on the basic insurance, which is family-based. The result is that Germans under 25 who leave their parents' household lose their benefits. Furthermore, sanctions for unemployment under national activation schemes hit young people harder, out of a belief that young people can be re-educated through harsh measures. This structure fits neatly with Walther's theory on employment-centred regimes, where much of German citizenship hinges on employment. Young people are thus dependent on their parents until they gain employment for themselves, which hinder them in transition to adult life.

Youth work in Germany is a special part of the youth service. It is offered to all young people until the age of 27. Youth work differs explicitly from other offers and parts of the youth services. The aim of youth work is to offer young people developmental and educational experiences based on their voluntary involvement. The idea is to enable them to play a part in the democratic society and learn the meaning of citizenship. The professional discourse on youth services focuses on the support for young people to develop their own values, attitudes and capacity to critically analyse society and see themselves in their context. Youth work was and is seen as an important part of democracy education, emancipation and participation.

The second field of youth work is associative youth work, youth associations are a big part of German Youth work and have a long tradition in Germany. They are structured by self-organisation and volunteer work; only a small part is professionalised.

Italy

On the one hand, the family orientation of the national structure of social protection still impedes the development of a coherent strategy aimed at the de-stratification and de-commodification of youth, and so to new regulations in the areas of inter-generational relationships and social expenditure. On the other hand, the possibility of a bottom-up development through local resources and commitment has been made more and more difficult through the rescaling of welfare policies during the last two decades, hobbling local authorities attempting to make any meaningful change.

While the importance of the municipalities remains strong in the area of youth policy, despite the regional political power, there is a prevailing lack of coherence and coordination in these interventions. Furthermore, a general tendency to adopt short-sighted measures as a reaction to a crisis rather than thought-through, long-term strategies is regrettable, as is focusing of measures on cultural areas instead of on measures aiming at providing full citizenship and a meaningful adulthood, like work and income, housing and education.

Since the 1990s, measures have been taken to improve the situation. The National Plan for the Youth was established in 1998, stressing both empowerment and participation. This coupled with a few laws championing youth and child participation in the local community seems to have set the tone for the national discussion. National laws inspired by a more promotional vision were approved and so, thanks to the action of local actors, the slow process towards the recognition of young people as social subjects neither necessarily problematic nor to be addressed through a paternalistic approach began to strengthen. Two other aspects have to be underlined as persisting features of Italian youth policies. On the one side, the tendency to adopt measures under conditions of emergency (drugs, crime, bullying, unemployment) and so with pressure for quick, short-sighted and media-oriented solutions. On the other side, the prevailing supply of interventions in the field of leisure, music, culture and happenings, rather than towards the key factors for the access to adulthood and full citizenship, like participation, income and job, housing, credit and right to study (Bazzanella, Campagnoli 2014); with the effect of strongly reducing and simplifying youth issues (Salivotti 2005).

More recently, there has been an increase in interventions aimed at aiding the transition to adulthood, most likely due to the creation of the Ministry of Youth and the extra focus that has provided youth policy, as well as the economic crisis, which has thrown the vulnerability of young people as a group in stark relief. The Local Projects for Youth, LPY, enacted through cooperation between the Ministry, the National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI), and the national coordination of InformaGiovani is an important driver of the Italian youth policy. These projects provide local communities with the possibility to involve youth in project addressed to the wealth of the community, an important player in the Italian welfare system. In 2014, through the establishment of the Department of Youth and National Civil

Service, institutional attention at national level has been given to Civic Service, with the aim of promoting the participation of 50.000 young persons in paid activities of community service. The Department is also responsible for the implementation at national level of the EU Youth Guarantee strategy.

Despite these positive signs, there is still a troubling lack of coherence and cooperation between local actors and the Ministry nationally, as well as a lack of funding, exacerbated by the continuous chipping away of the budget allocated for youth policy. In the last years, as the vulnerability of Italian young people has dramatically increased due to the economic crisis, the Governments at national level have focused on labour policies, particularly on the promotion of employability and on subsidies to enterprises for hiring, but promoting the socio-political involvement of young people only through the National Civil Service.

Sweden

Youth policy frameworks in Sweden take a long time to develop, and frequently new governments inherit and use the previous government's policy as a guide, regardless of political colour, since there is a considerable agreement on this question. The current policy, Focusing Youth, did not rouse much opposition when it was launched, and has quietly persevered after government change.

Three main topics are highlighted in the policy: good life circumstances, power to decide over their own lives and influence on society's development. This fairly vague definition should be interpreted as a holistic welfare approach and the power to change and take charge of their own lives. The power to take charge in societal decision-making is however not present, the policy instead opting for the softer "influence society's development", limiting the scope of youth participation. The reasoning behind this decision is that the policy includes youth under the age of 18, who cannot vote and thus cannot be responsible for societal decision-making. These youth instead have to rely on the beneficial ears of people with actual power, through for instance surveys, and invitation to public discussions as a part of a student council.

Furthermore, the parallels between the "youth perspective" brought up in the text and the term "child perspective" ideologically hark back to the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, which also emphasises that certain young people are at risk discrimination and the youth policy is expected to address this topic. The youth perspective is a key component in understanding Swedish youth policy as it influences relevant actors across the board, given its holistic nature – everyone should consider the youth's perspective in their decision-making. This makes it difficult to distinguish which welfare providers are more or less important.

Every school is by law obliged to provide health services to all students. Frequently the school employs a health team with school nurse and a social worker combined with consultancy from a psychologist and a general practitioner. The school health team is responsible for general vaccination programs, control of physical development,

assessments of school achievements, direct guidance to the students and their parents and referrals to other actors.

Youth guidance centres are separate institutions. They provide open access health services with a special focus on sexuality, guidance to contraceptives and psychological evaluation to youths from about age 13. Another universal offer supported by but not directly provided by the public sector is civil sector associations providing opportunities for sports and cultural activities.

Furthermore, the welfare system provides support and training of unemployed young adults, with national legislation ensuring that special attention is given to young people. This also includes the potential for subsidised salary or tax reductions for employing a young person. Students at university level are entitled to study loans to cover their expenses. There are also special arrangements for housing for students (although these are not enough to stave the lack of housing in many larger cities). The general welfare policy gives people from the age of majority (18 years old) the opportunity to apply for social benefits for themselves if no other financial resources are available, in contrast to for example Germany.

Structured and meaningful leisure time is also to some extent institutionalised. Traditionally the Swedish youth policy has given quite a lot of attention to young people's cultural life. In school students are given the opportunity to develop their musicality. Some of the traditional "music schools" in the municipalities have expanded their repertoire to include many sorts of cultural training, such as theatre and writing. Besides these opportunities, youth centres sate the need to meet, relax and learn in non-formal ways.

Switzerland

In its strategy report, the Swiss Federal Council defines child and youth policy to consist of three areas: the protection, promotion and participation of children and young people. Besides, youth policy is also understood as a cross-sectional task, which falls under the competence of various policy areas, such as education or health policy.

While the main responsibility for determining youth policy lies with the municipalities and cantons, the Federal Council steps in with policies and programs to boost development in certain areas. These include, for example, preventative programs on youth and violence and youth and media, as well as financial funding for child protection programs. Based on the Child and Youth Promotion Act, the Federal Council can also provide financial support for actors in the field of extracurricular youth work and participation projects. Despite this impressive structure and the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, emphasising the importance of children's and youth participation at every level, national laws to ensure participatory rights for children and youth are lacking. In most of the cantons, such laws are lacking too.

In the field of child and youth assistance an extensive range of counselling and guidance services are offered in Switzerland in both outpatient and inpatient settings. Open child and youth work can also be considered as a part of the child and youth assistance system. In contrast to associational child and youth work, which is primarily provided by private organisations. Municipalities and churches are the main providers of open child and youth work. Child and youth work services are generally intended to promote the growth and development of autonomy and social responsibility in children and youth.

For what concerns the access to assistance and the promotion of children and youth, the cantonal school systems play an important role. The cantons have introduced a variety of special needs education programs for the education of children and youth with special educational needs. Although Switzerland has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, it is to be observed that inclusion is construed very differently in the various cantonal school systems. Some cantons have completely abolished special needs schools. School therapeutic services and school social work are however anchored in almost all cantonal school systems.

The responsibility for health care, for example treatment in hospitals, lies almost completely with the cantons, while the federal government is responsible for specific areas, such as obligatory health insurance or the prevention and containment of infectious diseases. Child and youth health care includes counselling for parents of children between the ages of 0 and 3, paediatricians, children's hospitals, school medical and dental services and the cantonal child and youth psychiatric service.

The UK/England

By the late 90's, youth policy in UK/England was characterised both by emphasising social integration, particularly through employment, highlighting young people's potential as future citizens, and at the same time, increasing the surveillance on them through youth custody.

By the year 2000, the focus had shifted to "NEETs": the program Connexions' budget of 420 million pounds for the years 2002-2003 paved the way for an extensive individual case work with young unemployed, for example by hiring personal advisors to reduce the number of those at risk of exclusion. In comparison, youth service programs dedicated to 'tackling anti-social behaviour and crime and overcoming alienation among young people' were given 54 million pounds for 2002.

Through a series of influential policy papers, the English discourse emphasised reach and participation, and youth work-based approaches became sought-after for their efficiency in dealing with social problems relating to youth, despite youth work being continuously viewed as under-evidenced as a method for social education.

Youth unemployment remains an important issue to solve, and while the figures are improving, the youngest unemployed citizens are doing worst (Howker and Malik,

2013). Efforts to improve this problem mainly using education as a tool for preparing young people for the labour market have substituted the cash-heavy programs for "NEETs" that characterised the earlier era. Other policy areas for young people include health, safety, education, and participation, as well as more specialised issues such as radicalisation and teenager pregnancy. However participation is not seen as the solution for any of these problems, or understood properly as a tool of human development, in decision making or to guide human flourishing (Percy-Smith, 2010; Fielding, 2006).

There has been a shift in responsibility relating to youth policy, where the citizens and their communities have to rally to provide solutions, rather than relying on the state. Another important change under the coalition government is the rebranding of the Department of Children, Families and Schools to the Department of Education, the intent of which is made clearer still by Secretary of State Michael Gove's 2013 announcement that "youth policy is not a government priority" (Davies 2013, 26).

Turkey

Youth policy measures in a more general way have traditionally not been a part of Turkey's politics. The previous main national actor in this field, Directorate of Youth and Sports, the organizational structure that existed until 2011, had concentrated mainly on "sports" and did not play an active role in creating youth policy. Various institutions such as the Youth Studies Unit at Istanbul Bilgi University, and UNDP Turkey advocated for the adoption of youth policies in Turkey, arguing that their non-existence had been in itself a policy, and underlined the importance of developing youth policies and youth research (Yentürk, Kurtaran and Nemutlu, 2008). UNDP Turkey argued for the necessity of investing in the young population for sustainable development and that underlined the importance of not missing the demographic window of opportunity expected to last until 2040.

> "What seems needed is an approach which takes youth's needs and prospects as a focal issue and adjusts, reshapes, creates and coordinates policies and institutions in a streamlined and coherent way toward this goal in different relevant areas from education to employment, budget allocations, regional policy and social security" (UNDP Turkey, 2008, p. 3).

The need to create a Ministry and adopt youth policies was also an issue during the EU candidacy process of Turkey. It is also important to note that the creation of a Ministry was realized after a two year collaboration in which a mixed group of representatives from civil and public institutions including bureaucrats, academics and youth NGOS came together to determine its mission and objectives. This process however remains open to criticism in light of the fact that there was not an open call for different actors from the field, raising the issue of "who" and "which groups" became a part of this process.

There are two main institutions linked to the Ministry of Youth and Sports: the General Directorate of Sport and the Higher Education Credit and Dormitory Agency (YURTKUR). The objective of YURTKUR is to support financially social-economic disadvantaged students in higher education through the granting of scholarships and student loans. Other than that, the Ministry's youth-related work includes supporting young people and promoting their participation through providing services like guidance, access to information, and counselling, coordinating and cooperating with other institutions on issues related to youth research.

Other institutions work with issues concerning youth, for instance the Employment Agency and the Directorate of the Centre for EU Education and Youth Programs (National Agency). The latter aims to promote mobility of young people in the EU through education opportunities as well as to provide information about opportunities offered by the EU. Another important institution is the Ministry for the Development, which focuses its services particularly on the underdeveloped southeast and east area of Turkey. Interestingly, there are separate youth activity centres provided by the state and the municipality, offering meaningful leisure time for youth, although the activities are similar.

Turkey spends insignificant amounts of money on youth policy apart from education. Strikingly, with only 30% of young people 15-24 years old in education, 68% of the youth policy budget is allocated to them. (Kurtaran, 2014, p. 92-93) Meanwhile, a large amount of idle youth – or "NEETs" – are largely invisible in Turkey's policy:

> "Almost 40% -5 million young people- are 'idle': They neither work, nor go to school. In fact, there are millions of young people who are in the category of "invisible or less visible youth" in Turkey. These include: women who are neither in education nor at work – about 2,2 million; the physically handicapped – some 650,000; young people who have given up all hope and stopped seeking jobs -300,000; juvenile delinquents – some 22,000; and street children and youth living on the streets, internally displaced, or victims of human trafficking and others who rarely get noticed or mentioned in survey studies or in the media" (UNDP 2009: 4).

Clearly very little is done to empower these young people, and perhaps particularly troubling is the gender aspect, with so many young women not participating in society. As mentioned under the previous subheading, the Turkish welfare state seems to be one of Conservative values but no funding, with a particularly dire situation for youth.

4. Measure-defined youth policy

Table 2 is a way of de-picturing the youth policies' character in the single countries as well as how important the youth issue seems to be looking at how it is prioritised in

relation to other areas. The last column refers to youth participation and if it is recognised as an aspect and/or as a tool in the policies.

The policies (understood in broad terms) in all countries mention different areas and issues important to youth but they do it in different manners. Some are more multi-faced, by what here is meant that they indeed identify several topics, but they seem not to be connected in a more comprehensive scheme or ideological platform. The policy in UK/England, for example, have notions on how to battle unemployment, health issues and radicalisation etc, but still a government's spokesman maintains that youth policy is no priority for them, and the cut-backs of financial resources speaks in the same direction. Compared to this we find multi-dimensional ones, that indeed are more benign to connect different topics into a more comprehensive policy even if one issue could be a top priority, such in Bulgaria to alleviate economic endeavours, or in Switzerland that face the problem of coordination and power negotiations between stakeholders at different levels that makes it hard to realise in fully a common policy. Germany's policy in this area is partly segmented because it in some places leaves out important areas from the policy – education, training and employment. This does not mean that they do not have policies in these areas, but they are not fully integrated in what is recognised as youth policy. Sweden on the other hand is the country, in line with its universalistic welfare state, that have a holistic policy, meaning that different issues are connected and that a common "youth perspective" should guide all measures and understandings of young persons' situation.

The standing of the youth issue differs also a lot between the countries. From what is mentioned for UK/England, stating clearly that it is not a priority, to reflections from their scarce budget allocations in Bulgaria and Turkey, to Germany that gives the area priority but not integrate them in a holistic way. France is experiencing a decrease of prioritisation in this sector due to the austerity measures following the last economic crisis and Italy, despite some pioneer works done in the last years, still struggles with old structures and low budgets. Switzerland in this line up does have a quite developed system in many respects, but then again it is experiencing quite difficult implementation problems.

When it comes to the general view on young persons' participation, several notions and implementations' models come to the fore. In the Turkish policy this seems to be more discussed when young person as receptors of service is discussed, in guidance or receivers of information etc. Bulgaria suffers from old structures that are not attractive for young people, while in Italy the real participation of young people is most promoted and developed at local level through different initiatives of social action. In France a lot of attention has been given to the civic service and to its participatory aspect, even though its main role regards the promotion of youth employability. In German youth policy, excluding important areas, participation in youth work is intended as training to democracy and citizenship. In Sweden participation represents a central part of the youth policy, and also something that is included in the aforementioned youth perspective.

Tab.2 Youth policies in PARTISPACE's countries: main characteristics

	Character of policy	Standing of the youth issue	Participation
Bulgaria	Multi-dimensional, several issues are joined, mainly to battle economic endeavors	Structures and ideology in place but not prioritized	Top-down approach and unattractive forms for young people
France	Multi-dimensional, several topics are recognized together - but over-shadowed by the (un)employment issue	Decreasing prioritization for other than employment issues.	Emphases on voluntary work and participation in civic service
Germany	Multi-faced, refers to youth organizations, extracurricular activities, social support and may or may not include training, employment and education	Prioritization with blind spots	Recognized as a training of democracy and citizenship
Italy	Multi-faced, several issues recognized separately and not fully structured or coordinated	Hindered prioritization, new policy is hard to implement because of lack of resources and heavily relying on traditional family-oriented welfare model.	Restricted, interesting local initiatives to promote and exercise participation, but not a developed structure.
Sweden	Holistic, different issues are supposed to be understood and work in conjunction	Long tradition of political consensus and fairly prioritized	Integrated as a value and tool
Switzerland	Multi-dimensional and multi-agency, several issues recognized but not fully structured	Increasing priority, but unevenly implemented on the cantonal level.	Recognized as a training of democracy and citizenship, but unevenly recognized and implemented on the cantonal level (some cantons by statutory legislation others lacking)
The UK/ England	Multi-faced, focus on (un)employment, several issues recognized separately	Not a government priority	Not integrated as a tool to battle societal challenges
Turkey	Centred, focus on education other areas un-recognized or on small budgets	Generally low priority	Limited to ways of young as receptors of services

5. Educational system

From previous researches (cfr. YOYO and GOETE project) it has emerged that schools or apprenticeship schemes do not very often foresee the active influence of young people in policy or if so, only in relation to marginal issues and in consultative

form. This contradicts, however, the discourse of lifelong learning, according to which individuals are subjects who only engage (participate) in learning if this is relevant for them and mirrors other life interests (European Commission, 2001). Since the early 1990's, the discourse of lifelong learning has been related at the European level to the broader, and apparently contradictory objective of European integration as one based on becoming '…the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world' (European Council, 2000, p. 1) granting at the same time sustainable economic growth, better jobs and greater social cohesion. With the aim of developing human capital, the share of the younger generation that complete post-compulsory qualifications has been set has an important benchmark for evaluating the national education system. Despite this common goal, all around Europe different education and training systems (selective vs. comprehensive) continue to provide different spaces for access to and coping with education that represent the main basis for students' participation to their educational trajectory. The wider existing scopes of choice and negotiation existing in comprehensive systems seems to offer more possibilities of balancing disadvantageous structural effects by either supportive significant others or by individual motivation and persistence, giving the individuals the possibilities to participate more actively in their decision-making process (cfr. the GOETE project). In the following, we present a general overview of the educational and training system of the eight countries involved in the PARTISPACE project with the aim of highlighting their participative potential.

Descriptions in more detail, including graphs of the educational systems of the different countries are available at the website of the EURYDICE network established by the European Commission (www.webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Countries).

Bulgaria

The educational system consists of pre-primary (from 3 to 6 years of age), basic education (from 7 years of age, comprising of primary level for grades 1 through 4 and junior secondary level for grades 5 to 8), secondary education (grades 9 to 11 or 12) and higher education (BA, MA, PhD). Pre-school education is compulsory from the age of 5 and school education is compulsory from the age of 7 to the age of 16.

Secondary educational divides youth at the age of 14 into vocational or general education (comprehensive or specialized schools), and also into public or private institutions. Most prestigious are the specialized and selective schools (in languages or natural sciences), which prepare young people for the university. Entrance to those schools is highly selective and often requires additional preparation of students through private lessons preparing for tertiary studies. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to attend vocational schools, whereas the most prestigious and competitive schools preparing for university studies require further training to be attended, making them inaccessible to anyone but the most privileged students. Concerns with the quality of education are often present in public debates

and the falling results of Bulgarian students in PISA studies are often cited in the media while less attention is given to the equal access to education on all levels. There are also special needs boarding schools run by the state for physically or mentally disadvantaged children although there is a strong policy trend towards integrated education.

The state provides educational allowances to students in secondary schools and universities, as well as pays for the provision of free meals and schoolbooks for disadvantaged groups like the Roma. However, these measures have not made the system open and accessible to all. Another malfunction of the system is the underdeveloped availability of support within school and training which to cater to the individual needs of children and young people.

The share of students who continue on to tertiary education is below the EU average (29.4% compared to 36.9%). Furthermore, female students are overrepresented in this group, 37.6% to the men's 21.8%. A significant per cent of young people leave education early, 12%, which is near the European average. Students from rural areas and ethnic minorities are overrepresented. Youth unemployment remains high in the country at 21.8%, but is significantly higher among early school leavers, 44.8%, and long-term unemployed youth measure at 8.1%.

France

The national state and decentralized state agencies holds the responsibility over the national educational plans, certificate requirements and official curriculum. It also manages the payment to teachers and non-teaching staff, and is directly responsible for higher education. In 2014, 68.0% (males 65,9%, women 70,1%) of French youths aged 15-24 participated in some kind of formal education, which is an increase since 2004. According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), as of 2012, the average French adult, aged 25-64, has completed 16.4 years of education between the ages of 5 and 39. This is less than the OECD average (across 36 developed nations) of 17.7 years.

Schooling is compulsory from age 6-16. Preschool education is offered to children 3 – 5 years old. Compulsory school starts with Primary school that includes children from the age 6 to 10. The curriculum focus on basic elements of reading, writing, and mathematics and also encourages students to develop intelligence, physical and artistic capabilities. All students who complete the primary school are enrolled in college (lower secondary school) with a broader curriculum, at the age of 12 at the latest. During lower secondary school the student group are divided into either entry a general and professional (55 %) or a vocational lycée (30 %), based on the student's abilities and interests in further study. The student, the family, and the educational team take the decision. In upper Secondary (lycée) from age 15 the students either train for specialized exam (one of three general or six technological) or a vocational qualification. To advance from upper secondary students must meet a number of

requirements and may have to pass a number of tests and exams. If the student wishes to attend a "grande école", a particularly prestigious university, they have to complete a competitive examination. Tertiary education includes university and vocational education with different requirements for entry and prestige. Different diplomas from university studies can be obtained after two, three, five years and finally at doctorate level.

The municipalities are responsible for the primary schools, departments for providing secondary school education (pupils 11-15 years old) and regions for the upper secondary school system (pupils 16-19 years old). Public schools are free but parents have to pay tuition fees in private schools. Even in state schools parents have, depending on income, to pay supplementary fees to cover insurance, school supplies, after-school care and school meals.

Germany

Education and training system in Germany is structured according to the division between general education, vocational education and training and higher education. Education is mandatory from ages 7 to 16 and provides a minimum of 9 years of schooling. The system is highly selective and multiplex – students are put in different tiers straight out of primary school – the possibility of change between the triers is very low from bottom to top (Allmendinger, 1989; Parreira et al., 2015). The different tiers of secondary education vary considerably in terms of duration (from 5 to 9 years) and certificates awarded – these range from a basic secondary education certificate that allows entry to vocational training to the Abitur, the A-levels/baccalauréat equivalent certificate needed to enter tertiary education. The different routes produce and reproduce all kinds of inequalities along the lines of gender, race/ethnicity, social status of parents and region and therefore are one of the most contested arenas of politics in most federal states. Similarly to Switzerland, general education is regulated on a regional level (German Länder), and it is thus difficult to conclusively state much about the school system.

Another significant question is the introduction of full-day school days as opposed to half-days, which has implications both for the school system. Schools have to face new tasks like to cater for lunch, but also to develop new forms of cooperation with external organisations such as youth work providers or sports clubs to integrate non-formal forms of learning into the school day, but also with youth welfare actors to develop new forms of day care. This development also severely affects all other out-of-school activities of pupils and students including youth work and other youth services because of its impacts on the organisation of everyday lives in this age group (Lange/Wehmeyer 2014; cf. section B 4.)

Minimum one year of vocational school is mandatory for students who do not wish to continue their education, this is often provided in close connection with companies. An upper secondary certificate is needed to enter the different branches of the tertiary

education system. Around 40% of students from receive a tertiary education diploma, compared to around 30% of all young Germans. With the Bologna agreement, the whole tertiary education sector has been re-structured according to the bachelor-master system that replaces the old diploma and magister atrium system. There are some indications of consequence such as time to engage in voluntary activities such as university politics or other forms of participation due to the tightening of university curricula introduced with the Bologna reforms (Lange/Wehmeyer 2014).

Italy

Education is mandatory from ages 6 to 16. The educational system consists of a) pre-primary school for children between 3 and 6 years of age. b) First cycle of education, lasts then for 8 years, and includes primary school for children between 6 and 11 years of age and lower secondary school for children 11 to 14 years old. c) Second cycle of education comprise two pathways: a general upper secondary school offered within grammar schools (licei) for students from 14 to 19 years of age, and technical institutes and vocational institutes and three and four years vocational training courses (IFP). d) Post-secondary non-tertiary education includes post qualification and post-diploma vocational courses and higher technical education and training courses (IFTS). d) Higher education offered by universities and the high level arts and music education system (Afam). Higher education is organised in first, second and third levels according to the Bologna structure.

The Ministry of Public Education is responsible for education, separate from the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and is represented by local offices. The regions on their part share the responsibilities for general education with the state, and are exclusively responsible for vocational education and training, whereas tertiary education falls under the Ministry of University and Research.

The vision of a *knowledge-based society* seems to suggest that acquiring knowledge in itself guarantees full membership status and participation in society. However, the rhetoric of a knowledge-based society tends to mask the existence of old lines of segmentation in the societal asset, which continue to prevail beneath the surface and combine with new lines of segmentation. While policies for disadvantaged youth address early school leaving, reflecting the fact that low qualifications are one of the main reasons for youth unemployment, the progressive cuts made both to preventative and compensative learning measures reveal the individualistic approach of the knowledge-based society. While the dropout's rate is decreasing but still high, the situation for those who drop out without an upper secondary school certificate is getting worse. But even those with this certificate experience increasingly higher demands from the labour market making the entrance harder. In this situation is often the parental support that determines whether to leave the school early as it does not lead to a job, or stay as long as possible in hope to get the required qualification. This creates an increased marginalisation of the disadvantaged students, exacerbating and reproducing the traditional socio-economic divides.

In the past public education was expected to make the most students able to meet the demands of the labour market and social integration, nowadays the paradigm of lifelong learning shift this responsibility to individuals who are supposed to care for themselves and update their human capital (cf. Kuhn & Sultana, 2005).

Sweden

9 years of schooling is mandatory, and children start school at age 6 or 7. Pre-school is offered from about 1 to 5 years, primary school last for 6 years and secondary takes another 3 years to complete. Upper secondary school, consisting of three years, is voluntary, but only a few per cent do not attend it. However, it is not uncommon for young people to drop out of upper secondary school, in which case the municipality has the responsibility to offer support. Public schools fall under the responsibility of the municipality, whereas independent schools are run by their own boards of directors. While education is the responsibility of the municipalities, the parliament and government define the national education goals. They do this through The Education Act, the curricula, the school ordinance, the upper secondary school ordinance, and the adult education ordinance, the syllabi for compulsory school, the subject syllabuses for the upper secondary foundation subjects and the diploma goals for the upper secondary school. The National Agency for Education on the other hand draws up and decides on syllabi for the compulsory school, the compulsory school for learning disabilities, the Sami school and the special school, subject syllabi for the upper secondary school, knowledge requirements for all school forms, regulations and general guidelines.

The policy for the upper secondary education has undergone some changes during last years, from the aim that all programs should prepare students for tertiary education to open up for more traditional vocational training and apprenticeship model. A motivation for this is the high drop out rate from the national programs that led to a massive group of pupils followed individualized education plans.

Declining results in the PISA evaluations and other reports of crises in the educational system both in compulsory and upper secondary has led to a heated public and political debate and several educational reforms suggested from the political parties.

Switzerland

It is difficult to pin down Swiss education policy since it varies widely between cantons. In general, though, most cantons have 11 years compulsory schooling (including two years of pre school (kindergarten) and nine years of regular school attendance). Children enter a) primary level at the age of four in two years of kindergarten and then continue another six years at this level. After eight years in primary school they are invited to b) secondary level I in which they spend three years. At this level the pupils are faced with different alternatives, for example in Zurich there are three alternatives sorted by future career plans – higher education or vocational training, together with a long-term alternative leading in baccalaureate

school. After the completion of secondary level I it is possible to pursue c) post-compulsory education, so-called secondary level II, though this level is organised in different manners by the individual cantons. At the d) tertiary level it is possible to attend programmes at higher professional education and training institutions or degree programmes at universities. Universities – but not universities of applied sciences or universities of teacher education – have the exclusive right to award doctoral degrees. The canton of Zurich also defines the so-called quatemary (or fourth) level as comprising all forms of advanced training (Kanton Zürich 2015ab).

Although compulsory education ends with the completion of secondary level I, at least 90% of students finish post-compulsory education, the so-called secondary level II (EDK 2015). This level is organized in different manners by the cantons. In general, it could be stated that it is possible to pursue vocational education and training or general education on this level. Therefore, after finishing secondary level II it is possible to pursue a profession or to continue education at a PET college (professional education and training) or - in case of a general, specialised or Federal Vocational Baccalaureate – at an institution of higher academic education.

There are both public and private mandatory school alternatives to choose from, but most enter free of charge public run schools run. The federal government and the cantons share the responsibility for the mandatory school system with primary responsibility of the latter. The cantons shall also ensure that adequate special needs education is provided to all children and young people with disabilities up to the age of 20.

The UK/England

Education is mandatory for all children aged 5 (4 in Northern Ireland) to 16 in the UK. The primary stage includes three age ranges; nursery (under 5), infant (5 to 7/8) and junior (up to 11/12). In UK/England, children follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in nursery followed by Key Stage 1 & 2 in infant and junior respectively. However, many students will attend the same primary school for all three stages. In Wales, early years and Key Stage 1 and 2 are combined to create one curriculum phase called ‘foundation’. Whereas, in Scotland the primary curriculum is part of the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) which is from 3-18. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, Secondary Education begins for most children at the age of 11. In England, the range of different types of secondary schools is increasingly diverse including comprehensive (maintained by the local authority), academies (publically funded but free from local authority control), free schools (similar to academies but set up by members of the local community). In Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, secondary schools are all comprehensive in character, maintained by the local authority. Further Education or post-compulsory begins at 16, comprising of a range of academic and vocational qualifications followed by Higher Education provided by universities for those aged 18 and over.

Both public, free of charge schools and private "independent" schools in England following the same national curriculum, providing a framework for education for pupils from 5 to16 years of age. At least in the independent schools most students stay until 18 years and then go on to tertiary education. There seems to be a clear division in which the latter to a higher degree than the other attracts in a selective manner those who aim at further education and top positions in the society. The local governments are responsible for the public schools in which the great majority of the pupils enter. There are also variations in school forms in which one can find those targeted at raising the academic achievements in disadvantaged communities (academy schools), those own and run by the local authority (community schools) and other that to different degree include organisations (such as churches) or parents themselves to run the school.

The head teacher increasingly has full decision-making power over the support system of English schools. However, schools are required to have a special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), while other staff members, including other teachers, have the overarching responsibility for the children's pastoral needs.

Turkey

Turkey mostly allocates public spending to young people through the education system. The education system in Turkey is governed by the Ministry of National Education and can be summarised as "4+4+4" (4 years of primary education, 4 of lower secondary and 4 of upper secondary school education). After the compulsory first eight years, students take an exam in order to enter upper secondary schools, with a high selective competition for getting into the leading ones. Also the access to University education is determined through a centralised exam, and the last four years of the education system (4+4+4) are considered as preparation for the university entrance exam.

Although the education system is both public and private, the share of private sector is between 5 and 10% for different levels. Among the most prestigious schools at each level, there are both public and private institutions. Also note that, these schools provide an education in foreign languages that later on contributes to social distinction. Even if some of the private schools have their particular historical or institutional traditions, the Ministry of Education excess a close supervision over all institutions, including private ones. More recently, under the Justice and Development Party government, the share of religious vocational schools has increased among secondary schools. The total share of students in vocational secondary schools is 45% in 2013, around 10% being religious schools (ERG report).

The education system in Turkey presents three important and chronic problems concerning quantity, quality and equality. Firstly, the amount of young people in education tends to be low compared to other OECD countries, and it is couples with a gender gap, which explains women's lack of participation in the labour market.

Secondly, the quality of the education is troublesome as it is confirmed by PISA results: “In Turkey, education continues to be of relatively poor quality and millions of young people risk completing formal education without having achieved proficiency in fundamental areas” (Education Reform Initiative, 2014: 6). Thirdly, fundamental inequality permeates the education system, and PISA results also prove the big performance gaps between schools. This also underlines the issue of inequality in education; the distribution of students both in secondary and tertiary education in Turkey is strongly correlated with their socioeconomic status.

5.1 Comparison of the educational systems

The participating countries show both similarities and differences in the construction, character and content of the educational system. In table XX some of the characteristics are displayed, sorted in compulsory school length and approximate years of entering and leave and when important choices in school career (higher education or vocational training pathways) are made (www.webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Countries). The main character in relation to the division of the group of pupils is also proposed. There are in all countries different alternatives in respect how the pupils are divided into to “exclusive”, high demand school, not seldom these connects better to some social groups than other and could work as an upholder of social stratification. Some models have this dividing mechanism earlier and more general than others. In many of the countries the PISA evaluation comparing results from the OECD countries has been a major issue and force to educational reforms and sense of crises. Table 3 shows the results from the PISA evaluation from 2012 in maths, reading and science (M, R, S) and whether there has been significant changes in these since the previous evaluation, not significant changes are thus not showed (Source: OECD, PISA 2012 results. www.oecd.org/pisa/keyfindings/pisa-2012-results-overview.pdf. Retreived from the Internet. 2016-02-18)

All countries have a compulsory school and also different voluntary alternatives. Both Bulgaria and Switzerland have an obligatory educational model starting at pre-school level, while others start this at primary level. The length of the mandatory school varies from nine to twelve years with Bulgaria, Germany, and Sweden at the lowest and Turkey at the top in this respect. The table also shows that important choices that affects the school career and future transition into higher education or vocational training starts as early as when the child is ten years in Germany to 16 years in Sweden together with the choice of upper secondary education (gymnasium). Somewhere in between these countries we find the others. The choice is often part of the secondary level in which the pupils are invited to follow different syllabus aiming at different future careers. In respect to the need of higher formal qualification to compete in the labour market, and on a broader level; In order for Europe to compete in a globalised world, an early exit from academic training could be a risk affecting

specially those who early choose more vocational, manual training. A system that generally forces young people at early ages to such a choice can be deemed as selective, which Germany and Turkey are defined as in comparison with the other countries. However most countries have different alternatives to the more general schools attracting the mass of pupils, some of which are high profile and very selective, France may be chosen as an example for this. Sweden is characterised as inclusive, but this must be viewed caution since the very openness for different private alternatives. These can have severe selective consequences, but can on an individual level also open up for choosing a school on other principle than geographical. Since they all are compelled to accept student with various background, the idea nevertheless is defined as inclusive even if there also are clear possibly selective mechanism present.

Tab.3. Some characteristics of the educational system of the Partispace countries.

	Compulsory school (length, appr. entry/exity age)	**Educational pathways split** (appr. age)	**Division character**	**Overall PISA rank, 2012** (performance, 15-year old pupils to OECD means)	**PISA trend, significant changes**
Bulgaria	9 (7-16)*	14	Inclusive, selective alternatives	Below (M, R, S)	Positive (M)
France	10 (6-15)	13	Inclusive, selective alternatives	Average (M, S), Above (R)	Negative (M)
Germany	9 (7-15)	10	Selective	Above (M, R, S)	Positive (M, R)
Italy	10 (6-15)	14	Inclusive	Below (M, R, S)	Positive (M, S)
Sweden	9 (7-16)	16	Inclusive	Below (M, R, S)	Negative (M, R, S)
Switzerland	11 (4-14)**	14	Inclusive, selective alternatives	Above (M, R, S)	Positive (R)
The Uk/England					
Turkey	12 (5-17)	13	Selective	Below (M, R, S)	Positive (M, R, S)

* Compulsory pre-school from 5 years of age.
** Compulsory pre-school from 4 years of age.

The effect from the OECD, PISA evaluations, cannot be downplayed, neither as indicator of actual performance nor to its political edge. In many of the countries these have played an important role in shaping policy and reformation of the systems (perhaps similar to what can be said in higher education by the Bologna process). Of the included countries we find those with all results (maths, reading and science)

below the OECD average: Bulgaria, Italy, Sweden and Turkey; those with average results or above in some of the measures: United Kingdom and France and above in all: Germany and Switzerland. In all countries except the United Kingdom we find significant changes in performance in one or several of aspects with Turkey coming out as the country in which these have been improved in all three, and Germany and Italy achieving better in two (maths and reading vs maths and science). Sweden is the country that in this respect is confronted with the biggest challenges; even if the results from this country is not the lowest among the countries, a negative trend of the results is significant in all the measured subjects: maths, reading and science.

Concluding remarks

In this section some of the re-occurring themes will be pointed at and commented. In the final discussion of the report some of these will be mirrored and the object of deeper analyse in relation to the results in the other chapters.

In many of the involved countries it seems that youth policy is not really a prioritised political area on the national agenda. In several cases, governments have a structure in place, but not the will to follow through. Instead of a long term based strategy and allocation of adequate resources there could be a whittling away of the budget allocated to youth policy, even in countries where the topic is supposedly popular, such as France. One typical sign of lack of political will to implement youth policy seems to be the unwillingness to fully grasp or in other ways difficulty in implementation and coordination processes in achieving a youth policy that overlaps and integrates several Ministries' duties. Instead of cooperating and working in synchrony, they each work on their little slice of the issue, creating no meaningful change.

One of the most significant issues faced by the participating countries is youth unemployment, but the way they use youth participation strategies to try to solve this problem varies. England seems strictly against the notion, and many others seem to feel that youth policy relating to employment need not involve any actual youth participation. Instead, youth unemployment is viewed as more of a moral than a structural problem, even in countries such as Bulgaria, where cumbersome bureaucracy impedes youth entrepreneurship, which might otherwise be part of a solution, or Sweden, where youth unemployment seems to be interpreted as something that can be removed if only employers are given enough perks. Youth work in its various interpretations – German, French and Italian – might provide a different answer, that encourages young people to be active, however, it does not necessarily provide work.

The issue with NEETs remains a big hurdle for the participating countries, in particular Turkey and Bulgaria. Not being able to provide good education, or that students are failing out of education, or that the best education is reserved for the

already privileged, seems to be a common issue and a big obstacle. This is particularly the case in Turkey, where it is additionally a gendered problem.

Frequently youth policy acts on young people as an object either to protect, as in Italy, where young people's vulnerability in face of economic uncertainty is a fixed image, or as in the UK, a threat that needs to be normalised. It seems rare to find youth policy that actually aims to genuinely empower youth, and trust them to make correct decisions for themselves and their communities, even if Swedish policy includes such a commitment.

Decentralised power frequently seems to lead to greater experimentalism but also to great disarray, even within countries. The varying wealth and political realities of regions with a lot of independence leads to situations like that in Switzerland, where youth policy is incredibly complex due to all the different decision-making institutions. It also leads to injustice, where citizens of certain regions may be afforded more opportunities and rights than citizens in another.

While welfare systems vary a lot among the participating countries, the common theme across the board seems to be a movement towards cutting costs, often through putting the responsibility of youth policy elsewhere than on the state budget.

Discourses on Youth and Youth Socio-political Participation

Introduction

This chapter of the report focuses on the analysis of the discourses on youth and youth socio-political participation in the involved countries.

During the elaboration of WP2' country reports, each national team has analysed a sample of national policy documents issued after 2001 with the aim of highlighting the main discourses on youth and youth socio-political participation emerging from the text. As mentioned in this report's methodological section, this analysis has been carried out using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) method, a specific kind of socio-linguistic analysis that aims at highlighting the main rhetoric lying underneath a discourse conceiving language as a social practice where dynamics of power and recognition are mirrored.

According to Robertson (2007) "Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a particular variant of socio-linguistics. Each of its three components of CDA – critical, discourse and analysis - gives us a sense of what it is that makes it a distinctive approach to analysis. It places discourse at the centre as the object of scrutiny and makes claims about the centrality of discourse for modern social life. It argues that through analysis, we can lay bare social relations. And, though mobilising a critical perspective — that is that social realities are produced, and that particular generative mechanisms both produce and reproduce asymmetrical social relations -, we are able to link agents to deeper underlying structures within societies".

CDA conceives discourse as 'a form as social practice' (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p.258) and takes particular interest in the relation between language and power, affirming that cultural and economic dimensions are essential in the creation and maintenance of power relations that are mirrored in discourses, and that can be studied through discourses.

Rather than being considered as a single method of analysis, CDA can be better understood as an approach, consisting of different perspectives and different methods for the analysis of the relationship between the use of language and the social context. The most widely cited perspective is the one

that Fairclough and Wodak's (1997) have elaborated in their "eight principles of CDA" and that we have considered our study.

What follows is a synthetic description of these principles (Wang 2006).

- CDA addresses social problems. CDA focuses both on language and language use, and on the linguistic characteristics of social and cultural processes. A critical approach to social problems characterises CDA, whose aim is to make explicit power relationships, which are frequently hidden.
- Power relations are discursive and CDA seeks to explore how social relations of power are exercised and negotiated in and through discourse.
- Discourse constitutes society and culture. Every instance of language use makes its own contribution to the reproduction and the transformation of society and culture.
- Discourse produces ideologies and through the analysis of text and discursive practices (that is how the texts are interpreted and received and what social effects they have) is possible to highlight the ideologies that are produced by a certain discourse.
- Discourses can only be understood in relation to their historical context. In accordance with this CDA pays attention also to extralinguistic socio-cultural and historical factors.
- The link between text and society is mediated. CDA, thus, is concerned with making connections between sociocultural processes and structures on the one hand, and properties of texts on the other.
- CDA is interpretative and explanatory. CDA goes beyond textual analysis. It is not only interpretative, but also explanatory in intent (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Wodak, 1996).
- Discourse is a form of social action. The principle aim of CDA is to uncover opaqueness and power relationships. CDA is a socially committed scientific paradigm. It attempts to bring about change in communicative and socio-political practices (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997).

1. Method and aims of the discourse analysis

Through the application of CDA to the analysis of national documents we have sought to shed light on the main recurring discourses on youth and youth socio-political participation emerging in the 8 countries of the PARTISPACE

consortium and at highlighting divergences and similarities between them. In so doing, each partner has been asked to select a sample of national documents concerning youth and to analyse them according to a common grid of analysis.

In particular, the study has been carried out on the following texts:

Bulgaria

- National Youth Strategy (2010-2020)
- National Youth Program (2011-2015)
- Law on Youth (2012)
- Youth Report (2014)
- National Plan for the implementation of the European Youth Guarantee (2014)

France

- "A new thrust for youth" (2001)
- Green Paper To recognise youth value, Commission on Youth Policy (2009)
- Formal Rights/Real Rights: Improving the Use of Social Rights of Youth" - Opinion of the Social, Economic, and Environmental Council (2012)
- Inter-ministerial Committee on Youth, Youth Priority (2013)
- "Freedom, equality and citizenship: Civic Service for all" (2014)

Germany

- Participation of Young People 2005. Report of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Commission of the European Union (2005)
- Priorities of the implementation of the common agreed goals in the areas of participation and information of young people with respect to the advancement of their European citizenship (2007).
- Participation of children and youth between aspiration and reality. A position paper by the Federal Youth Council (2009)
- Center for an Independent Youth Policy. Principles and objectives of a new youth policy" (2014)
- Social legislation collection/literally - Book of Social Law Volume VIII – Children and Youth Aid (Version of 26 June 1990, last change 17 July 2015)

Italy

- National Youth Plan: Objectives and Guidelines (2007)
- Guidelines of the Ministry of Youth (2008)
- Emilia-Romagna Regional Law 14/2008 "Norma on policies for the young generations" (2008)
- Draft law on the Reform of the Third Sector, the social enterprise, and the universal Civil Service (2014)
- National Plan for the Implementation of the Youth Guarantee Strategy (2014).

Sweden

- Governmental report "Discrimination. Stronger protection against discrimination" (2007)
- Governmental report "Children and young people's rights. A strategy for strengthening children's right in Sweden" (2009)
- Governmental report "Politics for the civil society" (2009)
- Governmental declaration "Equality. The aim of the politics for equality 2011-2014" (2011)
- Governmental report "Young people not in employment or education – statistics, support and collaboration" (2013)
- Report "Focusing Youth –politics for good life circumstances, power and influence" (2013)
- Report from the board of youth affairs "Proposal to better working follow up system of young people's life conditions" (2014)
- Governmental proposal "Power to decide. Right to welfare" (2014).

Swiss

- Expert report by Lüscher (2008)
- Expert report by Vollmer (2008)
- Strategy report of the Federal Council on child and youth policy (2008)
- The new Child and Youth Promotion Act (KJFG) (passed in 2011, enacted in 2013)
- The second and third NGO report of the Child Rights Network which was submitted in 2014 to the UN committee (2014)

The Uk/England

- Every child matters (2003)
- Aiming high for young people: A ten year strategy for positive activities (2007)
- Positive for Youth: a new approach to cross-government policy for young people aged 13 to 19 (2010).

Turkey

- Constitution of the Republic of Turkey (1982)
- National Youth and Sports Policy Document (adopted by the Council of Ministries on 27th November 2012 and entered into force after its publication in the Official Journal on 27th January 2013)
- Law on Municipalities (2013)

The analysis of these texts carried out through CDA does not intend to be a proper comparative study, for three main reasons. First of all, the characteristics of the selected documents may vary a lot between them in terms of, for example, authorship (government, local authorities, academic experts), time period (early or late 2000's), and topics (general youth plan, actions specifically dedicated to a youth issues). This heterogeneity, which reflects national differences concerning the problematization and governance of the youth issues, creates a too much inhomogeneous sample to be compared.

Moreover, the selected texts do not complete the panorama of the documents that, in each country, contribute at shaping the discourse on youth and youth socio-political participation. Lastly, even if we have used a common guideline to analyse the documents, the researchers' perspectives, which may or may not be able to notice every relevant element and which are necessarily different from each other, necessarily influence the resulting analysis.

For these reasons we have opted for an analysis aimed at highlighting some general and recurring trends emerging in the discourses on youth and youth socio-political participation that are presented referring to the more exemplificative national cases and documents. In this perspective, through the analysis of a sample of key-texts selected because of their recognised relevance in the national discourses on the young people and their engagement in society, we have sought to shed light on:

- the main recurring discourses and measures on youth in PARTISPACE countries (e.g. How is youth defined? Which issues are mostly problematised? What are the main proposed solutions?);
- the main definition of and measures for youth socio-political participation emerging in the considered national contexts (e.g. How is youth engagement defined? How is it promoted? What styles and spaces of youth participation are considered in and promoted by in the national policies?).

The chapter is organised in the following structure. First the discourses on youth will be presented, focusing on the emerging definition of youth and youth issues. Secondly, the focus will shift on the presentation of the discourses on youth socio-political participation, highlighting the main dimensions, definition, aims, and measures proposed in the analysed national documents.

2. Discourses on youth

2.1. A vague definition of youth

Concerning the definitions of youth, in the analysed documents youth is characterised through three main ways that sometimes are used together:

- by proposing a broad definition of youth as the period of life located between childhood/ adolescence and adulthood;
- by explicitly referring to an age range;
- by stressing some social conditions that are considered or presented as peculiar of the young people.

In a very limited number of cases, the documents opt for a *general definition of youth as the period of the life course located between childhood/adolescence and adulthood*.

When used, the decision to opt for such a vague characterisation of youth is presented as the result of a rational choice aimed at acknowledging the impossibility of grasping all the nuances of the youth conditions or at highlighting general and global trends encompassing individual specificities. This is the case, for example, of the French document Youth Priority (2003), where youth is simply described as the time between puberty and procreation affirming that the idea of defining the population in question through an age range or through a more specific definition is an error that triggers to focus extensively on a particular population while forgetting to take into account the global youth conditions, that is the issues concerning young generation as a whole.

Although this kind of vague definition of youth is not common in the considered documents, it stresses a diffused tendency to avoid a clear characterisation of the targeted population that is mirrored also in the other two identified strategies of definition.

Indeed, even when youth is defined by making *explicitly reference to an age range*, the texts deal with a rather indistinct group of 'young people', which is itself broadly defined by vague age boundaries, placing teenagers and thirty year olds in the same group.

The age brackets used to define youth differ from one text to another, but they are usually large: the most mentioned age range includes in youth all the individuals who are aged between 15 and 29 years old (see, for examples, National Youth and Sports Policy Document, Turkey; National Youth Law, Bulgaria), while other documents opt for an even larger definition of youth that considers together children, adolescents and young people (see, for example, "Child and Youth Promotion Act" , Switzerland; Emilia-Romagna Regional Law, Italy). Many documents foreseen some specifications of this age range in relation to particular issues or measures (e.g. policies on education for people aged under 18; issues of employability for people aged between 19 and 25), however, a little defined focus appeared to be frequently diffused in the documents which, when they explicitly refer to an age range, prefer to opt for the 15 to 29 range.

Similarly, also in the cases in which youth is defined by underlining *specific social and economic conditions the youth cohort experiences*, the aforementioned tendency of maintaining the definition of youth rather vague can be recorded. In these cases, youth is characterised by highlighting the peculiarities of young people's living conditions in relation to other previous or contemporary generations. In so doing, young people are presented as being

part of a certain group in society with specific needs, problems, resources and capabilities, that are partially linked to the 'normal' process of growing and partially due to the specific historical conditions in which this process of growing is happening. In other words, this third way to define youth describes young people making reference to their educational, occupational, relational needs (e.g. access to school, transition to work, creation of a family, and so on…), emphasising if and how these same needs have changed in the contemporary social scenario.

An example of this strategy of definition of youth can be found in Charvet's Report (France) where young people are described as individuals going through a "double passage," specifically moving from school into the professional world, and going from the family into which they were born to one of their choice and where it is underlined how policies should "take into account the specificity of youth trajectories in times of crisis, respond to challenges encountered by them in their school careers and employability, take into account the impact that these difficulties can have on their lives, their welfare and housing, and their cultural practices and their engagement".

Although the definitions focused on youth conditions highlight how a general attention to the difficulties young people are experiencing as a generation can be recorded in the vast majority of the analysed texts, an overestimation of the homogeneity of youth condition that results again in a vague definition of the targeted population can be noticed.

This can interestingly be noticed, for example, considering the use of the concept of "disadvantaged young people" and its main commonly diffused synonyms like, for example, "young people facing difficulties" or "young people with less opportunities". These expressions are recurring in the vast majority of the national documents, but it is interesting to notice that:

- the same concepts are used as an umbrella category for all those youth groups that deals with explicitly problematic conditions (e.g. youth with migration background, children and youth affected by poverty and children and youth with disabilities), which are placed all together in the same set;
- more subtle, but still relevant forms of disadvantage, such as those concerning the effects of gender and ethnic background in achieving a stable and well-paid position in the job market are rarely considered.

2.2. Representations of youth: resources, threats and victims

Concerning discourses on youth, through the analysis of the documents taken in consideration in the eight countries, it has been possible to highlight some general trends concerning the images of youth diffused in the public national discourses. Beyond some differences related to the peculiarities of the different contexts, three main images of youth have emerged from the discourse analysis.

Young people as resources

The first image of youth commonly diffused in the national documents we have analysed is the one that describes young people as precious and necessary resources for the country. This discourse on youth is particularly recurring in all the national contexts and in all the related documents. Indeed, the vast majority of the texts we have taken in consideration for this analysis, invariably start in a very optimistic tone, stating the importance of highlighting the potentialities of young people.

This discourse emphasises the importance of youth in constituting (cfr. Turkey's and Bulgaria's national reports) and/or in continuously renewing the country (cfr. Ministry of Youth guidelines, Italy), it is usually used at the very beginning of the texts that frequently affirms their intention to go beyond the common problematisation of youth and to highlight the many positive aspects of the contemporary young generations.

Examples of this mythicized image of youth can be found in the German and the Swedish case where the "youth as a resource" perspective with young people being attributed an active role in shaping societal institutions recurs in all the analysed text. In the Italian case young people are similarly described in ways that resembles revolutionary heroes, through a particular vocabulary that depicts their participation in society as a sort of "mission" and them as "rebels who confront the fear, the apathy, the desertification of values, and who ask just for instruments to turn their rage into positive energy". In both these cases, young people are considered as the main "agents of change" in a political framework which gives them the responsibility of fighting against their elders, or the corruption, or the crisis or any other difficulty/problem the nation is facing in order to widen their future opportunities and forge a better, fairer and more sustainable future for the country.

Similar and different at the same time is the process of mythicization of youth that can be highlighted in the Turkish case. Indeed, the Turkish discourses on young people have seen different kinds of mythicization follow one another since the Ottoman Empire. Although, in general terms the Turkish "myth of

youth" defines youth as a political category representing the future and symbolising the nation's willingness to develop and become strong, the myth of youth has been interpreted in different ways in the various recent political phases of the Turkish history (Cfr. Turkish Country Report) and it's now one of the elements of a political conservative paradigm that suggest the idea that "the ideal young person" is the one "carrying a computer in one hand and a Quran in the other" (Lukuslu, 2009).

Young people as a threat

The discourse that describes young people as resources is often placed side by side to the one that describes young people as threats. Although, as previously mentioned, the texts usually express the intention to go beyond the image of youth as a problem stating that this is today an outdate discourse, a more attentive analysis of the documents highlights how the problematisation of youth has not yet been abandoned in the national discourses.

This discourse suggests the idea that youth represents a difficult phase of the life course of the individual, as well as a problematic segment in the society. Within this perspective it is argued that young people are or could be a problem for themselves (e.g. higher inclination to self-harming behaviours such as drug and alcohol abuse) and/or for those who are around them (e.g. higher predisposition to anti-social behaviours such as vandalism, aggressions).

The idea of youth as a problem is thus twofold: in some cases the attention is placed on the vulnerability of the young people, in other on their dangerousness. In the first interpretation, young people are understood as problematic not because of their inclination to antisocial behaviours, but because they are consider as holders of certain deficits which have to be compensated by measures such as (civic) education and so forth. In line with this idea, young people are portrayed as being eminently in danger and it is strongly stressed the need to adopt measures to save them: in education, health, sexuality, market, internet, etc. Particularly effective to illustrate this trend, is the main article of the Turkish Constitution dealing with youth (art. 58 - Protection of Youth) which affirms that state shall take all necessary measures to protect youth from addiction to alcohol, drug addiction, crime, gambling, and similar vices, and ignorance. In a similar way, also Sweden, which has a comprehensive youth policy, both considering young people as hopes and resources and as problems, gives a lot of attention to young people as potential victims (that be of violence, discrimination, inequalities) and addresses a broad array of measure to alleviate the conditions of these different groups.

The perspective that stresses the image of youth as a dangerous category emphasises instead the idea that young people could represent a threat for the society they live in, because of their predisposition at adopting and acting

antisocial behaviours. This perspective reflects a strong 'deficit' model in most policy discourse surrounding young people, which can polarise easily into a binary of threat and respectability. Some young people are 'active citizens in becoming', while others are problem bodies outside the 'norm'. There remain too strongly homogenising tendencies in the policy discourse with little room for minorities' voices or perspectives, for the quirky, the interesting, the creative or the new—young people are not seen as potential allies in the becoming of the next scene of the society. This particular interpretation of youth can be easily noticed, for example, in the Uk discourses on youth where emerge an underlying perspective that all child and young behaviour that does not follow the norm needs to be normalised. Although the explicit discourses proposed in all the UK documents highlight the "positive" aspects of "young people", implicitly, the rhetoric is one that posits young people as feral creatures that need to be tamed and properly fitted in a certain social arrangement. As a result, an entire governmental, local and professional machinery is set in motion to guarantee that children and youngsters will become what is expected for them to be – well integrated and contributors of society and labour market.

Young people as victims

The "victim discourse" can be partially considered as a recent variation of the youth as a problem discourse and it is mainly based on highlighting young people's existential difficulties and the exacerbation of these difficulties due to different societal transformation, such as the globalisation or the economic crisis. On the basis of the analysis carried on the selected document, it seems that elements of this image of youth can be especially underlined in the Italian and French discourses on youth where strong emphasis is placed on the negative effects of the labour market re-structuring on young people's lives over the neo-liberal decades, in particular unemployment and precariousness.

The representation of young people as victims is often associated with other discourses, highly characterised by moral terms. There are two main frames to which the heterogeneity of images and narratives prevailing in public debate seem to be connected.

In the first, young people are represented as passive or even "guilty victims", i.e. their situation is their own fault. In other words, they are subject to a discourse of blaming. For example, the problems they experience in relation to work, such as unemployment or frustration at the impossibility of making the most of their skills, stem from passivity or personal failings in how they face these problems, due to lack of the appropriate skills or competitive attitudes suitable for the more open, flexible labour market.

At the same time, a sort of "absolution discourse" can be recorded. In this discourse there prevails a representation of young people as above all "innocent victims" in contrast to a society and its institutions which, rather than favouring the achievement of a more independent, autonomous status, function as a constraint.

2.3. Problematisation of youth issues

As for the problematisation of the different issues concerning youth, the documents focus on a variety of different topics, such as education, employment and citizenship, but also living conditions, housing, health, family, etc. which are embedded in a more general discussions about equality, inclusion, and autonomy.

Although the texts consider among their topics various issues and problems affecting youth transition to adulthood, it is interesting to notice and highlight a common prioritisation of the issue of employment. In general, young people are recognised to grow up in increasingly complex labour markets, which has been transformed by global competition, consumerism and technology as well as by the 2008 economic and financial crisis, that is rarely mentioned in the documents, but that has probably influenced the rhetoric lying behind their images of youth.

In the Bulgarian National Youth Strategy, for example, the main issues faced by the young generation are presented as strictly connected to their employment conditions, as if finding a good job could be enough to solve every difficulty experienced by young people. Even the order of strategic objectives listed in the National Youth Strategy is not accidental and reflects the conviction of policy-makers that the key problem faced by young people in Bulgaria are the socio-economic and occupational difficulties. Youth unemployment is proposed as a valid explanation to the high immigration attitudes, the distrust in the political system and the institutions as a whole, youth delinquency rates and bad quality of life.

A relevant emphasis on job placement is recordable also in France, Italy, Sweden and the UK, mirroring the growing European attention on this issue that has recently resulted in the elaboration of the Youth Guarantee strategy. In France and Italy, for example, the civic service – which offers to unemployed young people aged between 18 and 28 y.o. the possibility of engaging in the activities of social promotion of a public or private organization receiving a small economic reimbursement for 12 month - is presented more and more as a possible solutions to youth unemployment rather than a measure aimed at fostering youth civic participation and sense of belonging to their communities; while in the UK a strong emphasis on business when talking about young people can be noticed in the analysed texts

where business is seen as important for the development of a positive youth and youth itself is seen as a good opportunity for investment (especially through the use of voluntary, non-waged, work).

3. Discourses on youth socio-political participation

3.1. Definitions of youth socio-political participation

Although youth socio-political participation is one of the central topics in the vast majority of the texts considered for this analysis, it is possible to affirm that a clear definition of "youth participation" is rarely proposed in them.

Concerning documents produced by the government and the main political institutions (such as laws, youth plans and programmes), no straightforward definition of youth participation is provided in the analysed documents and youth engagement is usually defined by a list of practices (voting, being a volunteer, protesting, etc.), structures (association, youth councils, etc.) or objectives (for instance being involved in public decision).

More elaborated definitions of youth participation can be found in some documents elaborated by non-governmental organisations or experts and that aim at critically analyse the governmental approach to both engagement. These definitions often refer to academic classifications and typologies of participatory behaviours. For example, one of the German documents - *Participation of children and youth between aspiration and reality. A position paper by the Federal Youth Council* - defines participation referring to Arnstein's ladder of participation[22] and other models and linking participation to the distinction between democracy as a form of government and democracy as a way of living. A very similar classification can be read in the Swiss' expert report edited by Vollmer (2008), where the author highlights the distinction between various kinds of child and youth participation:

- Having a say, which includes the expression of one´s opinion about a certain topic;
- Involvement, which means the direct participation in a consultation process about a certain issue or decision;

[22] In her work, Arnstein has analysed the relationship between community and government using a ladder as a metaphor for increasing access to decision-making power. The ladder is composed of 8 rungs. The bottom rungs of the ladder are (1) Manipulation and (2) Therapy and represent levels of "non-participation" where the real goal is not to enable people to participate in planning or conducting programs, but to enable powerholders to "educate" or "normalise" the participants. Rungs (3) Informing, (4) Consultation, and (5) Placation and compose the level of "Tokenism": they allow citizens to hear and be heard, but do not assure that their views will be heeded by those who have the power and be turned in concrete action. Further up the ladder, citizens can enter into a (6) Partnership that enables them to negotiate and engage with power holders, can get (7) Delegated Power obtaining the majority of decision-making seats, and (8) Citizen Control achieving full managerial power.

- Co-determination and co-decision-making, which means the binding and/or equivalent participation in a consultation process;
- "Co-Shaping" [Mitgestaltung], which refers not only to the participation in a consultation process, but also to the involvement in the implementation and execution of certain decisions.

Again in Germany, the Federal Law on Children and Youth Aid from 1990 also distinguishes between three sub-sets of participation:

- *Mitwirkung* ("co-determination") is mainly applied to the design, but also the procedures of the implementation of youth policies where young people are seen as partners in decision-making processes;
- *Beteiligung* ("involvement" or "consultation") is defined roughly in line with the UN Convention where all young people are granted the right to have their say in all matters that concern them; and
- *Partizipation* ("representation", but also "partaking" and "attendance"), which is representation on committees and decision-making bodies either by young people themselves or through organisations like in the obligations of local youth authorities to involve them into their planning process or to have representatives of young people on the statutory youth aid committee.

Beyond these examples of explicit definition of youth engagement, youth socio-political participation seems to be commonly just defined in broad terms through the aforementioned reference to specific practices, structures and objectives that contribute in drawing a sort of participation perimeter. Moreover, a general diffusion of the term "involvement" can be recorded in many of the considered document. The use of the this word appears not to be completely accidental, since it suggests the idea of making young people engaged on pre-existing issues and in pre-existing issues.

Concerning the structure of the document and the argumentation flow commonly diffused, the analysis of public documents show that there is often the same approach of youth participation, a common framing structure used to explain why there is a need to promote youth engagement:

- young people are not enough involved and their political integration is weak;
- youth participation is necessary for social running (references to social ties, to republican integration, the future of the Nation depends on young people);

- young people want to involve themselves and they have expressed the desire of being engaged and opportunities must be developed and supported (Becquet 2012).

This framing strategy can be noticed, for example, in the Bulgarian National Youth Strategy, in the guidelines the Italian Ministry of Youth (2008), in the Swedish governmental report "Children and young people's rights - A strategy for strengthening children's right in Sweden" and in the Swiss " Child and Youth Promotion Act".

3.2. Aims and benefits of youth participation

Despite different labels are used in the country documents to illustrate the main goals youth participation is intended to achieve and produce, it is possible to generally state that youth engagement can be proposed as a tool aimed at:

- strengthening the young individual;
- reinforcing the society as a whole.

Although these two argumentations concerning the importance of youth engagement usually coexist in the same document, there are some texts, which tend to place more emphasis on the first or on the second aspect.

In relation to young people who decide to take an active role in society, the involvement in the civic and political sphere is suggested as a way young people can use to access to their social rights (Cfr. Dulin Report; France), to win back a voice in the public sphere (cfr. Italy- National Youth Plan; Italy), as an experience useful to gain self-efficacy and to better delineate the young individual' personality and interests (Expert report by Vollmer, Swizterland), as an instrument to foster the young people's sense of belonging and trust, as well as a way to facilitate youth transition to the job market (Chereque Report , France; Law on Civic Service; Italy).

The Italian Guidelines of the Ministry of Youth are a good example of an argumentation largely based on emphasising the individual benefits of youth engagement. In this document, youth involvement in society is conceived as a sort of "weapon" in a war aimed at winning back a central position in a national context ruled by the older generations. In line with this perspective the text states that the Ministry intends to "give birth to a real generational visibility (…) starting from the need to fight the gerontocracy that is in all the levels of our society". Since the document conceives youth participation as a weapon in the battle rather than a tool of dialogue, the benefits of youth activation for the institutions and society as a whole are not highlighted

(institutions and society are the "enemies" of youth and cannot explicitly benefit of their activation).

In relation to the state, the involvement of youth engagement is instead presented as a way to develop and improve the country's social system and as a crucial tool to solve the democratic deficit issue many democracies are experiencing (Chereque Report, France; Expert Report by Vollmer, Switzerland; Participation of children and youth – between aspiration and reality, Germany; National Youth and Sports Policy Document, Turkey; the National Youth Plan, Italy; the National Youth Program, Bulgaria).

The French document Chereque Report, for example, suggests that larger youth participation to the national civic service would enhance national cohesion and contribute to a wave of trust towards youth, as well as an increase economic and political life. Similarly, the Swiss Expert report by Vollmer and the document of the German Federal Youth Council "Participation of children and youth – between aspiration and reality" underline that the early inclusion of those affected (children and young people) by public planning and decision-making processes promotes efficiency of public system and its services (reaction to declining legitimisation of public decisions). Lastly, the Turkish National Youth and Sports Policy Document adopts a similar approach illustrating a perspective on youth participation that is instrumental to the State's development as can be noticed in the following passage: "the participation of young people in economic and social areas has a great significance for the country's development and improvement. The existence of a dynamic young population is a great opportunity and wealth for Turkey for the continuity of the multi-dimensional development move, which centres on the individual. Therefore, it is necessary to support the personal and social development of young people, to create opportunities and to provide ground for them to truly reveal their potentials and to help them participate actively in every aspect of life." It is important to note the repetition of the word "dynamic" to define the young population: a dynamic young population is a human resource for the development of the country. In a similar manner, sports are also exploited to rise healthy generations.

3.3. Practices of promotion of youth participation

Concerning the forms of youth participation that are considered and promoted in the national discourses on youth socio-political involvement, some general trends and specificities can be highlighted.

The disappearance of the traditional fields of participation in political discourses

Following the common argumentation that underlines a general youth escape from the traditional forms of political engagement (e.g. voting, standing for election, being involved in parties and associations), these practices and spaces of involvement seem to have disappeared from the national discourses presented in the analysed texts, that just rarely or never mention the need, for example, of direct interventions aimed at creating a dialogue between the young people and the political parties, or at promoting youth people willingness to stand for an elective position.

Although this can be considered as a recognition of a different way of being citizens that goes beyond the electoral cabin, it worth to notice that this lack of attention toward the promotion of youth engagement also in the traditional political sphere could hinder the young people and their voice, leaving them outside from central arenas of power.

One exception might be Sweden that in Focusing Youth describes measures to inform young people of the importance of this formal participation both at national and EU levels. Especially groups living in disadvantaged areas are said to be important to reach. Any other policies aimed at revising this trend has been mentioned in the analysed texts.

Information and volunteering: a panacea to youth disengagement?

In front of the widespread awareness on the low participation of youth in the traditional expressions of participatory democracy (e.g. election), the solutions the analysed documents propose are mainly the following two.

Fist of all, the need of diffusing and strengthening the level of information on the existing participatory opportunities that young people can access to and on the benefits they can obtain from this involvement is commonly underlined in the national discourses. Information is considered as a crucial pre-condition to participation and the main actors responsible for informing young people of their possibility as citizens usually coincide with schools and local institutions. “Information” is, for example, one of the priority indicated in the Bulgarian National Youth Program, that suggest the implementation of a series of activities designed to encourage the obtaining of knowledge and skills necessary for effective participation. The informative aspects connected to youth participation are undoubtedly relevant elements in determining the success of any programme aimed at promoting youth involvement, but the enormous space and relevance attributed to information and to the need of fostering it seems to not adequately consider that the main issue concerning youth engagement is not making the young people more informed. Indeed, many analyses and researches suggest that the young generation is usually well informed and high-interested, but low-active in practices. In the national

discourses the issue of the passage between "being informed" and "being active" is rarely problematized.

A second solution commonly proposed to solve the issue of youth disengagement and to promote participation, is that of volunteering, that is presented as one of the fast growing fields of youth participation on a European-wide scale. The idea of supporting youth involvement in society through volunteering and community work can be found in any analysed document, where it is also commonly expressed the need of strengthening the National Civil Service and the Third Sector in order to create new opportunities of engagement for the young people. In the Italian Guidelines of the Ministry of youth, for example, the positive role of associations and voluntary activities in youth engagement is particularly underlined and association are described as "extraordinary worlds (…) where ideas are turned in blocks". Similarly, the French Chereque Report indicates civic service as a sort of training for youth participation, because it takes place in associations or agencies involved in active work.

Recurring measures and instruments

To promote youth participation various other measures and instruments are discussed in the national key texts. However, many of these measures and instruments are "only" mentioned as best practices or examples for how youth participation could be realised or promoted, without discussing how it could be effectively implemented.

Among the measures usually included as best practices in national discourses, the following ones are particularly recurring.

First of all we have the development of the intercultural dialogue, which is considered a way to promote participation (especially in a global perspective). Through international exchange and involvement in supra-national projects, young people are supposed to adopt values of toleration and mutual respect, and to synchronise their visions of the future with their peers in other EU and non-EU countries. Therefore, efforts have been declared (and partially made) to establish various networks for international education programmes, exchanges, trainings, internships, specialisations, and volunteering;

The creation of Youth Councils within local and regional institutions is also a measure frequently mentioned. Youth councils are considered a good way to foster youth sense of belonging, responsibility and self-efficacy. Although they are commonly described as best practices, literature suggests that their relevance in the promotion of youth engagement should be reconsidered for different reasons:

- first of all, young people participating in these opportunities of engagement tend to be characterised by a wealthy family background;
- secondly, youth assemblies have often difficulties in being independent from the municipalities because the municipalities themselves provide the budgets of these youth councils;
- moreover, due to possible connections with the municipality's governing party, the youth assemblies are not totally open to the participation of young people from different political perspectives;
- lastly, the youth assemblies are called to express themselves are usually limited to a narrow range of issues which are often considered as not so relevant (e.g. sport, parks) while youth councils are just rarely involved in decision concerning "core issues" such as budget expenditure, educational or cultural offer, social services planning, urban development.

Concluding remarks

The CDA analysis of the selected key national texts highlights, first of all, the lack of a clear definition regarding the concepts of youth and of youth participation. The maintenance of vague definitions partially mirror the difficulty of circumscribing the perimeter of these two concepts, which is naturally linked to their very large and ever-changing nature and which has been underlined by a plurality of analyses (Cotè 2000; Dalton 2008), but also a weak consideration of and reflection on the nuances of these two concepts.

As for the concept of youth an overestimation of the homogeneity of youth conditions has been recorded and suggests a generally scarce attention to the internal segmentation of the youth population along more or less evident forms of disadvantage. This suggests a still diffused difficulty in understanding youth as a universe composed of different "worlds" despite the attention rose on this point by several scholars (Cavalli, Galland 1993; Furlong 2009; Furlong *et al.* 2011).

Also in relation to youth socio-political participation, although youth engagement is the central topic of the texts considered for this analysis, it is possible to affirm that a clear definition of "youth participation" is rarely proposed in them. Some attempts can indeed be recorded just in the documents produced by non-governmental organisations or experts, while the governmental texts rarely engage in proposing an explicit definition of youth engagement.
This lack of a clear definition could be read as a result of an aware choice of not circumscribing the complexity of youth participation in a list of actions and behaviours but if we look at what is not explicit, a rather clear idea about what youth participation is actually emerges and this definition appears to be rather

"narrow".

The narrowness of the national discourses on youth socio-political involvement concerns mainly: the recognition of youth practices of engagement and the tools through which youth involvement is promoted. Indeed, the national texts appear more interested in engaging young people pre-existing activities rather than in recognising and supporting their own forms of activation, while the interventions proposed in the analysed texts to promote youth engagement are often based on mere activities of information and sensitisation to participation. Moreover, the forms of participation that are envisaged in the documents mainly refer to civic engagement and to the involvement of the young people into voluntary activities promoted by associations.

Fostering youth participation in civic and associative sphere is undoubtedly important, but the conception of youth participation as something lived *just* in this sphere that is sustained in many national discourses must be carefully problematised as it appears to have at least three limits:

- it partially proposes an idea of society and community (untruthfully) "pacified" where social conflicts are removed;
- traditional forms of political involvement (e.g. voting, standing for election, being involved in parties' activities) are almost never mentioned as spaces and forms of youth engagement to promote and foster in and this could turn in an exacerbation of youth political marginality;
- the national discourse are still not adequately considering some forms and spaces of youth engagement, such as the virtual spaces, forms of involvement based on consume and art, but also antagonistic and anti-political forms of engagement, confirming a traditional lack of full recognition.

More generally it seems possible to argue that the paradigm at the basis of many national discourses on youth and youth socio-political participation seems to accord only a partial recognition of the young people as active citizens. As recently pointed out by several authors (Collins 2009; James 2011), the majority of public policies on youth appear indeed guided by a so-called "youth development model", a theoretical-methodological approach to young people based on the idea that the latter is something "in the making" and not something that already is (James 2011). In the perspective of the youth development model, youth is essentially perceived as a transition to control and to manage: the main purpose of public policies based on this model is to guide young people in their transition from youth to adulthood, managing the potential problematic behaviours. Under this perspective, young people are always placed in a subordinate position compared with adults and conceived as subjects that need to be guided, monitored and controlled (White & Wyn 2004).

With regard to participatory politics, the youth development model has fuelled the widespread idea that young people are not "full citizens", but "citizens in the making" that need to be guided through strict socialisation strategies (Thomson *et. al*., 2004). In line with these ideas, many policies aimed at promoting youth engagement pigeonhole youth's mobilisation into rigid programs that do not take into account the ideas, the requests and the elements of innovation expressed by youth. Following Hart's perspective (Hart 1992), all this sometimes results in mere activities of "decoration" and "tokenism"– that have little to do with real democracy.

In relation to the further steps of our research, these results appear to be particularly relevant since they suggest that the socio-political scenario in which the young people are meant to be active citizens and to express their participatory interest is a partially unwelcoming one. Indeed this scenario appears to be characterised by a diffused acknowledge of the importance of youth participation for a society, but:

- it welcomes just certain forms of youth engagement, removing from the participatory scene the more opposing styles of engagement, without even try to understand them;
- it welcomes youth in the participatory scene, but it is rarely ready to support and foster young people's own initiatives;
- it mainly understands young people as "apprentice of citizenship", that is as actors who are not yet completely ready, but who should be "educated" to citizenship;
- it generally forgets the close relation between participation and socio-economic inclusion.

Considering the delineated scenario, through the empirical activities carried out in WP4 and WP5, we should thus pay attention to the ways in which young people understand, describe and practice participation, to their interactions or non-interaction with the institutional scenario, to the difficulties experienced in obtaining recognition, and to the potential reaction to the lack of recognition from the institutions.

Youth Socio-political participation: a state-of-the-art

Introduction

The chapter provides a state-of-the-art on youth socio-political participation on the basis of both statistical data and literature. In particular, after presenting the main general trends concerning youth engagement that are highlighted by national statistics, the chapter offers an overview on the main literature on styles and spaces of youth socio-political participation, as well as on the relationship between youth engagement and education and youth work.

The increasing electoral abstentionism and the crisis of the identification with traditional political ideologies are clear signs of the decline of the youth participation in the conventional forms of politics. Nevertheless, alternative modes of engagement are growing, strongly influenced by the on-going processes of individualisation of values and valorisation of the private sphere among the younger generations. The new forms of participation, located on the border between the public and private, individual and collective sphere are expressions of the desire of direct democracy, as they are lived or interpreted as intermittent, non-institutionalized, issue-based and horizontal, operating in public spaces but also in the virtual arena.

The concept of "spaces of participation" assumes, in our contemporary societies, different meanings, referring to abstract contexts and physical spaces. The variety of the spaces are generally described using opposite adjectives: political vs civic; formal vs informal; public vs private; offline vs online; local vs global. Some dimensions such as the accessibility of the settings, the level of required commitment and allowed personal agency, the perceived efficacy of the actions realised in the settings, are transversal to these dichotomies and determine the young people's preference for certain spaces.

This section also investigates the relationship both between participation and the educational system and between participation and youth work, as well as the different strategies, approaches and levels of interest in relation to the participation's teaching/learning processes that can be recorded in the PARTISPACE countries. Educating youth to participate is not an easy task and the emphasis on/the ways of implementing educative programmes aimed at fostering youth engagement differs

from country to country. There are different levels of interest and approaches to political education and, for these reason, local environment particularly affects the relationship between education, youth work and participation.

1. Statistics on youth socio-political participation

Describing how young people participate in public life and explaining why they engage is a very complex challenge for social and political researchers. The simple act of taking part incorporates a multiplicity of dimensions and assumes different meanings. This section summarizes the main statistics on youth participation in the eight PARTISPACE countries. In order to understand the multifaceted profile of collective engagement during juvenile age, the section refers to theories and explanations on social and political changes that have/had an impact on participation. It also takes into account the rule of national institutions in the implementation of policies that explicitly or informally regulate or support youth involvement. Data result from national surveys or official agencies and institutes, with a particular attention to the most recent years or elections and including young people at different stages in their juvenile age. All the reported statistics cover two different domains of participation: political behaviours in both conventional and non-conventional repertoires of actions, and social involvement in formal and/or local groups.

Political participation is at the core of the PARTISPACE project. Almost all the selected countries provide detailed information on electoral behaviour and party activism disaggregated by age. As regards to voter turnout, empirical evidence tells us of a prevailing heterogeneity of results and trends, that reflect both political culture of our countries and type of data registered in the statistics (first or second-level elections) level of election reported.

In Italy, Sweden, Germany young people exhibit high turnout rates with percentages close to 80%, a limited decline of participation over time and no significant age gap. Conversely, abstainers are the majority among young people in the remaining countries and the rise of abstentionism seems to have penalized more the new voters than the rest of the population. The percentages of young people who have casted the ballot in recent elections are only 40-45% in United Kingdom, (2011 National elections; 78% among 65+), about 30% in Switzerland and France (local elections). In Switzerland, a recent study (2015) have showed that most of the young people perceive the participation in elections as a free choice decision of one's own and not as a civil duty. In Germany many young people would be willing to elect but don't vote (Gaiser and Gille, 2012)

Largely than electoral behaviour, activism in traditional political organization has become residual in the participative repertoire of the young people. Percentages of party activists are negligible in all the PARTISPACE countries (2-5%, in national surveys carried out after 2010). Only in Turkey values rise 10% (even though statistics include also past activism). Disengagement has also extended to another

typical domain related to political environment, the militancy in trade unions. In France, the major trade union confederations reach less than 5% of young people. In Italy, the corresponding percentage is 3%. Sweden, known for its high organisation rate, suffered a sharp decline in membership: during the 90ths about half of young persons (16-24 age group) were a member of a trade union, whereas today percentage dropped to just about a third and a huge majority of youngsters do not consider becoming a member. In United Kingdom, the decline in membership is faster among young people than in older age groups.

The crisis of participation in traditional political organizations corresponds to a growing sense of distrust of politics and politicians among youngsters. Disaffection has strengthened the diffusion of negative attitudes towards politics, such as alienation, apathy and cynicism, and a progressive weakening of party loyalty as well as the conception of voting as a civic duty. The emerging risks in the sphere of politics explain, in some countries, a declining support for democracy or an increasing sentiment of refusal of democratic institutions and political parties. Empirical evidences dramatically capture such negative feelings. As emphasized in a recent Eurobarometer survey (2013), in Bulgaria 35% of the young people state that democracy is not good for their country, 43% think that all political parties should be dissolved, only 46% say that it is important who is ruling the country. In the majority of the countries, young people do not directly question the democracy, rather express a dissatisfaction with politics or the existing form of democracy, and inhibit their potentiality of engagement because of this dissatisfaction. This was the case of Germany, as reported in a Shell youth survey of the last decade (2006): a very high percentage of young people was critical towards the outcome of democracy (57 % in East Germany and 34 % in West Germany), and sympathized with a sentence such as "a strong hand should bring order in our state". Participation outside the political system can however strengthen the belief of one's ability to be recognized among decision makers. An analyses of youth participation in school and/or in extra-curricular activities (sport associations and alike) in Sweden show that those who experience influence in one of these or at best both, were significant more confident to reach decision makers than others (Forkby and Nilsson, 2014).

Critical voters have faced the crisis of the traditional model of militancy by shifting their preferences towards more direct methods of political action (protests, boycotts), or towards other activities such as volunteer work in social or cultural associations. Data confirm that activation through political mobilization or non-conventional political participation attracts a relevant component of new citizens. In Italy, 12% of 18-30 years old took part in a rally, 22% signed a petition, 7% sent a letter to a public office, and 10% boycotted products (year 2013). In Turkey, 26 % of young people (15-29 age group) participated in a civil organization or a university club, 10% in at least one action of protest, rally or manifestation (year 2013). In Switzerland, among 16 to 29 years-olds, 27% signed a petition in the previous twelve months (general population: 34%); 20% boycotted products (general population: 28%), 6% worn or distributed a sign or sticker for a political campaign (general population: 6%) (year

2014). Generally, youngsters are more involved than adults do in protest through mobilization, while the gap is unfavourable in conventional political activities. Youth's incline to participate in society in other ways than through political parties is also mirrors by figures from Sweden showing that their interests in societal and international matters can greatly supersede their interest in "politics" (38 % reported interest in politics compared to 57 % in societal matters and 64 % "what's going on in other countries).

New forms of participation are more individualized and offer more opportunities and channels to express an opinion for "sophisticated citizens" (Dalton 1996) who possess resources and skills that make them competent, interested and exigent with regard to politics and its institutions. This explains the emergence and success of complex participative activities such as those produced in the Internet sphere. Through the Web a minority of the population become active on relevant topics, but much more use the Internet as source of information or join a political group on Facebook or another social network. Statistics on the online participation in Switzerland from 2013 are particularly significant: 82% of young people have at least once joined one or more political group on Facebook or another social network, more than 90% have published political information or a personal opinion on a website (not including Facebook) at least once. 50 % of Sweden's 16 to 25 years youth had 2013 made some kind of political statement using the Internet, which was the most common political activity.

Another important dimension of youth engagement is external to political circuits and has to do with social activities. This term includes a great variety of experiences. In Germany, many young people (about 10%) engage in their neighbourhood and closer environment. In Italy membership in cultural groups and volunteering are the two most common experiences, that involve about 10% of the juvenile population (18-30).. In Turkey one quarter of young people take part in a civil organization or university club. In Bulgaria, the same percentage of respondents has done voluntary activities and the positive evolution of such engagement contrasts with a declining trend for political activities. In United Kingdom about 30% of 16-24 years old have volunteered (2013). In almost all the countries, youth were active most often in organisations in the field of sport and recreation. In Switzerland, 40% of young people in the age class 19-29 are members and 30% are involved in voluntarily work for such organisations. In Sweden, sports clubs attract about one third of Swedish youth and recreational centres 10%. In France, juvenile population prevails in the sports associations, while for cultural or other fields of affiliation membership increases with age.

Activism in social groups generally lacks an ideological component and is often paid as a job. In some cases, national or local institutions explicitly promote these experiences. In Sweden, government financial support is channelled to national leisure-oriented youth organisations. In France, associations are seen as the stakeholders that implement actions, and the Civic Service Act gives the opportunity

to carry out a mission of general interest. Some critical points are reported from the German case, where voluntary/volunteer work for the community suffer a problem of acknowledgement and power, as it does not lead to direct benefit in terms of competences or improvement of chances on the job market.

2. Styles of youth socio-political participation

Declining youth participation in conventional forms of politics has become a central theme for academics and policy makers and has often been viewed as marking a crisis in citizenship. De-politicisation is considered a common phenomenon in all the European societies. Nevertheless, the overwhelming evidence that European young people express their own views and are active in alternative modes of participation have brought many scholar to reject the hypothesis of de-politicization.

Findings from literature and empirical studies mainly agree that the problem is not with youth political apathy or inadequate knowledge/political literacy, but rather with alienation, distrust, lack of faith in the political system. As pointed out in some Italian studies, youth identification with traditional political ideologies has become diluted (Sassen, 2004; Caniglia, 2007; Ramella, 2011) and less frequent than in the past (Bichi, 2013), the growing electoral abstentionism of the young voters has led to question the boundary between a-political and anti-political attitudes and to analyse the political significance of youth abstention (Sciolla, 2012). In this perspective, non-vote assumes the meaning of "conscious choice", a way to express political disappointment instead of disinterest (Zani *et al.*, 2011).

Young people have increasingly become 'standby citizens' (Amnå and Ekman 2014), who engage from time to time with political issues and select, among different opportunities of participation, those that hold meaning for their everyday lives. They are more prone to engage in specific issues and causes (Fahmy, 2005), or interested in international and local issues rather than in national ones (Gargiulo, 2008; Harris and Wyn 2009; Riley and Morey, 2010; Farthing, 2013). Olivier Galland and Bernard Roudet (2005) pinpoint, for the new generation, a tendency towards 'individualization of values', which result in a valorisation of the private sphere (family, friends) (Houdon and Fournier, 1994; Jupp 2008). The act of taking part appears to be motivated by the will to share, the desire to help others, to be useful and to defend a cause, to give a meaning to their life, and even to test a vocation and/or a training (French strategy 2015).

These radical changes have brought youngsters to be involved in intermittent, non-institutionalized, issue-based, horizontal forms of participation and avoid long-term commitment through formal institutions with broader policy goals and entrenched hierarchies. New forms of cause-oriented participative style fit better with a desire of direct democracy. Participation is increasingly mobilized by specific issue that are closely linked to personal interest (Norris, 2003; Harris, Wyn and Younnis, 2007; Bayat 2010; Zani *et al.*, 2011). Most of the international literature on this field has

highlighted the growing diffusion, among youth, of those forms of participation located on the border between the public and private, individual and collective sphere. These tools of engagement act at the micro-level and aim at producing the little, but meaningful changes through daily actions and within daily interactions. Wearing a certain T-shirt, writing for a local magazine, buying fair trade products, take part in cultural and artistic activities and other small choices and small gestures meet the needs of young adults more than institutionalized forms, such as membership in parties or unions (Bang, 2005; Bennet 2012). The latter require long, structurally rigid commitments, are hierarchical and organized according to relatively clearly defined tasks and responsibilities. Young adults, however, seem to prefer flat organizational structures, casual relationships and informal groups, organized around specific projects which allow for brief involvement on short notice (Rothenbühler *et al.* 2012). A recent study on stress and pressure to perform among 15 to 21 years olds in Switzerland (Iacobs Foundation 2015) shows that half of the questioned young people (51%) strongly agree or tend to agree that young people do not have enough time for engagement or associate life. Thus one possible explanation for the preference of young people for the preference of young people for, in particular, short term participatory forms can also be seen in context of their life situation, especially in the lack of time for more binding and time-consuming activities.

In many European countries, local administrations and national government recognize as relevant cultural and artistic forms of participation. In Sweden, the government bill youth policy "Power to decide – the right to welfare" (Government proposal 2004/05) has concluded that culture and leisure activities may help vulnerable youth living in poor suburbs. The so-called "open activities" at the recreational centres play a strategic role in establishing local infrastructure to enhance youth participation and creativity at a local level, as well as promoting intercultural issues. An example of transnational value of art, music and subcultures is the hip-hop youth subculture that emerged in the German-Turkish young people communities (Kaya, 2001; Soysal, 2001). Hip hop is a counter culture appreciated by youth with a migrant background (no only Turkish). The recurrent reference to "respects" refers to experiences of injustice and discrimination – yet often not in an explicit way. Therefore policies aim at supporting hip hop projects in order to get access to these target groups (Hebdige, 1979; Fornas and Bolin 1995;).

As young people's repertoires of participation change, the political arenas in which they operate become more diverse, including, in particular, online social networks. The rise of the Internet and new social media has enabled a quickening of political participation that promotes real time engagement in politics and non-hierarchical forms of mobilization (Bakardjieva, 2005; Collins, 2008; Vromen, 2008). Anne Muxel (2010) maintains that "young people take ownership of new tools of democratic expression and mass access to information via social networks which leads them to seek more transparency". Internet and the new media have updated the repertoires of political action, offering "the possibility to replicate traditional actions or experiment with new political influence attempts, such as sending mail to

politicians, signing online petitions, express their opinions through text, videos and photos, comment on articles online newspapers, discuss on blogs, forums, websites and social networks, join virtual groups in support of political causes, carry out protest actions online as mail bombing and net-strike" (Widmayer, 2012, 57). However, it is acknowledged that the growing diffusion of virtual participative practices among the young people is not a risk-free solution to the marginalization of youth in the political sphere (Introini, 2007; Bennet, 2007).

All these relevant changes in political and civic engagement raise new questions about inequalities in participation and the nature of political socialization (Sloam, 2014), as well as the classic questions of representation and power at institutional level. According to French strategy (2015), the interest in politics is linked to social background: the political deficit is deeper among less graduated young people, while associative membership increases with the elevation of study levels. The so-called 'disadvantaged' youth are poorly represented in participatory activities and are more exposed to the risk of withdrawal from collective and public spheres. They perceive themselves as illegitimate or ineffective and do not trust the institutions to ask as their spokespersons. The same problems of barriers between generations and class differences have been affecting also the other European countries for a long time and more active and precise policies directing power, participation and youth questions have been implemented in order to realize democracy for all groups of society, but their results have not been satisfactory so far.

The excluded groups can be easily attracted by religious radicalizations or political extremists, and express their repressed feelings through illegally participatory forms. Especially from the beginning of the new millennium, a new upsurge in protests, confrontations and riots led by extremist groups mainly composed of young people has been recorded in Europe and the episodes of violent and illegal engagement have acquired considerable relevance (Della Porta, 2015).

3. Spaces of youth socio political participation

The concept of "spaces of participation" assumes different meanings. It can be found both in reference to the abstract contexts where the participation is expressed (e.g. the political setting, the online contexts, etc.) and in reference to the physical spaces where the engagement occurs (e.g. a municipal council, a school, a street, an occupied building, etc.). These two dimensions are strictly intertwined and frequently overlap producing a certain confusion and many difficulties in the development and systematization of the debate on this topic.

As regard to this problem, Valérie Becquet (2013) distinguishes three spaces of participation: collective commitment (of groups and organizations), social movements and public action. The first one refers to youth organization and to organizations addressed to young people and appears as able to promote effective engagement practices. In addition to youth, pupils and students organizations, this space gathers all

types of collective experiences created by young people, included informal environments. The second type concerns youth movements with a general (and mostly artificial) distinction between student's movements and disadvantaged urban youth movements on the one hand and more general social movements in which young people take part. This space appears quite meaningful for young people because they tend to give particular credit to protest practices. The space of public action is the last structured space that contributes to the construction of juvenile citizenship. It has gradually emerged through the development of youth policies and the definition of youth as a category of public action (Bantigny, 2007; Tétard, 1988). This distinction is rather formal, related to explicitly political participation, leaving out many of the youth cultural scenes.

The concept of "space" of youth participation and the various settings of engagement can be described using opposite adjectives:

- *Political vs civic settings*: this couple of opposite adjectives distinguishes the spaces of participation in relation to different types of interaction between individuals and the society. While the concept of political settings is used for those spaces where citizen and state are acting (e.g. voting or other space where engagement acquires a clear political value), the concept of civic (or social) setting refers to those spaces where the relationship involves an individual and a group or a community (e.g. NGO, associations, etc.) (Baglioni, 2009);

- *Formal vs informal settings*: this second dichotomy organises the spaces of participation according to the level of institutionalisation of the settings in which participation occurs. In this perspective, formal and informal settings are usually conceived as the opposite points of a *continuum* on which it is possible to identify different level of institutionalisation. The concept of "institution" is flexible, including just the structures of the governmental apparatus at their different institutional and geographical levels - and sometimes in a broader sense, referring to all those governmental or non-governmental settings of collective engagement that have a formalised organisation (e.g. parties, trade unions, NGO, etc.) (Della Porta, 2008).

- *Public vs private settings:* the distinction justaxposes to the growing diffusion of practices of engagement acted to the contexts of private life with a more public way of being engaged which was typical of the previous decades. Today, this dichotomy is still used to refer to the different spheres of life in which participation can be realised and to the related actions of manifest or latent political value that citizens perform in the attempt to testify or promote their idea of society (Melucci, 1989).

- *Offline vs online settings:* this couple of opposite adjective clearly refer to the real or virtual nature of the space where participation occurs;

- *Local vs global settings:* the geographical level in which the participation is practiced is the basis of this distinction between different spatial settings of engagement. Sometimes geographical and institutional aspects are also combined in a classification composed of four levels: local, national, European and international.

Young people's preference for certain spaces of engagement usually depend on dimensions that are transversal to all the dichotomies: accessibility of the settings (Zani *et al.*, 2011); commitment required by the actions realized in the settings (Mazzoleni, 2003); level of personal agency allowed in the settings (Zani *et al.,* 2011); perceived efficacy of the actions realized in the settings (Gozzo, 2010).

Cockburn and Cleaver (2009) underline the importance of the promotion of attachment to places, localities and particular social networks, which can be positive in supporting a sense of identity, responsibility and relatedness. However such attachment may also be restrictive to young people's association; for young people in deprived areas, attachment to place, family and friends can provide them with social support and encouragement but can also act as a 'brake' on their seeking opportunities outside the locality.

A part of the literature on this field put the attention on the various spheres and societal sub-systems instead of different spaces. Rieker *et al.* (2015) examine the participatory opportunities for children and youth in the spheres of family, school and the community. In the sphere of family, participation is operationalized as co-determination in decisions that concern the whole family and, in particular, children and young people themselves. In the sphere of school, participation refers to items like, for example, being a class representative or a "conflict mediator" on the school playground, the co-determination of rules and regulations of the school or the participation in school events. Participation in the community refers to, among others issues, the co-determination in the planning or designing of a playground, in the creation and designing of ways to school (concerning rules, cycle paths, pedestrian crossings etc.) and the co-determination in leisure programs in one's residential district.

A typical space for youth participation are the recreational centers. In Sweden, for example, the expansion of "open activity" in recreational centers, youth clubs and cafes has been promoted since 1939 (Olson, 1992), when the governmental youth care committee proposed that these spaces had to look like a home. In the clubs, young people engage themselves in study, research on a variety of topics, handcrafts, and activities such as table tennis and games. In the Governmental report (1997) these meeting places were considered rooms in which democracy would be realized.

The growing relevance of virtual spaces for the expression of youth engagement (Marinelli, 2010; Bichi, 2013) represents a very important trend in all the European countries. New strategies to foster online participation and to create/reinforce the relationship between online and offline engagement is generally seen as a necessity

and a challenge for the contemporary democratic systems (Marinelli, 2010). Regarding the case of Switzerland, Rothenbühler *et al.* (2012) has showed that a great deal of the political activities of young adults is associated in some way with new media. Such participatory online activities are, for example, the joining of a political group on Facebook, the participation in online-discussions or the writing or forwarding of e-mails with political content. The results show a strong correlation between participative online and offline activities: young people, who are politically active online, participate beyond the Internet and vice-versa. Lüküslü (2014) seems to confirm this results when argues that cyberspace in Turkey has served as an active and "youthful" reference point for expressing powerful discontent and suffering that cannot always be expressed through either conventional politics or open resistance, although it is important to distinguish between sites for explicit participation and more implicit forms and expressions on generic websites.

4. The role of education and youth work in youth socio-political participation

This section aims at exploring the relationship both between participation and the educational system and between participation and youth work, as well as the different strategies, approaches and levels of interest in relation to the participation's teaching/learning processes that can be recorded in the PARTISPACE countries.

In general, the national findings highlight that educating youth to participate is not an easy task and that the emphasis on- and the ways of implementing educative programmes aimed at fostering youth engagement differs from country to country. Indeed, there are different levels of interest and approaches to political education and for these reasons, the relationship between education, youth work and participation is particularly affected by the local environment.

Taking in consideration a specific national context, all reports underline the existence of different approaches to promote political participation and nearly a general low interest for the promotion of participation in the youth work.

Before presenting the main findings of the literature review on this field, it is worth mentioning that there are still a limited number of studies on the practical application of educational programmes for participation in schools, educational contexts, and youth work.

4.1. Relations between education and socio-political participation

Concerning the relation between youth participation and education, the country reports highlight a general lack of educational programmes aimed at educating the young people to participation and at fostering their engagement in society, as well as the limited efficacy of the existing programmes. The main reasons that are commonly

mentioned to explain the difficulties connected to the elaboration of educational programmes to participation are:

- a general process of de-politicisations of the youth and the diffused mistrust towards institutions that would make young people less and less interested in the participatory offers of the educational system, as well as in delegating;
- the family background of the students in terms of social inequality and disadvantage, that influences the possibility of activating programmes, the actual participation to these programmes and their efficacy;
- a generally scarce political attention towards practices of participation's teaching/learning, that are usually underfunded.

Despite these problems, some meaningful examples of student's involvement in the democratic life of a local context through the school can be recorded in the different countries of the PARTISPACE consortium.

Particularly interesting is the Swiss School project "My City". The aim of this school project is to build a city-model in the classroom, including houses, shops, trees etc. In order to decide how to build the city, a city council and a president are elected by the pupils. From then on, the "elected" pupils have to discuss and negotiate about how to build the city. The authors of a recent study on participation in various fields, including the school contest, noticed that, children and youth perceive such school planning games in different ways. Some of them experience these programmes as fields of empowerment or practice, for some others they do not represent a serious opportunity to participate (ibid.). In this analysis on participation project Wittmer comes to the conclusion that in the analysed school participation project no real transfer of responsibility or power to the children and youth takes place. Instead, they merely learn "how they could participate if given the opportunity" (ibid., 38, emphasis in the original). A further critique is that the projects on political education are generally not voluntary but take place in the framework of mandatory instruction and under the supervision of teaching staff (ibid.).

In the Swedish context, schools are considered as a space where it is possible to experiment forms of democratic participation, through, for example, the formation of student councils, that are recognised as genuine "cooperative experiments". Moreover, since 2008 an inspectorate that monitors and encourages the development of curricular projects aimed at the development of democratic forms of participation is active in the country.

Similar strategies and opportunities for youth participation in the educational contexts are also present in countries like Italy and France with the building of Student Councils usually organised around two models of participation:

- a representative model based on the election of student delegates who are entitled of managing power and taking decisions;

- a participatory model organised on a voluntary basis, where students are just consulted.

Despite the fact that in each country the number of educational programmes aimed at promoting youth engagement is growing, the following issues remain unsolved:

- the gap between young individual's participation in participatory programmes inside and outside the school remain high: the involvement in participatory programmes within the educational system does not assure the participation in similar activities outside the school;
- students who engage in the school' participatory offer remain a small percentage. In the Swiss literature, for example, as reported above, one discussed reason in the problem of the "simulation" of participation in the existing programmes, which is not perceived as a serious opportunity to participate by some students.
- although the effects of the social status on the real participation's opportunities have been deeply explored in literature, these effects are rarely considered in the elaboration of the educational programmes aimed at promoting youth engagement;
- the teacher's role in civic education is not well defined and therefore pedagogically fragile of his/her role. Many teachers complain about a lack of training and experience in the field of civic education.

Lastly, in relation to the students' participatory identity and to its characteristics, two opposite voices can be highlighted. As suggested in the UK country report, in the attempt to define the students who actively participate, two competing narratives can be recorded. One which recognises student voice as a policy technology (Ball, 2001) that is increasingly used to enhance competition and drive efficiency, through the use of audit apparatus whilst positioning students as consumer leading to instrumentalism and tokenism (Fielding and Bragg 2003; Reay, 2006; Gunter and Thompson, 2007); and a second narrative that positions student voice as mechanism for empowerment, democratic renewal and pedagogical transformation (Giroux, 1986; Fielding & Bragg, 2003; Lodge, 2005; Taylor and Robinson, 2009).

4.2. Youth Work and youth socio-political participation

Over recent years, youth work and youth participation have become central elements in the European youth policies (Chisholm *et. al.* 2011; Belton 2014).

Indeed the development of youth work is currently among the priorities of the European Commission and of the Council of Europe, that propose youth work as an essential tool for the promotion of youth inclusion and participation (Williamson, 2007).

Also, all over Europe, social research and youth studies in particular are increasingly focusing their attention on several key issues connected to youth work, such as "the analysis of youth work, its history, traditions, key features and methods; the role and relevance of non-formal learning/education, the dimensions involved, its validation; the pathways towards recognition and professionalization of youth workers; the impact of the various initiatives to promote and enhance youth participation, the role of youth organisations; the strengths and weaknesses of youth policies at both a national and supranational level; finally, of no lesser importance, the relationship between youth work, non-formal education and youth participation, their roles as incubators for youth innovation and their impact on young people's life trajectories" (Morciano *et al. 2015,* 1).

However, it seems that this European and international interest for the analysis of youth work and of its relations with youth socio-political engagement and participation has not taken root at the same way in the every national context considered in PARTISPACE. Generally speaking, when looking at the projects and the activities promoting participation through youth work it can be highlighted how the promotion of youth work projects dealing with youth political participation are more widespread in countries where the "political interest" is already very high and where youth work is a more consolidate reality (such as Germany, the UK and France). This is partially mirrored also by a general scarcity of studies on the relationships between youth work and youth socio-political participation in the countries where youth work is a less defined phenomenon (such as Italy and Turkey)

Despite the scarcity of researches and studies on the relationship between youth work and youth socio-political participation, the vast majority of the considered studies suggests the idea that youth work can represent a crucial tool in educating young individual to active citizenship. Conceiving participation as an experience of interaction between young people and adults, and between the youth and adult "world", many studies highlight how youth work can help young people in becoming active citizens by supporting both their autonomy (freedom of choice, self-efficacy) and relational capacities (dialogue, empathy, negotiation skills).

In line with this perspective, other studies have suggested that youth work can make a difference in the youth attempts to transform society thanks to its ability to reduce the distance between youth lifeworlds and the socio-institutional system. In this perspective, the positive relationship between youth work and youth participation is due to the latter's capacity to operate in the middle between the intent of the social system to preserve itself and young people's aspirations for change (Percy-Smith, 2006). Indeed, youth work is the area of youth welfare, which has been traditionally seen as most open, and relying on participatory practice.

However, taking the example from the German case, there is a discrepancy between young people's declared interest of participating and professionals who ascribe their target group a lack of willingness on participation (Schwanenflügel 2015: 43; Klaus and Ströver 2005: 43ff.).

This may result from the high, formalised barriers of participation, the preference of young people for low-threshold, low-mandatory, informal styles of participation and a lack of transparency regarding opportunities (Santen and Prein 2012: 77f.; Schwanenflügel 2015: 43f.) Participation in open youth work occurs in two dimensions: (1) in formalised ways of decision-making in the institutions and of voluntary work and (2) in the informal and flexible ways of participation "ad hoc" which result from the voluntary nature of youth work (Bröckling and Schmidt 2012: 48).

In associative youth work, participation coincides largely with voluntary work even if neither professionals nor young people themselves name their use of and activities within the organisations as such (Bröckling and Schmidt 2012: 50). According to a study done by a non-governmental youth organisation, about 30,6 % of young people have possibilities of co-determination in their institution, 82,4 % describe this in a formal style, like committee-work, voting and team work, 17,6 % as the possibility to take influence by informal conversations with the professionals (Bröckling and Schmidt 2012: 50). This study shows the highly formalised style and barriers of youth work by youth organisations what is also revealed by the fact, that young people with a migration background or from single parent-household are under-represented in youth organisations compared to open youth work (Santen and Prein 2012: 76). Research findings show that informal participation by young people often is not recognised as participation by the professionals and the young people themselves, even if it is the most likely form in which they do participate (Bröckling and Schmidt 2012: 51).

In sum, participation in public institutions in general and in youth welfare and youth work in particular reflect general contradictions of current trends in youth policies and the overall discourse on youth participation. Rather than mitigating, counteracting or preventing effects of social inequality, exclusion and normalisation youth work and youth welfare thus seem reinforcing them. This reveals the necessity of a critical discussion of the influence of social inequality and normativity in the discourse about participation. Moreover, the restricted time limits of the project show the provisional nature of these praxis as well as the impossibility of creating an effective institutional network on participation.

Concluding remarks

To sum up, this chapter offers a clear overview on the condition of young people as well as their relationship with national and local groups, institutions, and communities. Despite the relevant differences across countries, some common trends can be emphasized. Statistics on political and social participation indicate that only a minority of young people have remained in touch with institutional or formal politics and, in many cases, this disaffection has had a particular impact on electoral behaviour, with a dramatic decline in turnout, directly questioning the way political

institutions obtain legitimacy in representative democracy. The component of “engaged” within the young generations has shifted from a dimension of involvement confined to parties and official politics towards more self-directed political actions and activism in associations. In particular, social activities rooted in the local communities seem to offer new stimuli and opportunities, especially where they are socially and institutionally supported.

This renewal repertoire of youth participation in Europe is facing crucial questions about inequalities of access, the nature of political socialisation as well as representation and power. All the possible answers must be considered in a complex and changeable scenario, in which barriers between generations and class differences constitute problematic elements. Considering that disadvantaged youth are poorly represented in participatory activities, more active and precise policies directing power, participation and youth questions should be implemented and improved in all the European countries, in order to realise democracy for all groups of society and reduce the risk of political marginalization.

The promotion of attachment to places, localities and social networks is generally considered as decisive for the creation or strengthening of a sense of identity, responsibility and relatedness. Since long time in many European countries, local and governmental policies have supported the recreational centres and the expansion of open activities, considering these contexts and meeting places as rooms in which democracy might be realised. Nowadays, we are also experiencing the growing relevance of virtual spaces for the expression of youth engagement in all the European countries. New strategies to foster online participation and to create/reinforce the relationship between online and offline engagement represent a challenge for the contemporary democratic systems.

In conclusion, educating youth to participate is not an easy task. All the national reports analysed in this chapter have showed a complex framework where different levels of interest and approaches to political education prevail, reflecting the peculiarities of the local environment. The existing programmes aimed at fostering engagement and education to participation are generally perceived as limited in the efficacy. What is crucial to understand is whether young people are effectively 'disengaged' or inhibited by discourses and policies elaborated by adults and disconnected by youth cultural and social environment. Over recent years, youth work has played a decisive rule for the promotion of youth inclusion and participation. In particular, informal participation has become widespread in the society and played a decisive rule, even though not recognised as participation by the professionals and the young people themselves. Why are these forms of participation so hard to be recognized? This question arises the general contradictions of current trends in youth policies and the overall discourse on youth participation. Rather than mitigating, counteracting or preventing effects of social inequality and exclusion, youth work seems to reinforce them. This reveals the importance of a critical discussion about the influence of social inequality in the debate on youth participation.

Local Areas

Introduction

This chapter introduces the eight cities that constitute the empirical base of the Partispace project. Each city is presented by some social and geographical characteristics, as well as by statistical data. Then the emergence and current state of youth participation, youth work and youth policy is described. The cities are presented one by one in order to underline the individual character and specific youth work history that signifies each location. No comparison between the cities is made, since the access to local statistics and other data varies a lot.

1. Bologna

1.1. Characteristics of the urban area

Bologna is located in the North-East of Italy with a population of 386.181 inhabitants.

It is the capital of the Emilia-Romagna region. Bologna is a wealthy city with a local economy based on a balanced mix between industry and services. The rate of employment is generally high, also for young people, though there has been a tendency to decline in recent years. The Emilia-Romagna region has a responsive and well functioning social policy and Bologna is often renowned for the quality of its services (European commission 2013).

There is an overrepresentation of old people within the population. The immigrant community makes up 15% of the inhabitants with the largest groups coming from Romania, Philippines and Bangladesh. This reflects the relatively old population of Bologna, since the majority of the immigrants are employed as domestic workers or in the care of elderlies (Perna 2015).

The University of Bologna is considered the oldest university in Europe and is mainly located within the urban center. It hosts about 90.000 students and is an integral part of the identity of the city.

Historically, Bologna has a tradition of being a participative city through its citizens' active engagement in political, social and civic life (Censis 2003). Characteristics of this are high rates of voting participation (Jäggi et. al. 1977; Putnam 1993; Colombo and Vanelli 2012), active involvement in political organizations and trade unions (Cartocci 2007; Colombo and Vanelli 2012), intense engagement in voluntary

activities (Cartocci 2007) and the presence of about six hundred civic associations and three hundred voluntary organizations within the city (Colombo and Vanelli 2012).

1.2 Local youth participation, youth work and youth policies

Youth participation in Bologna has developed in certain steps, interwoven with historical incidents and the spirit of the times. After World War II Bologna was destroyed and young people, through neighbourhood committees, took a very active part in the reconstruction of the city. Student mobilization characterized the 60's. There were confrontations with the police and the university was temporarily closed (Capponi 1989; Rapini 1999). During the two following decades the violence escalated. This was due to a political polarization of the student movement, but also to criminal activities like bomb attacks and bank robberies. These incidents caused the death of a large number of people and this is a difficult period in the history of Bologna. However, it is also a time when young people founded free radios and journals (Pastore 2013) and when the municipality tried to involve young people in the affairs of the city through creating youth centres. Since the 1990's, the activism connected to the 'centri sociale' has attracted a lot of attention. 'Centro sociale' refers to a building, usually occupied without permission, where politically aware groups gather to discuss, organize political actions and promote different kinds of activities. These are often artistic and cultural events. Together with the vast network of civic associations, these centers exemplify the vitality of youth participation in Bologna.

The youth policies in the city of Bologna refer to national and regional guidelines and are focused on six main areas:

- *Policies for work, support for employment, innovation and creativity* – this is about supporting the use and knowledge of digital resources, to promote urban marketing for example in the field of tourism, to encourage the creation of youth enterprises and the development of a creative economy.
- *Policies for culture* – to encourage young people's knowledge of the historical-scientific-environmental heritage, to include new citizens through cultural resources and to increase the collaboration between educational and cultural institutions.
- *Policies for welfare and health* – to promote health, physical activity and sport, and to prevent drug, alcohol and technology abuse.
- *Policies for the education and the transition from school to work* – includes facilitating student access to the city's cultural institutions and activities, to strengthen the character of Bologna as an educational and children's city, actions to support the teenagers of foreign origin and their families, projects and actions for the qualification of education and training.

- *Policies for social inclusion* – promotes the involvement of the wider community in the management of social and cultural complexity through improving intercultural dialogue, involving young people at risk of exclusion in paths of art education and confronting the issue of school dropping.
- *Policies for citizenship and participation* – aims to facilitate young people's access to various civic and political opportunities in the city. Important is the Flashgiovani-network, which is a website by young people that provides information about services and opportunities for young people in the Bologna area. Also includes the support of international exchange and hosting of young people from other countries, and projects of active citizenship where young people can contribute with concrete actions for the development of the local community.

When it comes to Youth work structures both public and private institutions and associations are involved. The municipality plays a central role to support the active involvement of youth in the socio-political life of the city. This is often done in collaboration with the provincial and regional authorities. The goal is mainly realized through the support of youth-led or youth oriented initiatives implemented by private actors, such as social and cultural associations, cooperatives, foundations, sport clubs and other organizations. The city's Youth Office and the Flashgiovani portal are important in this context, since they function as collectors of local initiatives and opportunities for youth engagement.

School can be considered as another relevant institutional actor/setting in the local promotion of youth engagement. Beyond fostering youth active citizenship and socio-political inclusion through educational activities, the local schools offers opportunities of direct engagement to the students in the school councils.

The local and national parties, political groups and trade union organizations also promote youth engagement through their juvenile sectors. Here young people have the possibility to get engaged in actions of local mobilization and local festivals.

Regarding political involvement, the para-political and extra-parliamentary political movements must be considered. The activities of these groups, often led or largely composed by young people, many times adopt a conflicting character that give rise to manifestations, public mobilizations, riots, boycotts, and occupations. The 'centri sociali' often play a crucial role in this context. Also, the Ultras groups of football clubs and basketball teams have recently promoted many initiatives of civic interest involving young people.

Bologna is one of the liveliest towns of Italy, especially in the field of music and artistic production. Several informal music bands and creative groups are present in every area of the city, occupying public and private spaces and promoting initiatives of cultural and artistic value.

2. Eskişehir

2.1. Characteristics of the urban area

Eskişehir means ‘old city’ in Turkish and is located in central Anatolia, connecting Istanbul and Ankara. It is situated 240 km to the west of the capital Ankara and 315 kilometres east of the global city of Istanbul. With a population of 812 320, Eskişehir is the 25th largest city in Turkey. 25.03% of the population is between 15 and 29 years old; this percentage is very close to the national average.

Eskişehir is highly urbanized and one of the foremost industrial cities in Turkey. The history of Eskişehir is linked to railways, aviation and the mining industry (borax). The city expanded with the building of railway workshops, dating back to 1894, for work on the Berlin-Baghdad Railway. It later became the site of Turkey’s first aviation industry, as well as an aeronautical supply maintenance centre on NATO’s southern flank during the Cold War. It was also the first civil aviation enterprise in Turkish republican history. Eskişehir is in fact a city of aviation, the host of Turkey’s first aviation industry.

Today Eskişehir produces 100% of all aircraft engines, diesel locomotives and borax in the whole country. The borax reserves of the Eskişehir province do not only supply the national demand, but also a main part is also exported (Eskişehir Chamber of Commerce, 2014: 4).

The unemployment rate is 8.5 %, a little below the national average.

In general, the population of Eskişehir is more educated than the rest of the country and it is the home of two public universities, with a total of around 60 000 students in 2015. In social media Eskişehir is often portrayed as a ‘student city’ and cafés and bars are understood as spaces linked to young people. Similarly, the environs of the Porsuk River and some main streets and shopping malls, make up the “youthful” spaces of the city.

2.2 Local youth participation, youth work and youth policies

During the period following World War II, two major events are significant regarding youth participation in Eskişehir. The first one is the foundation of The School of Commerce in 1958. The second one is the wave of protests that occurred following the 1968 social movements.

The school of Commerce is important in the history of youth political participation because of the student protests that occurred just prior to the coup d’état in Turkey during 1960. Ten years later, under the influence of 1968, there was a formation of radical political youth groups, both on the left and on the right side. Confrontations

between those groups led to violent street conflicts, since there were two armed camps on both sides.

One consequence of this history is that in the literature concerning youth in Turkey, participation is often understood as political participation and young participants are defined as students. For this reason, there is not much knowledge about other forms of participation and other segments of youth during this period in Eskişehir.

In the period following 1980, Eskişehir's reputation as a student town continued to grow. The presence and visibility of young people in the city increased with the transformation of the School of Commerce to Eskişehir Anadolu University and the opening of Osmangazi University. In a perspective of participation this underlines the importance of university students and their activities: mainly the university clubs and the university festivals.

As they did in other cities, the Gezi protests in Istanbul 2013 marked an important turning point for the participation of young people in Eskişehir. A student studying in Eskişehir Anadolu University, Ali İsmail Korkmaz, was beaten to death and, just like the other young people killed during the protests, he became one of the symbolic names of the larger Occupy Gezi movement.

Youth work is a recent field in Turkey and in Eskişehir. Actors and structures of youth policy in Eskişehir can be categorized in three levels:

- The national level, including local representatives and the implementation units of the ministries (Ministry of Youth and Sport, Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Family and Social Policies)
- The local level, including the various municipalities
- The civil society level, including civil society organizations, university clubs, and youth councils

Concerning the relations between the state and the local level, it is vital to understand that the Turkish administrative structure gives a very limited role to the municipalities in formulation and implementation of youth (or other) policies. Instead, this predominantly belongs to the jurisdiction of the national government and the state institutions. For instance youth policies are mostly formulated by the Ministry of Youth and Sport, whereas the Ministry of National Education mostly formulates education policies. The limited role of the municipality presents itself not only in the policy formulation, but also in the implementation process. The central institutions implement the policies not through the municipalities, but mostly through the appointed local governors at the provincial or district level who are directly responsible to the central institutions and are independent from the municipalities. In such administrative structure, the municipalities can only implement local youth policies voluntarily, limited to their areas of jurisdiction (Ersoy 1992; Ozcan at al

2008). Still, the municipalities have a place in youth work since they provide services for different age groups, including young people.

Following this, there are youth centres in Eskişehir, some of which are operated by the state organization and others by the municipality. One characteristic is that the main target group of these centres is university students and, to a minor degree, high school students.

Eskişehir is also famous for its football sports club, Eskişehirspor, and its fans. Clubs from Istanbul dominates the football scene in Turkey, but Eskişehirspor and its supporters have a distinct and important place (Topyıldız, 2003).

3. Frankfurt

3.1. Characteristics of the urban area

Frankfurt is the largest city in *Land* Hesse and part of Germany's second largest metropolitan area. The city is a financial centre and hosts important institutions like the European Central Bank. It is also an important transportation hub, with a highly frequented international airport. The population consists of 701.350 people, however, due to commuters and visitors, the day population exceeds one million people.

When it comes to young people 12,9% of the population are less than 14 years of age and 10,8% between 14 and 29 years[23]. In comparison to other German cities Frankfurt has, with 43 %[24], the highest proportion of inhabitants with migration background[25]. In 2015 the unemployment rate was 6.7 %[26], which is very close to average rate in Germany[27].

Frankfurt is a wealthy urban area and there is a migration into the city. Old city districts are transformed into new ones, often resulting in a process of gentrification, which adds to the already high level of living costs. Despite this, the segregation pattern of the city still is that people living in districts close to downtown are at the highest risk of poverty. Frankfurt has a long university tradition, but is not a typical student city. Few students live there since the rental costs are too high.

The city centre is mainly reserved for consumption. However, there are centrally located squares that function as popular hangouts for young people, especially during evenings. There are also some central parts that young people use for skating activities.

[23] Own calculations, based on https://www.frankfurt.de/sixcms/media.php/678/J2015K02x.pdf

[24] http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/migration/newsletter/148820/migrantenanteil-in-deutschen-grossstaedten-waechst

[25] Persons with migration background are those who are having a foreign citizenship, were born in a foreign country and/or immigrated after 1949.

[26] http://frankfurt-interaktiv.de/frankfurt/geschichte/fakten.html

[27] http://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/Navigation/Statistik/Statistik-nach-Themen/Arbeitsmarkt-im-Ueberblick/Arbeitsmarkt-im-Ueberblick-Nav.html

There are many places in the city reserved for children and young people: water parks, gardens, parks, sports parks, football fields, basketball courts, museums etc. A Frankfurter Pass gives families with limited financial resources discount for admission and transportation costs in order to enable partaking in activities.

3.2. Local youth participation, youth work and youth policies

The *Frankfurt Youth Council* is an important actor of youth participation in Frankfurt and was founded in 1920. The council was reorganized after World War II and in the beginning of the 1950s a new *House of Youth* was built. Nowadays the council is the umbrella organisation for 29 youth organisations that operate children's and youth work and children's and youth policy in Frankfurt. Further, the youth council is a point of intersection for the diverse and wide work of their member associations: it serves as a communication platform between the youth organisations and ensures the cooperation. They have representatives in the local *youth welfare committee (Jugendhilfeausschuss)* and their *expert committees (Fachausschüsse).* Furthermore, they are members of *District Youth Education Center (kommunales Jugendbildungswerk)* with focus on political and cultural education.

Open Youth work originates from the beginning of the 20th century. Since the 1970s it is understood as a social infrastructure for all young people based on principles of participation and self-organisation and as an area of youth welfare separate from youth organisations. Nowadays Frankfurt is well equipped with its 130 organisations of open youth work. There are 69 youth centres or clubs. Those youth centres, youth associations and other organisations offer an array of possibilities and platforms for young people for realising their own projects or ideas and furthermore for developing their own interests, learning participation, self-organisation and mediation of social participation rights. A particular feature of Frankfurt is that these youth organisations by their majority are under the responsibility of voluntary youth (welfare) organisations.

Other important actors include:

- *The Frankfurt children's office* working to support children to realise ideas concerning their environment and making the city of Frankfurt less bureaucratic.
- The project *Stadtteilbotschafter* where young people between 15 and 27 years have the possibility to realise certain social projects in their neighbourhoods by scholarships of the polytechnic foundation Frankfurt.
- The *Stadtschüler innenrat Frankfurt*, which is a local council for pupils that has been very active in current youth policy discourses.

In addition to these formal participation structures, Frankfurt is characterised by a relatively large number of groups and movements of political self-organisation on the

left of the political spectrum as well as on the right political or religious motivated spectrum. The leading democratic parties also have youth parties.

Public efforts directed to young people with certain problems or needs are coordinated through four Houses of Youth Rights (*Haus des Jugendrechts*). Here actors like the police, the prosecution and the social services cooperate. For unemployed young people under 25 years there is a special youth employment agency (*Jugendjobcenter*).

When it comes to funding, there is since 2010 a notable shift of resources from youth work into youth social work, especially school social work. The actual political and practical development is, that the available resources are less invested in spontaneous and open offers (for example open youth work), but in problem-, school-, and labour market-orientated offers respectively youth work is exploited for school and labour market (Walther 2014; Schwanenflügel/Walther 2015).

The open youth work (*Offene Kinder- und Jugendarbeit*) is also increasingly orientated towards school-education and labour market. In this way open youth work lost an increasingly part of his structures of openness and voluntariness.

At the regional level, the Hesse government has significantly reduced benefits to the social sector. This has resulted in the creation of an alternative structure of cooperation between Hessian public-sector youth welfare services. There is also a Hessian Municipal Code that regulates the responsibilities, rights and authorities in the municipalities, which supports the involvement or consultation of children and young people in relation to youth issues. However the formulations are very vague and this reflects the weak political position that both young people's participation and youth work have in the Hesse region.

4. Gothenburg

4.1. Characteristics of the urban area

Gothenburg is located on the Swedish west coast and with 544 285 inhabitants (June 2015) it is the second largest city in the country. It has a long history as a centre for industry, trade and shipping. Today the harbour is the biggest in Scandinavia, but the ship-wharfs and parts of the industry is gone. The current official policy is to change the image of the city from an industrial one to 'A city of meetings and events'. The goal is to host world events in for example sports and commerce. Another part of the policy is to encourage high-tech industry and knowledge production. The University of Gothenburg is the third largest in Sweden with 37 000 students and 6 000 employees. Another 11 000 students are studying at Chalmers University of Technology. The public sector is a big employer, however, still the private sector engages most people.

There are more people coming in to Gothenburg for work, than going out. This reflects that smaller villages and residential areas, where especially the middle-class is living, surround the city. About 22% of the population is between the ages of 16-29. Of the total population 32% has 'a foreign background', defined as being born outside Sweden or both parents were born outside Sweden. The official unemployment rate in

2014 was 3,7 % of the people between ages 18-64. The highest figure was among the 19 year old: a little more than 9 %.

The amount of new housing units built during 2013 was very small and it does not correspond to the need. It is difficult for especially young people to find a place to stay. It also constitutes a big problem for people living temporarily in Gothenburg, like students.

Gothenburg city has taken a decision to develop the city in a 'social sustainable' direction. Investigations show how residential segregation causes very different life-circumstances depending on where one lives in the city. In all respects, health, resources, employment, school success and feelings of safety, there is a huge diversity between different city districts. (Göteborgs Stad 2014).

4.2. Local youth participation, youth work and youth policies

The first effort by the city to organize a meeting-place for children and youth outside school was made in 1926 when a 'workhouse' was opened. It was modelled from what charity and philanthropy associations had been doing for almost 40 years in the city. The emphasis of the effort was on work, study and sound morals (Brange 1982). For the years to come, this discourse gradually shifted into an understanding where moral problems were changed to 'social' ones and the emphasis was put on the educational possibilities of pedagogical leisure time activities.

The first step in this direction was taken in 1936 when the first municipally organized youth club started in the east part of the city (Brange op cit). Now, leisure time activities were in focus. During the 1940's and 50's several new youth clubs were set up in Gothenburg.

Overall, this was a period of welfare state organization in Sweden and the public sector grew in importance, both as a funder and as an actor in the field. With this followed a professionalization of the role as a leader in the youth club. This was sometimes criticised, especially by youth organizations representing a long tradition where young people organize and chose their leaders themselves (Olson 2008).

Another thing affecting both the discussion and the practice of youth work in Gothenburg in the late 50's was the increasing signs of new youth cultures emerging. In central parts of the city, large groups of young people met, showing cultural looks and habits picked up from Britain and America. In order to make contact with these groups the city introduced outreach youth work. (Andersson 2014).

During the 1960s and 70s the city was very active in building new youth clubs and overall to expand the youth work. New residential areas, mostly suburbs were at that time built in Gothenburg and the youth clubs were often located there.

Young people were much more involved in the 1980s and the recognition of their own needs and values were pronounced. However, words like 'participation' or 'user

involvement' were not used much. There are a number of different projects, efforts and important events concerning young people in Gothenburg from the 1980s and onward. One was the project 'Let a thousand stones roll', which worked participatory with music, drama, photo, writing and media (Sernhede 1984). In 1989 five Youth receptions were organized as a co-operation between the municipality and the regional health authorities.

In October 1998 a huge tragedy occurred in Gothenburg when 63 young people died in a discotheque fire. A system of help and support efforts was organized many of temporal character (Rönnmark (eds) 2001). However, the five youth culture centres of the Youth Effort, organized in 2001, are still running.

Another important occasion in the local youth history of Gothenburg is the incidents in relation to the EU summit in 2001, known as the Gothenburg riots. For a number of days there were serious clashes between mainly young protesters and the police.

An important step on the way to involve young people in the political discussions and issues in the city was taken in 2004 when the City Youth Council was established. The latest addition to participatory structures organized by the city of Gothenburg is the Warehouse, started in 2011. All activities at the Warehouse are dependent on initiatives from young visitors.

The city of Gothenburg has no youth policy of its own. Instead the national policy is implied and the official position is that Gothenburg should be a city with many possibilities to participate for all inhabitants, not least the young.

The majority of the Youth clubs and the outreach Youth workers are organized by the city districts. However, there is also a central administrative unit, which organizes youth activities that stretch beyond the responsibility of the local city district.

There are 33 Youth clubs in Gothenburg. Most of them work in relation to all young people in the local area. However, there are also examples of specialization.

There are 25-30 outreach Youth workers in the city. Most of them work in local district, but one unit is located in the city centre and have a wider responsibility. The City Mission, a Christian organization that does a lot of social work in the city, also has an outreach work team.

Aside from the city there are other organizations that run youth work. One example is 'Fryshuset' ('The Cold Storage'), running for example activities like skateboard, basketball, music and other leisure time activities. Other examples are 'Passalen' and 'Utopia', two associations that see to the interest of young people with functional variability.

There is an 'Action Park' for skateboard, in-lines and BMX-cycling, which was planned together with the young performers.

There is a huge variety of both permanent and temporary organization of youth participation in the city of Gothenburg. A lot of institutions, associations and

activities have organizational forms for participating user-influence. For example, it is a routine that all schools and youth clubs have pupil councils and user councils. Also, since ‘participation is a catchword for youth-oriented activities today, there is always new projects popping up. It is almost impossible to get an overview of all this.

As already mentioned, one stable structure for youth participation is the City Youth Council, started in 2004. The Youth Council is organized directly under the Board of the City Council and it has its meetings in the same localities. Since 2011 there is also a system of local Youth Councils. Their task is to increase the possibilities of taking part in issues related to the neighbourhood and the city district.

The traditional political parties have youth sections that gather young people for political action. Another organization, ‘The Panthers’, has received a lot of attention in media the last years. It is an organization that started in one of the suburbs and gather young people who feel that they do not belong to the traditional political organization.

5. Manchester

5.1. Characteristics of the urban area

Manchester is located in the northwest of England and is the largest metropolitan borough in the Greater Manchester area. The city has 503 207 inhabitants and in total there are 2.7 million people living in the region. The population of Manchester is growing and also getting younger: over 40% is aged 25 or under.

Manchester is known for being the first industrialised city, but today much of the old industry is gone. The economic recovery and growth of the city is now explained by factors like an international airport, a relocated Centre for the BBC in Salford, the Music Scene and Sport. Football, with two world-renown clubs, has for many years had a significant presence in the life of the city. Since the beginning of the 1980’s Manchester also has had a vibrant music scene that has played an important role for alternative pop-culture. ‘Madchester’ is a widely spread label for parts of this.

There are four universities within the city of Manchester and another fifteen within an hour’s drive. At an estimated 85 000, the student population of the City of Manchester is claimed to be the largest in Europe.

Manchester has a long history of immigration into the city and still many migrants from across the world make their home there. In total 153 languages are spoken and this multiculturalism is celebrated as one of the greatest strengths of the city. Many in-migrants come from Pakistan, China and India, but during recent years there has also been an increase in migrants from the EU.

In spite of the economic recovery, a lot of people in Manchester, especially the young, face problematic social conditions. The city has a high child poverty rate and many young people struggle to progress towards social and economic independence. As a result of the housing crisis many young people still live in their parental home and youth unemployment is a critical problem. This situation affects to a higher degree ethnic minority groups, why some of these communities experience significant levels of poverty. Another two indicators of a problematic situation for young people are low voter turnout and poor education attainment.

5.2. Local youth participation, youth work and youth policies

In the 1940's Manchester was a centre for Labour Movement activism. This included cultural and social activism, with young people organising in networks. Youth Councils were established at this time and most youth projects were in the voluntary sector, linked to national movements and/or to churches. In this period, the club movement had a strong emphasis on the club as a training ground for citizenship, with the club committee a model of preparation for democratic citizenship.

The 1950's and early 60's saw the emergence of 'youth culture' and new venues for young people was opened in Manchester: a Civic centre, Youth centres and a Youth club for the first generation of African Caribbean community. Also, the first dedicated professional training for youth and community workers was established. The years that followed was characterized by social liberation with movements like the Women's Liberation, the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign and the Gay Liberation, all very present in the city. Community Service Volunteers, an early organisation, which supported young people's participation through volunteering, was founded. There was a growing awareness of the failure of Youth Services to reach significant groups of young people (often the poorest and those with most unmet needs) and detached and outreach projects developed rapidly, including a very significant Manchester organisation, the Youth Development Trust, founded in 1967. The influence of progressive education ideals was in evidence with new community based and play based projects emerging in this period, including very early Young Women's Projects.

In the late 70's new voices emerged to challenge the dominance of certain forms of (white) 'respectable masculinity' within the ethos of youth work and youth participation. Manchester Youth Workers from the Girls Work network were involved in 'Boys Rule not OK' conferences. Lesbian and Gay youth groups were established, at first in relative secrecy and University/Youth Work links were strong with significant research projects strengthening youth work in the city. However 1981 saw riots focussing attention on the policing of the African Caribbean community in Moss Side and Youth Centres played a significant role in advocacy in the ensuing period.

In the years that followed some of the key voluntary sector youth organisations was handed over to independent management committees. One was Forty Second Street, which worked with young people with mental health and emotional difficulties, had a

dual focus on supporting young people and enabling them to challenge the conditions – in family life, in schools and education, and in psychiatry – which contributed to their distress. Early work challenging homophobia in schools and families, and challenging sexual abuse emerged from these projects.

In the late 90's there was an emphasis on social exclusion that led to much open-access work being replaced by targeted work and participation projects often targeted the most disadvantaged or those who public bodies now had legal obligations to listen to. An emphasis on 'Youth voice' but also on 'Youth nuisance' with a strengthening of links to police in the City's youth work strategy in this period. Manchester became known as ASBO (Anti-Social Behaviour Orders) City and the development of 'dispersal zones' as a strategy combined with silencing of youth workers who worked for the city council.

Austerity policies in 2010 have led to Youth service closures. The development of the Youth Opportunity Fund and investment in a new generation of buildings: MyPlace Centres/Public Private Partnership, of which The Factory Youth Zone in Manchester is a key example. Following the 2011 riots Youth Forums and Youth Council re-established. Most provision now once more supported through the voluntary sector, and there is further development in that sector with e.g. Young Advisors and new forms of youth-led social enterprise, often with an anti-gang and then later, anti-radicalisation focus.

Main actors in the formal sense are most schools that have School councils. There are also Youth Forums in each area of the city and these link directly with Manchester Youth Council.

Political Parties and Religious Organisations often have 'youth' sections. All four local universities have well established Student Unions. Beyond this, there are links to North West Region Participation Workers Forum; North West Youforia!; Consultations and advice on young people's voice to public service providers; and elections for Members of the Youth Parliament are held through these networks.

Some examples of non-formal actors include Voluntary Youth Manchester (VYM), which is an infrastructure body with about 120 affiliated clubs ranging from Scout and Guide Groups, church youth clubs to medium size voluntary organisations with significant staffing. Also, Reclaim!; a network of social action, which works through mentoring and volunteering. A variety of Youth Arts Projects have bases in all the City's cultural institutions.

Some examples informal actors are a Homelessness Camp permanently under threat of eviction in the City Centre, music and performance scenes via pop-up events, online feminist activisms, Post Crash Economics, FreeEducationMcr and sports-based charitable actions.

Regarding the relationship between partners and actors, the Valuing Young People's Board (VYPB) is a cross-sectorial partnership board made up of representatives from

across the public and voluntary sectors and chaired by the Executive Member for Youth Affairs. The Board has a clear focus on improving the outcomes for young people through the implementation of the Valuing Young People Strategy and shaping youth policy.

The Manchester Youth Council (MYC) is formally constituted as a part of the City Council democratic structures. The Youth Council has a clear role in influencing youth policy and the authority to raise any issue regarding young people with elected members through the committee structure and full council meetings.

6. Plovdiv

6.1. Characteristics of the urban area

Plovdiv is the second largest city in Bulgaria with a population of 338,153 persons (NSI 2015). It is situated in the central part of the country, east of the capital Sofia to which it is linked with railways and highways.

The city has a long history and there is an Old Town situated on three of the seven hills in Plovdiv. The city hosts several cultural institutions, for example an opera and a symphonic orchestra, and Plovdiv has been elected to be the European Capital of Culture in 2019. The spaces of youth participation in the city are not very visible. Cinemas, malls, parks, the Rowing channel and its surrounding area, the Unification Square are places frequented by the young in the city.

The economy of Plovdiv is concentrated in industry, predominantly micro and small businesses. Of the workforce, 70% is employed in the industrial sector. The city attracts commuters from nearby towns and villages, and functions as a 450-thousand economy (PCCI 2015). However, the demographic development is actually in decline. This can be attributed to a drop in fertility rate, economic difficulties during the country's transition to a market economy, a rise in migration abroad and an internal mobility towards Sofia.

In the Census in 2011, 90% of Plovdiv citizens declared themselves to be ethnic Bulgarians, 5% Turks, and 3% Roma. The main religions are Orthodox Christianity (84%) and Islam (6%). The population of Plovdiv is a bit younger than that of the country as a whole; it is also somewhat better educated (Plovdiv Municipality 2015). There are four ethnically segregated suburbs where the Roma are the majority of the citizens.

Youth unemployment in Plovdiv is high, compared to the rest of the workforce. However, the overall unemployment rate is lower than in the country as a whole (REA 2015).

6.2. Local youth participation, youth work and youth policies

Youth activism in Bulgaria has for a long time been connected to the political sphere and has taken the shape of protest movements as well as being a part of a state supportive infrastructure. The National Revival in the 19th century saw the formation of 'revolutionary committees' and several mass armed uprisings with predominantly youth involvement. After Bulgaria gained independence in 1878 many youth organizations were formed having a strong nationalistic orientation. They were politically polarized and raised political issues rather than representing youth interests. In 1934 a youth movement was established by the state on the model of Hitler youth (Kovacheva 1995).

The partisan movement against the Nazi troops in the country was the most prominent form of youth political participation in the first half of the 1940s and the Plovdiv region was famous for such guerilla activities. When Bulgaria, in the end of the 1940s, became a 'People's Republic' led by the Communist Party, youth were officially proclaimed to be the builder of the 'bright communist future'. Under this regime most young people were members of the only official youth organization Komsomol (Wallace and Kovatcheva 1998).

During the 1980s, political protest led to a fundamental change of the political system and young people organized parts of this opposition. Since then there has been a number of occasions when young people has engaged in political activism trying to influence for example economical and ecological issues. One tendency is that this activism first was organized along a generational divide, but now has changed so young people can be found in both camps.

According to the Law on Youth each municipality should have annual plans for youth, however, Plovdiv lacks such a plan. Instead, the main instrument for youth policy in the area is a Plan for Youth adopted by the Plovdiv District administration in 2015. This plan starts with a declaration that it has been developed in accordance with a number of documents, among them the EU Strategy 'Europe 2020'. The main policy areas are:

- Encouragement of the economic activity and career development of young people
- Improvement of access to information and quality services
- Encouragement of healthy life style
- Prevention of social exclusion of young people in disadvantaged situations
- Development of youth volunteering
- Rise in civic activity
- Development of young people in small towns and rural areas

- Development of intercultural and international dialogues
- Rise in young people's role in crime prevention

For the implementation of the plan there is a certain budget. During 2015, half of the resources were allocated to placing young people in jobs. This demonstrates what is the first concern of the district government. The second largest share (10%) was assigned to young people in rural areas. Encouraging participation in education is literally missing and the development of youth volunteering was promoted with 1% of the budget.

The District Plan for Youth 2015 puts youth policy on the political agenda and is a move in the right direction. However, the elaboration of this plan is very superficial since no concrete objectives to achieve by the implementation of the plan are set and no concrete policy measures are presented.

In Plovdiv, as in the whole Bulgaria, there is a disarray of documents in the domain of youth policy, which makes it difficult to find information about local policy actors and their relationships. One possible actor is 'The Commission on Youth Activities and Sport', which is part of the Municipal Council. The municipal website also lists two projects: 'Plovdiv for Youth Program' and 'Youth Forum for Partnership with local government Plovdiv'. There is a statute of the Youth Forum for Partnership and an ethical code, as well as a calendar of events, but no other concrete information is provided to allow evaluation of the project.

Other actors of the local youth policy are the educational authorities, the Commission on Employment and the Job Centre, medical practitioners, law enforcement departments, cultural organizations and youth associations, each following their own policy objectives. There are no published reports on their activities for, or with, young people. The youth organizations do not keep their web sites up to date and many seem totally inactive. There is a list of 99 sports clubs, several music & dance ensembles and art centres, all with predominantly youth involvement. Finally, there is a new Youth Centre in the city with a sports complex nearby.

7. Rennes

7.1. Characteristics of the urban area

Rennes is located in the west part of France and is the capital city of the region Brittany. It is a city that for a long time have been characterized by its administrative functions and universities play an important role in the local cultural and economic

life. There are 208 033 inhabitants[28] in the city and almost one third of these are students. The economy of Rennes is rather good and the tertiary sector of the economy is very well developed. The rate of unemployment is inferior to the national one. In general, Rennes is an attractive and relatively wealthy city that never has faced major poverty or deprivation problems. However, there are areas in the city, which are characterized by contemporary urban problems like higher rates of unemployment, minimum incomes beneficiaries and early dropouts.

Many of the activities in the Brittany region, especially along the seaside, are oriented toward tourism. The region has a tradition of 'social Catholicism', which favors large interventions to struggle against poverty and inequalities. It also has a long history of partnership between local authorities and NGOs. Politically the Socialist party governs the whole region, including Rennes.

7.2. Local youth participation, youth work and youth policies

Rennes has a history of youth participation where youth organizations and associations play a crucial role. Some of these organizations are connected to the extensive student-life of the city; they promote the interests and activities of students. Other organizations have a long history within the system of 'patronages' and a third variety is youth movements like the Scouts, Young Christian Workers and the Houses of Youth and Culture. There are also youth informal organizations such as la Carpe or the antifascist movement[29]. The degree to which these different kinds of organizations actually work participatory with young people varies.

Through the years there have been a number of efforts, from the side of the city, in order to organize spaces and activities on a basis of youth participation (Loncle 2008). This has not resulted in any vivid participatory structures, but spaces for young people's initiative have been opened and there is a special funding for young people's projects.

Other results of this development are the Youth Mission of Rennes and the local youth policy. This policy has four main objectives:

[28] As of 2011 recensement from INSEE (site.apras.org)

[29] For further details, see these organizations websites or facebook pages: https://www.facebook.com/AD.Rennes2 *;* https://www.facebook.com/tandememploi *;* www.carpes-rennes.org *;* www.antifabzh.lautre.net/.

- To encourage ‘the expression of all young people’ (express)
- To encourage young people’s projects and initiatives (dare)
- To ‘accompany all young people towards autonomy and citizenship’ (engage)
- To facilitate that ‘all young people’ get access to their civil rights (inform)

The express part is about missions like promoting youth speech and artistic creation, connecting young people to neighborhood councils and user committees, supporting partaking in city planning and institutions.

The dare part encompasses missions such as helping youth initiatives in neighborhoods, reinforcing European and international consciousness and mobility projects, supporting (and thus funding) sport activities, especially feminine sport activities, valorizing youth voluntary work and youth voluntary service.

The engage part deals with missions like fostering links between youth workers, helping to create a ‘citizen dynamics’, encouraging young people’s implication in neighborhoods, helping young parents to return to studies, or training, or finding a job, raising youth awareness towards environment, increasing the quality of students life, reinforcing links between the city and the university.

The inform part includes missions such as proposing a ‘resource space’ specifically dedicated to young people, rising youth awareness towards emerging jobs, enhancing the access to training and part-time jobs, increasing the housing possibilities, developing actions of prevention concerning sexual life and healthcare system, guaranteeing the access to culture, facilitating mobility to work, informing young people about their rights

Concrete actions taken by the Youth Mission of the City of Rennes include:

- A structured leisure offer in all quarters of Rennes
- A partnership convention which allowed the development of students funds or the Zap journal, which is the first ‘youth expression’ web platform in France
- An organized program aimed at helping young people to plan leisure activities (free and without alcohol)
- Financial and material support to youth associations, in cooperation with popular education associations
- Promotion of youth’s place in public space
- To take young people into account in all sectorial of the city’s policies.

Since 2013 there is a ‘Youth Pact’ signed by the municipality saying:
‘Young Rennes inhabitants [between 16 and 25 years old] are full citizens according to us […] We must go to the young and do with the young, who must be considered as legitimate city actors […] Youth is an extraordinary source of development and hope.’

There are lots of structures and settlements where young people in Rennes can find activities and support. These include a Regional Centre for Youth Information, a number of youth workers employed by youth organizations, Community centers and Houses of Youth and Culture. There are also public bodies working with youth employment, homes for young workers, specialized prevention services, street education and various kinds of mediation.

However, the quality and accessibility of these services can be questioned due to a withdrawal of public funding. Also, the governance of these structures appears mainly fragmented, since the fact that they belong to different local authorities creates coordination problems.

8. Zurich

8.1. Characteristics of the urban area

Zurich is the largest city in Switzerland and located in the north-central part of the country. The city has 404,783 inhabitants (2014)[30] and is the capital of the canton of Zurich. Zurich is the Swiss city with the greatest absolute growth in population and it functions as the main economic centre of the country.

The average age of the residents in Zurich is 41 years, which about the same as in the country as a whole. This figure mirrors that there are just as many young people up to the age of 19, as there are senior citizens aged 65 or older. The number of foreign nationals make up to 31,3% of the population, which is far higher than the Swiss average. Most of these come from the neighbouring countries Germany and Italy, but also from Portugal and Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo.

When it comes to religious affiliation, a little less than one third of the population in Zurich are Roman Catholic and one fourth belong to Evangelical reformed churches. Another quarter declares no religious affiliation.

The unemployment rate in Zurich is 3,9% (2015) and of these 21,5% are between the ages of 15 to 30. However, these figures underestimate the actual number of unemployed people in the city, since the figures only reflect those receiving so-called ALV benefits (public unemployment benefits).

8.2. Local youth participation, youth work and youth policies

Much of the history of youth participation in Zurich can be associated with the demand for autonomous and open spaces for youth, specifically for a self-governed,

[30] According to the city of Zurich's definition of residential population, which includes all persons who are registered in the city of Zurich, live in the city and make use of the city's infrastructure (economic residential population) (see Stadt Zürich Statistik, 2015).

independently operated youth centre. This was voiced even before World War II, but for long the city of Zurich paid little attention to this demand. Rather the idea was to strengthen patriotism and promote national pride among the young. It was not until 1961 that the first youth centre was opened.

In the course of the 1960's, counter-culture protest movements came together in Zurich under the influence of human rights, anti-war and student movements in the United States and Europe (Peter 2008). After a number of youth riots and on-going demands for a new, autonomous youth centre, the city authorised the operation of such a centre, opened in 1970. However, the autonomous youth centre was closed after just 68 days because of lack of resources and overwhelmingly loads of challenges and social problems to be dealt with (okaj 2015).

Ten years later history repeated itself. New protests resulted in the opening of an autonomous youth centre. This was, however, ultimately closed by the young people themselves, due to police repression and the growing number of "alcoholics, drug addicts and youth who had escaped from foster care in addition to other marginalised groups" (Willems 1997 p. 222). Yet, in 1988 the youth movement finally achieved some of its objectives when the city's Youth Welfare Office opened the 'Dynamo' youth centre.

A general observation is that the calls for societal changes that played a central role in 1968 and that concentrated in the 1980s primarily on (autonomous and open) spaces for youth, have become considerably weaker in the 1990s and 2000s (Frossard 2003; Linke and Tanner 2008).

The city of Zurich has a comprehensive youth policy (May and Wiesli 2009) that includes diverse aspects of therapy, prevention and promotion. No single office, however, bears responsibility or coordinates all related measures. Youth policy is seen as a task that stretches across many city departments and that is to be implemented in close collaboration with cantonal and private organisations. One cantonal law that is of critical importance for the legal foundation of youth policy is 'The Children and Youth Assistance Act' (KJHG), which 'regulates the organisation, fulfilment and financing of outpatient child and youth assistance' (Sec. 1 KJHG). The law clearly focuses on deficits, but also provides a basis for extracurricular promotion and prevention (Sec. 3 KJHG).

The activities in the field of youth services, provided by the city of Zurich, are predominantly carried out by two departments. One is the Department of Social Affairs, which has a "Social Services" office that, among other things, provide counselling, voluntary guardianship and custodial care and guarantees basic welfare benefits. The department also runs the office of "Social Institutions and Operations" in which over 60 programmes from the fields of work integration, child care, housing and shelter and addiction and drugs are brought together. Another office at the department is the Career Counselling centre, which supports youth in the selection of a profession, provides career counselling and offers assistance in entering the job

market, among other services. Finally, the Department of Social Affairs is also responsible for mandating, coordinating and providing social and cultural programmes that are intended for the entire (district) population or for specific groups, such as youth, and that provide opportunities for youth participation.

The second department in charge of youth services is the Department of School and Sport. It is responsible for city primary schools, the Office of Sport and the School Health Services. It also offers professional transition and integration programmes and extracurricular music instruction.

Another municipal activity to be mentioned is the 'Art in Public Spaces' work group, which is responsible for carrying out child and youth art projects in collaboration with neighbourhood youth centres.

In addition to these municipal institutions, the canton of Zurich and the various cantonal administrations and authorities offer specific services and programmes for youth and young adults in the city.

There is an on-going discussion in the Municipal Council concerning formal political participation for young people, for example creating a youth initiative. From the seven parties with the greatest number of voters in the city of Zurich, only the Green party has formulated a youth policy.

When it comes to youth work the Department of Social Affairs is an important actor, as it is responsible for mandating, coordinating and providing sociocultural programmes. The goal is to promote self-initiative and self-organization of individuals. The non-profit organisation Open Youth Work Zurich (OJA), manages various offices in the city of Zurich that provide programmes for youth, as commissioned by the Zurich Department of Social Affairs.

Another important actor in the field of youth work is the foundation Zurich Community Centres that runs ten low-threshold youth clubs. Youth work is also carried out by associations and churches. The goals of these organisations are to provide recreation, to communicate values and to teach recreational and social skills.

Though Zurich has no youth initiative, nor any youth parliament, young people's participation is considered standard in activities within the sociocultural field (including youth work). Possibilities for political participation are also offered by the youth sections that most established political parties have.

In regards to the informal participation of youth, at this time it is virtually impossible to identify the main actors and most important conditions. As has been the case several times in the history of the city of Zurich, the search for (autonomous and open) spaces now appears to be intensifying again (Reinhart 2015). Accordingly, in the last few years protest forms of youth and young adults (in part in cooperation with older activists) have once again begun focusing on the right to housing/the city or on the search for autonomous spaces.

Conclusions

Aiming at contributing to a better understanding of the current developments, paradoxes and ways to deal with youth political participation in Europe, the main research question of the PARTISPACE project is:

> How and where do 15- to 30 year-old young people participate differently across social milieus and youth cultural scenes and across eight European cities (framed by different national welfare, education and youth policies)?

In relation to this research question, this report was intended to delineate the overall social, political, institutional and cultural framework in which the project PARTISPACE is placed and to identify the main starting points for the development of the forthcoming fieldwork.

In so doing, the report has outlined the scenario of youth participation in the eight countries involved in the PARTISPACE project through the systematic analysis and comparison of some elements considered useful to frame the phenomenon under study.

Specifically, over the chapters that make up the present report, the following dimensions have been considered and analysed:

- the social conditions of the young people;
- the main features of the national youth and educational policies, and welfare systems;
- the discourses on youth and youth political participation as emerging from some key-national documents;
- the state-of-the-art on the concept of youth participation as outlined from the main literature and statistics on this field of study;
- the main features of the local areas where the empirical research will be carried out.

These conclusions are structured in two sections: the first is dedicated at summarising the main results emerging from these analyses, while in the second the main implications these results have for the following research activities will be discussed.

The scenario of youth participation in Europe

Looking at the complex relation between young people and socio-political participation in the framework of the national and local socio-economic and institutional contexts, the aforementioned analyses have revealed the following main features of the scenario in which the PARTISPACE project is located.

Concerning **youth conditions**, the analysis of the statistical data has allowed the collection of a wide range of statistics on population, health condition, participation in social and leisure activities as well as in education.

As regards demographic characteristics, the PARTISPACE countries exhibit a great variation. The median age of the population varies from a very low level in Turkey (30 years) to a significantly higher level in Italy and Germany (44-45 years). In general, all the countries included in the project have lived a generalized process of increased longevity and, as direct consequence, the share of young people (15-29 years old) accounts for a huge minority (less than a fifth) of the whole population. The impact of migration is another relevant trait that characterizes the social profile of population. People born abroad who have established their residence in the EU state are 10 million in Germany, 8 million in UK, 7.6 million in France, 5.7 million in Italy; only in Bulgaria, they represent a huge minority (1.5%). Further information on national peculiarities derive from the statistics on transition to adulthood and, in particular, on the timing of leaving home, which reproduce cultural and historical cleavages within Europe. In 2013, median age when children become residentially independent in EU-28 was estimated in 27.2 for males and 25.0 for females. This transition occurs 4 years later in Italy, while young males and females leave parental home almost ten years earlier (at 19) in Sweden.

Regarding health conditions, high percentages of young people aged 16-29 in PARTISPACE partners declare to feel good, especially in Bulgaria. Also feelings of well-being and overall life satisfactions are quite high (mainly for 16-24 years old than for 25-34 ones), except for Bulgaria, where a more critical condition emerges. Data on participation of young people in informal voluntary activities show relevant differences among PARTISPACE countries, where 1 out of 3 among 16-29 participate in Sweden and Germany, and on the opposite only 2% of them in Bulgaria. The frequency of daily Internet access is high and not necessarily driven by personal computer (smartphones rather), with Bulgary and especially Turkey under the EU average (87%).

Although their starting points were different, the eight countries included in the PARTISPACE project have in general registered positive trends in the field of education over the last decade. With a few exceptions, the eight countries have shown growth both in the participation rate in formal and non-formal education (except for UK) and in the proportion of young people aged 25 to 34 with upper secondary or higher educational attainment (except for Sweden). At the same time, these countries

have registered a general improvement in the rate of young people leaving school early, with the exception of the UK, where the rate has remained substantially stable.

These recent dynamics have not annulled differences among the countries: Sweden, Switzerland, France and Germany continue to be the countries with better performances in the field of education in Europe. By contrast, Italy, the UK, Bulgaria and Turkey are generally positioned below the EU-28 average. Moreover, with the exception of Turkey (where – in a context of lower participation in education – young men still tend to attend school more than women), young women have a higher level of participation in education. Nevertheless, only Italy, Sweden, France and the UK show a gender gap in favour of women regarding young adults' educational levels.

The recent global financial and economic crises have severely hit the European labour markets in the last few years. Nevertheless, there are large differences in the way in which young people have been affected. Significant contractions in employment have been registered especially in Italy, the UK and France, while in the other countries youth employment rates have slightly increased. In addition, the unemployment situation of young people has also varied largely across PARTISPACE countries: only Italy, France and Bulgaria exceed the European average, while Switzerland and Germany are considerably below it. Along with Turkey, Italy, Bulgaria and France are also the PARTISPACE countries with the lowest employment rate among young people. Therefore, just as observed in the field of education, considerable differences can also be observed in the youth labour market: Switzerland, the UK, Germany and Sweden in general have more inclusive labour markets regarding young people. Moreover, Turkey, Italy, Bulgaria and France show not only worse performances compared to other PARTISPACE countries in employment and unemployment rates, but also a more severe gender gap penalising young women, namely a persistent sign of deficiency in fairness and equal opportunities.

The analysis of the **youth policies, educational policies and welfare systems** of the eight national contexts has shown that in many of the involved countries it seems that youth policy is not really a prioritised political area on the national agenda. In several cases, governments have a structure in place, but not the will to follow through. Instead of a long term based strategy and allocation of adequate resources there could be a whittling away of the budget allocated to youth policy, even in countries where the topic is supposedly popular, such as France. One typical sign of lack of political will to implement youth policy seems to be the unwillingness to fully grasp or in other ways difficulty in implementation and coordination processes in achieving a youth policy that overlaps and integrates several Ministries' duties. Instead of cooperating and working in synchrony, they each work on their little slice of the issue, creating no meaningful change.

As previously said, one of the most significant issues faced by the participating countries is youth unemployment, but the way they use youth participation strategies to try to solve this problem varies. England seems strictly against the notion, and many others seem to feel that youth policy relating to employment need not involve

any actual youth participation. Instead, youth unemployment is viewed as more of a moral than a structural problem, even in countries such as Bulgaria, where cumbersome bureaucracy impedes youth entrepreneurship, which might otherwise be part of a solution, or Sweden, where youth unemployment seems to be interpreted as something that can be removed if only employers are given enough perks. Youth work in its various interpretations – German, French and Italian – might provide a different answer, that encourages young people to be active, however, it does not necessarily provide work.

The issue with NEETs remains a big hurdle for the participating countries, in particular Turkey and Bulgaria. Not being able to provide good education, or that students are failing out of education, or that the best education is reserved for the already privileged, seems to be a common issue and a big obstacle. This is particularly the case in Turkey, where it is additionally a gendered problem.

Frequently youth policy acts on young people as an object either to protect, as in Italy, where young people's vulnerability in face of economic uncertainty is a fixed image, or as in the UK, a threat that needs to be normalised. It seems rare to find youth policy that actually aims to genuinely empower youth, and trust them to make correct decisions for themselves and their communities, even if Swedish policy includes such a commitment.

Decentralised power frequently seems to lead to greater experimentalism but also to great disarray, even within countries. The varying wealth and political realities of regions with a lot of independence leads to situations like that in Switzerland, where youth policy is incredibly complex due to all the different decision-making institutions. It also leads to injustice, where citizens of certain regions may be afforded more opportunities and rights than citizens in another.

While welfare systems vary a lot among the participating countries, the common theme across the board seems to be a movement towards cutting costs, often through putting the responsibility of youth policy elsewhere than on the state budget.

Overall, an ambivalent attitude emerges from the analysis of the national policies concerning youth, whose relevance in the national political agendas is commonly acknowledged more at policy discourse level than in practice.

The ambiguity towards youth mirrors some of the main results of **the discourse analysis of selected key national texts**, which has highlighted a general lack of a clear definition regarding the concepts of youth and of youth participation. The maintenance of vague definitions partially mirrors the difficulty of circumscribing the perimeter of these two concepts, which is naturally linked to their very large and ever-changing nature and which has been underlined by a plurality of analyses (Cotè 2000; Dalton 2008), but it also testifies a weak consideration of and reflection on the nuances of these two concepts.

As for the concept of youth an overestimation of the homogeneity of youth conditions has been recorded and one finds a lack in acknowledging the internal segmentation of the youth population, and how this relates to more or less evident forms of disadvantage (Cavalli and Galland 1993; Furlong 2009; Furlong *et al.* 2011).

Although youth engagement is the central topic of the texts considering socio-political participation, a clear definition of "youth participation" is rarely proposed in them. The lack of a clear definition could be understood as a choice not to circumscribe the complexity of youth participation to a list of actions and behaviours. However, analysing the implicit level, a rather clear idea of youth participation emerges – giving a rather limited picture.

The narrowness of the national discourses on youth socio-political involvement concerns mainly the recognition of youth practices of engagement and the tools through which youth involvement is promoted. Indeed, the national texts appear more occupied with questions about how to engage young people in pre-existing activities rather than to recognise and support new creative and self-controlled activities, Interventions proposed to promote youth engagement are often based on mere activities of information and sensitisation to participation. Moreover, the forms of participation that are envisaged in the documents mainly refer to civic engagement and to the involvement of the young people into voluntary activities promoted by associations.

Indeed, also the **statistics and literature on political and social participation** indicate that only a minority of young people have remained in touch with institutional or formal politics and, in many cases, this disaffection has had a particular impact on electoral behaviour, with a dramatic decline in turnout. This questions directly the way political institutions can obtain legitimacy in representative democracy. The component of "engaged" within the young generations has shifted from a dimension of involvement confined to parties and official politics towards more self-directed political actions and activism in associations.

In particular, social activities rooted in local communities seem to offer new stimuli and opportunities, especially where they are socially and institutionally supported. Fostering youth participation in civic and associative sphere is thus undoubtedly important to assure the involvement of the young people in the public sphere. However, the conception of youth participation as something lived *just* in this sphere, which is sustained in many national discourses, must be carefully problematized, as it appears to have at least three limitations:

- it partially proposes an idea of society and community (untruthfully) "pacified" where social conflicts are removed (Norris, 2003);

- traditional forms of political involvement (e.g. voting, standing for election, being involved in parties' activities) are almost never mentioned as spaces and forms of

youth engagement to promote and foster in. This could turn out in an exacerbation of youth political marginality (Dalton, 2008);

- the national discourse are still not adequately considering some forms and spaces of youth engagement, such as the virtual spaces, forms of involvement based on consume and art, but also antagonistic and anti-political forms of engagement, confirming a traditional lack of full recognition (Sciolla, 2014).

The literature and statistics confirm the growing relevance in youth participation of the virtual engagement and of the so-called "everyday participation".

Concerning online participation, due to the possibility of a broader, more immediate and less "expensive" use of the information provided by new media, the Ict have contributed to a de-hierarchization of the access to information and to a general increase of the possibility of knowledge (Thompson 2008). The new media have also facilitated the development of new politically defined social networks - as, for example, interest groups - characterised by their capacity to integrate subjects around specific causes. Especially among young people, the Internet has affected their repertoires of political action, offering the possibility to innovate traditional actions or to experiment with new ones. However, it must be said that the open availability of information also produces confusion and disinformation (Thompson 1998). The online engagement can easily turn out as "slacktivism", that is a lazy and sporadic involvement that does not produce significant results neither for the participating individual, nor for the interested community.

Also by virtue of the possibilities offered by Ict, youth civic and political participation is today usually expressed through activities of engagement located on the border between public and private spheres of life. Often defined as "everyday participation" (Vromen and Collins 2010), this kind of involvement reflects a contemporary tendency toward seeking "to effect small, profound change through their daily interactions, rather than shift grand narratives" (Vromen 2008, 99). In the everyday participation's logic, engagement is the result of a series of small choices and small gestures that are combined with the local and daily life of individuals and integrate into their personal life-style.

Implications for PARTISPACE research activities

The main results of the analyses presented in this report suggest a serie of dimensions and aspects to be considered during the following step of the PARTISPACE project.

Styles of participation

Firstly, despite the common rhetoric of a 'political' apathetic youth, the report, in line with current studies, suggests that young people are far from apathetic, but participate

mostly in non-conventional ways. As a matter of fact, political participation is often understood from the analytical angle of a public space disconnected from everyday life (Pleyers, 2014). Instead, many young people prefer cultural and individual forms of political engagement and experience-based, expressive and horizontal way of participation and therefore their commitment does not fit into the institutional perspective. Most of them do not trust institutions that in their eyes embody a 'top-down' approach to political and societal questions. Acknowledging all this, in the PARTISPACE project politics and daily life are not conceived as hermetically sealed compartments as they often intersect in the youth life world.

Starting from this theoretical approach, the fieldwork particular attention should be paid to the **process of broadening the repertories of participation** deriving from the new ways of being citizens put in place by the young people. More specifically, this means:

- widening the meaning of participation and democracy considering as case studies examples of different and innovative styles and spaces of youth engagement that go beyond institutional forms of participation and representative democracy;
- paying attention to the more invisible and latent forms of youth engagement, as well as to the 'everyday' practices and spaces of engagement;
- understanding the current evolution concerning the more classic styles and spaces of engagement, such as youth sections of political parties.

Participation and recognition

Secondly, it seems possible to argue that the paradigm at the basis of many national discourses on youth and youth socio-political participation seems to accord only a partial recognition of the young people as active citizens. As recently pointed out by several authors (Collins 2009; James 2011), the majority of public policies on youth appear indeed to be guided by a so-called "youth development model", a theoretical-methodological approach to young people based on the idea that the latter is something "in the making" and not something that already is (James 2011). With regard to participatory politics, the youth development model has fueled the widespread idea that young people are not "full citizens", but "citizens in the making" that need to be guided through strict socialisation strategies (Thomson *et. al*., 2004). In line with these ideas, many policies aimed at promoting youth engagement pigeonhole youth's mobilisation into rigid programs that do not take into account the ideas, the requests and the elements of innovation expressed by youth.

In relation to the further steps of PARTISPACE, these results appear to be particularly relevant since they suggest that the socio-political scenario in which the young people are meant to be active citizens and to express their participatory interest is a partially unwelcoming one. Indeed this scenario appears to be characterised by a

diffused acknowledge of the importance of youth participation for the society, but it welcomes just certain forms of youth engagement, removing from the participatory scene the more opposing styles of engagement, without even try to understand them; it considers youth as relevant actors in the participatory scene, but it is rarely ready to support and foster young people's own initiatives; it mainly understands young people as "apprentice of citizenship", that is as actors who are not yet completely ready, but who should be "educated" to citizenship; it generally forgets the close relation between participation and socio-economic inclusion.

Considering the delineated scenario, through the empirical activities carried out in the following phases of the project, attention must be paid to the **issues of dialogue and recognition** and, more particularly, to:

- the wide gap and misunderstanding between what institutions and what most young people mean by participation.
- the differences and similarities between youth-led and institution-led participatory experiences;
- the young people's interactions or non-interaction with the institutional scenario;
- the difficulties experienced in obtaining recognition and to the potential reaction to the lack of recognition from the institutions.

Participation and rights

The renewed repertoire of youth participation in Europe is also facing crucial questions about inequalities of access, the nature of political socialisation as well as representation and power. All the possible answers must be considered in a complex and changeable scenario, in which barriers between generations and class differences constitute problematic elements. Considering that disadvantaged youth are poorly represented in participatory activities, more active and precise policies directing power, participation and youth questions should be implemented and improved in all the European countries, in order to realise democracy for all groups of society and reduce the risk of political marginalization. The importance of these questions about social injustice, inequalities and marginalisation have become even more acute in the face of the large number of refugees and lone coming minor asylum seekers coming to Europe not at least as an affect of the Syria war. The integration of these to become citizens of their new country provides one of the greatest challenges in several countries, a challenge easily articulated as an issue of participation or not.

In relation to the further steps of our research, this implies a specific problematisation of the **relationship between entitlement and active citizenship**. More specifically:

- knowledge of the relationship between political disengagement and social marginalisation should be deepen through the involvement in the research of marginalised group of the youth population (such as, migrants or refugees, but also NEET and unemployed young people);

- specific attention should be placed in understanding those forms and those spaces of youth engagement that are favoured by the most disadvantaged segments of the youth population, even when they imply problematic and non totally legal styles of expression.

Spaces of participation

The promotion of attachment to places, localities and social networks is generally considered as decisive for the creation or strengthening of a sense of identity, responsibility and relatedness. Since long time in many European countries, local and governmental policies have supported the recreational centres and the expansion of open activities, considering these contexts and meeting places as rooms in which democracy might be realised. Nowadays, we are also experiencing the growing relevance of virtual spaces for the expression of youth engagement in all the European countries. New strategies to foster online participation and to create/reinforce the relationship between online and offline engagement represent a challenge for the contemporary democratic systems.

Considering the next phases of the research this means considering the **interactions between the different dimensions of the spaces of participation** through:

- the analysis of the connections (or of the absence of connections) between participatory actions carried out at local, national and international levels;

- the exploration of youth participation in 'everyday' life spaces (e.g. schools, neighbourhoods, streets);

- the analysis of the use of the virtual space and of the Internet and of the interactions between online and offline participation.

Lastly, the report has highlighted the crucial and problematic role of education and youth work in fostering the participatory activation of the young people. Concerning education, all the national contexts analysed have shown a complex framework where different levels of interest and approaches to political education prevail, reflecting the peculiarities of the local environment. The existing programmes, aimed at fostering engagement and education of participation, are generally perceived as limited in efficacy. Moreover, the analysis suggests how youth work has played a decisive rule for the promotion of youth inclusion and participation. In particular, informal participation is widespread in the society and plays a decisive rule, even though not recognised as participation by the professionals and the young people themselves.

Why are these forms of participation so hard to be recognized? This question arises the general contradictions of current trends in youth policies and the overall discourse on youth participation. Rather than mitigating, counteracting or preventing effects of social inequality and exclusion, youth work seems to reinforce them. What we can observe in several countries is that the focus of youth work efforts is directed away from open and youth-centred ways of working. Instead resources are allocated in order to form a youth work dealing with the 'social problems' of young people. This reveals the importance of a critical discussion about the influence of social inequality in the debate on youth work and youth participation.

Concerning the further research steps, these points imply the need of a deeper analysis of the **nexus between education, youth work and youth engagement** through:

- the exploration of the programmes aimed at educating young people to participation, of their approaches, practices, goals, and rhetoric;
- the analysis of the profile and the role of the professionals (youth workers, educators, teachers, pedagogues) involved in these practices and programmes.

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