EURYKA

Reinventing Democracy in Europe: Youths Doing Politics in Times of Increasing Inequalities

Publishable Synthesis of Project's Main Findings

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1. Introduction

The EURYKA project was implemented from February 2017 to January 2020 with the aim of suggesting novel democratic models to help reimagine more inclusive European politics and therefore strengthen European democratic life. Funded by the EU's Horizon 2020 program, the EURYKA project gathered ten partners from across Europe to investigate the conditions, processes, and mechanisms underpinning young people's political actions in times of increasing inequality. Core to the project's conceptual framework is understanding youth political participation as various forms of coping mechanisms for dealing with inequalities. The project thus investigated the norms, values, attitudes, and behaviours underpinning such mechanisms and how these relate to democracy, power, politics, policymaking, social and political participation (online and offline), and the organization of economic, social, and private life.

Our project was primarily based on a multidimensional theoretical framework combining macro-level (institutional), meso-level (organizational), and micro-level (individual) explanatory factors while accounting for the complexity of youths' experience with inequality and the differential aspects of how young people do politics in Europe. We also used a cross-national comparative design that includes European countries with varying degrees of exposure to inequalities and with different policy regimes (France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom).

We undertook the following methodological approaches and research activities. First, we tracked public policies and practices that promote youth participation and inclusion in each country and at the EU level (policy analysis). Second, we studied how media deals with young people and with their approach to politics, and we studied the presence of organized youths in the public domain and the claims they raise for new democratic models and for social and political change in each country (political claims analysis). Third, we investigated youth political participation by examining the networks and youth-led organizations active in the fields of youth inclusion, participation, and national and transnational democratic innovation and experimentation (organizational analysis). Fourth, we disentangled the causes behind various forms of youth political participation to retrieve their norms, values, attitudes, expectations, and behaviours regarding democracy, power, politics, and policymaking. In addition, we examine social and political participation (online and offline); the organization of economic, social, and private life; and the individual characteristics possibly associated with youths (panel survey analysis). Fifth, we tested hypothesized mechanisms that lead to young people's experiences of inequalities and to their support and for social and political change that could potentially strengthen democratic life, especially mechanisms that may include avenues for reimagining democracy in Europe (experimental analysis). Sixth, we examined the individual trajectories of young people from childhood to investigate how their paths influence their ways of doing politics. In addition, we studied how individual young people in various countries and socio-economic contexts live among and react to inequalities (biographical analysis). Seventh, we investigated youth political participation online and inequalities' effects on online participation by examining how young people use social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and how digital participation and representation may provide seeds for reinvigorating democracy in Europe (social media analysis).

Given our project's multidimensional character and multiple methodologies (combining qualitative and quantitative techniques), it produced a variety of research findings. In the following, we synthesize the project's main findings in a non-academic and easy-to-read format. We therefore deliberately omitted scholarly references, which are common in academic

writing. Additional results and more information about the project and its outputs can be found at www.unige.ch/sciences-societe/euryka.

2. Policy analysis

The analysis of policies influencing young people's political, societal, and cultural activism allows us to propose specific conclusions regarding the extent to which respective policies provide special treatment for young people and for vulnerable groups. The focus has been on contemporary policies, but the research also considered recent changes, especially regarding the recent economic crisis. Without making normative judgements, we assumed that policies that include special treatment of young people will promote their online and offline participation and social inclusion. The chosen policies cover some proactive welfare-state strategies implemented in certain countries, as well as educational and cultural policies.

The analysis provided contextual background on the institutional treatment of inequality, on social exclusion issues relating to young people from diverse backgrounds, and on how these issues affect young people's ways of doing politics. Regarding access to policymaking, the structural differences between countries (e.g., Germany's federal system, Spain, Switzerland, and the UK versus more unitary France, Greece, Italy, Poland and Sweden) provide all citizens, including young people, with diverse opportunities for political activism. Furthermore, Switzerland's direct-democracy-oriented political system provides more opportunities for political activism than do unitary representative democracies, such as in Sweden or Poland.

However, our findings have not shown large differences among political opportunities for young people in comparison to other age groups across the nine countries. Voting age causes major differences in electoral participation—for example, it is 17 years old for elections in Greece but 25 years old for Senate elections in Italy. If authorities want to increase young people's participation, then an equal voting age and the right to stand for any type of election would be important. Limited opportunities for offline non-electoral political participation (the most common way the younger generation participates in politics), rigid restrictions on protest participation, and decreased focus on civic education (as present in contemporary Spain) certainly do not promote young people's political activism. Online participation certainly relates to the issue of a digital divide between countries and across the age groups, but the majority of state authorities in the countries we studied provide opportunities to participate in politics using the Internet. The one exception is e-voting, which none of the countries use. From the perspective of including vulnerable groups, electoral rules that disallow voting for people with mental disabilities and for prisoners exaggerate rather than reduce the existing inequalities of political participation.

Looking to other fields, such as labour market activism, the participation results are relatively similar to prior research describing specific youth unemployment regimes. The focus was the special treatment of young people compared to other age groups, and the labour policies of the examined countries in general do not include many initiatives that improve the situation of young people in the labour market or of young unemployed people. Major obstacles were found in the UK and in Spain, where the recent economic crisis led to a decrease in the minimum wage of young people and in unemployment benefits. In the UK, these policies include relatively few initiatives that directly address vulnerable groups; therefore, these policies do not reduce the existing inequalities in society. Obviously, by looking for specific legislation that

focuses on 'vulnerable groups', we assume that countries have such policies. The investigation, however, clarifies that some countries (e.g., France) do not bring forward specific groups in their legislation and instead address social inclusion in a more universal way. This might somewhat limit our results.

Similar to prior studies, the analysis of labour market policies indicated that contemporary welfare states have created welfare conditions more beneficial for cohorts born between 1945 and 1955. However, these conditions also depend on the type of welfare regime because conservative welfare regimes (France, Italy, and Spain) tend to be the most cohort-unequal regimes, whereas social-democratic regimes (Sweden) appear more cohort-equitable. These judgements are based on the analysis of a set of policies broader than the set on which this project focuses. However, concerning policies that address political and social activism, our research noted that Spain provides fewer opportunities to young people in general or to vulnerable young people in particular compared to the other eight countries.

Our analysis also demonstrated patterns that prior studies neglected. For example, the lack of special treatment for young people and for vulnerable groups in German housing policies is in significant contrast to special treatment provided by French housing policies. Finally, in terms of cultural policies, the differences between countries are smaller than in respect of political and social activism, and the majority of the countries have initiatives to provide special fares and discounts for young people. Thus, young people are encouraged to participate more in cultural activism and many initiatives exist to reduce inequalities of such participation, although to lesser extent. This macro-level analysis's results will help further investigations of young people's participation and social inclusion because it provides an important picture of participation opportunities for young people in general and for young people from vulnerable groups.

3. Political claims analysis

The political claims analysis was based on an integrated comparative study of 4,500 youth-related political claims in the press (500 in each country). Following the traditions of political claims analyses, we focused our analysis on the main elements of political claims emerging in the public sphere. Thus, we identified claims' main actors, issues of interest, forms, addressees, objects, positions, framing (in terms of inequality), and the claimants' identified causes of and solutions to inequality. Regarding the distribution of claims throughout the study period in all participating countries, youth issues were more widely discussed in 2013 and in 2016, whereas the opposite occurred in 2011 and in 2014. In 2012 and 2013, the claims raised by youth actors outweighed the claims raised by non-youth actors. We observed the same for 2015, though to a lesser extent.

We found state actors are overall the most salient claimants on youth matters, outweighing other actors in all countries except in France, where youth actors prevail, and in Germany, where state actors have raised almost as many claims as youth actors have. Whereas Greece, Italy, and Germany score above the cross-national average of youth-made claims, the UK scores lowest. Nevertheless, the third sector appears well developed in the UK because it scores much higher than average regarding claims raised by civil society (i.e., professional organisations and other civil society organisations). Education-related actors are the third most salient actors. This actor category most frequently appears as a claimant in Swiss and German media, whereas we

observed the opposite in France and in Sweden, where education-related actors appear as claimants in less than 10% of their total claims. Regarding the profile of claimants' geographical scope of action, education-related actors, youth actors, and youth-related civil society organisations are usually active at the subnational level while all other actors have a national scope. Only a minority of claims were raised by actors active at the supranational level.

In their claims, most actors focus on education, followed by welfare/social benefits and socioeconomics/employment. Youth actors raise fewer claims on education-related issues compared to other actors, but they emphasize political issues. Thus, young people seem interested in political participation issues, which contrasts with contested literature on youth depoliticization and their lack of political interests. Political parties, labour organisations, and professional organisations prioritize socioeconomic issues and employment, but youth and other civil society organisations show increased interest in social welfare, creativity, culture, violence, abuse, and other issues. This deepens our understanding of young people's political interests and may indicate their orientation towards the politics of everyday life, which deserves further attention in future research.

Moreover, a cross-national comparison of the inequality-framed claims reveals that countries of the European South (i.e., Italy, Spain, and Greece) lead in socioeconomic and political inequality frames, whereas North European countries (specifically the UK, Sweden, and Poland) lead in discriminatory inequality frames. Such findings support works emphasizing the North–South divide, especially over the past decade. Focusing on claims raised by young actors, we found political youth groups and university students/young adults as the prevailing actor categories; however, the UK is an exception with respect to political youth groups' salience, and Sweden recorded the lowest presence of university students as claimants and the highest presence of political youth groups. Most other actors are national, but youth actors are more inclined to have a local or regional (i.e., subnational) scope. The only exception is political youth groups that have a predominantly national scope. Similar to all other actors, youth actors address state actors most of the time and focus primarily on education. Notably, youth actors choose political issues as the second most salient issue of their claims, with political youth groups primarily accountable for this trend.

The cross-national comparison of issues raised by young actors shows that Greece scores particularly highly in political issues, whereas Spain and Italy record the highest scores in education-related issues. Spanish youths also score higher than other national youths in socioeconomic and employment issues. These findings also appear related to the impacts of austerity measures in those countries. When it comes to the form of a claim, although young actors showed the highest frequency of verbal claims, this frequency is lower compared to the respective average frequency of all other actors. In addition, young claimants record much higher frequencies in contentious politics, with protest actions being met more frequently compared to the average frequency score of all actors. This finding, together with the increased rates at which young claimants discuss issues of political participation, provides evidence that young Europeans are more politically alert and active than the average claimant in the national public spheres.

4. Organizational analysis

We directed the organizational analysis towards organizational opportunities for youth involvement; that is, we focused on the 'supply side' of civil society organizations active in

youth issues. The organizational analysis aimed to systematically map this 'supply side' in the nine countries under analysis to better understand the possibilities young people have to become involved politically at the grass-roots level. We conducted a quantitative analysis of around 4,500 youth-related and youth-led organisations' websites in addition to a qualitative analysis of 265 semi-structured interviews in nine cities. Findings reveal that organizational fields mirror the institutional contexts. In fact, the countries' political structures clearly affect how youth organizations operate. For example, youth organizations in federalist countries (such as Germany and Switzerland) also establish multi-layered structures. However, in other countries such structures are either more centralized (e.g., Sweden) or less developed (e.g., Poland). In some countries, laws impose specific rules for associations (e.g., Germany and Switzerland), and in others a central 'charity register' exists (UK) that reflects youth organizations' appointed role. These factors (among others) appear to affect political orientations, organizational structures, the way activities are organized, and other characteristics of European youth organizations.

With these considerable institutional and contextual differences, other features of organizational fields are surprisingly similar. Similarities exist in the focus of their activities and beneficiaries and in how they try to reach their aims. Recreational activities are central, followed by education. Youth organizations also focus on democracy promotion, especially in France, Germany, Greece, and Italy. In addition, promoting democracy, values (e.g., friendship, citizenship, cooperation), and self-empowerment is widespread among otherwise unpolitical organizations, such as boy's and girl's scouting groups.

The youth organizations included in our data offer different ways of engagement. First, the high number of youth-led organizations is noteworthy; about a quarter of all websites described organizations as youth-led. This number was lowest in Poland and highest in Greece (which is related to the high number of student groups in Greece). In over 30% of cases across countries, youths were actively involved in organizing activities. Just under 70% of the organizations reported that young people were active participants, including scouts, athletes, and musicians. Slightly fewer than 60% of the organizations said they provide services (e.g., soup kitchens, educational programs, or information) for passive beneficiaries or engage in activities for young people (e.g., lobbying for youth rights).

Organizations in all countries seem to target and mobilize young people in similar ways, but this is untrue when looking closely at young beneficiaries. Organizations reported they distinguish between young beneficiaries actively engaged in organizational work and those passively receiving goods and services. For example, impoverished and disabled youths are targeted more frequently as passive beneficiaries across countries. We also found a few organizations across countries with very specific target groups, such as victims of abuse or violence and substance abusers or misusers, in addition to employment-related groups. In sum, youth organizations tend to offer active participation to youths in general (sometimes explicitly including specific groups), whereas specific groups are more likely to be targeted as passive beneficiaries by specialized organizations. This service orientation might explain why many organizations (i.e., more than 80% of the websites we analysed) did not mention a political orientation or mission; nearly 10% even explicitly identified as non-partisan. However, this does not mean they are fully unpolitical. To the contrary, the majority of youth-related organizations across all countries is political in terms of actions. Hence, they do not connect with specific political ideologies, but they do portray themselves as issue-driven.

Moreover, the interviews revealed that authorities understand youth as a period of transition and thus consider young people as having specific needs and grievances, such as asserting independence, forming an identity, and transitioning from education into the labour market. Therefore, interviewees identified the lack of affordable housing, difficulties in finding a job (or a traineeship), and the lack of leisure spaces as the main problems affecting youths and delaying their assertion of independence. Interviewees from Stockholm and Bologna also added isolation, addiction, and poor mental health as significant problems. Nevertheless, all case studies suggest that stakeholders and organizational actors understand youths as a highly differentiated population segment and thus consider their grievances and problems as very diverse. Interviewees from Cologne, Stockholm, Paris, and Geneva stressed ethnic discrimination as an important problem affecting young people and limiting their possibilities for participation. Furthermore, stakeholders in Cologne, Stockholm, and Paris expressed concerns about the spatial segregation in their cities and the stigmatisation of young people from working-class neighbourhoods.

The general perception among local stakeholders is that young people are not always interested in institutionalised political action, but they are at least interested in issues like environmentalism and protecting gender and sexual diversity. No unanimous consensus exists concerning youth participation: some interviewees argued that cities offer enough chances and that enough young people were active, but others lamented young people's lack of participation and the lack diversity in public debates. In most cases, though, participation clearly differed between milieus. One main challenge interviewees identified is reaching underrepresented segments in public life (i.e., working-class young people, migrants, and younger people with disabilities). The role of inequalities (social, ethnic, gender, academic, and even spatial) is a point of dispute. Although the majority of interviewees admit that inequalities influence political participation and recognise that young students from middle-class backgrounds are overrepresented in political circles, some stakeholders argued this has to do with interest and that some young people are busy with everyday life and thus have no interest in institutionalised politics. Others stressed that inequalities in socioeconomic status and access to education can explain the low participation levels of some population segments. Furthermore, some young interviewees and some organisational representatives argued that young people become disappointed because they do not feel politicians and decision-makers take them seriously. In these cases, youth is perceived as a form of inequality.

5. Panel survey analysis

The panel survey analysis collected data through a population survey on political engagement, online political participation and media use, attitudes and values, policy satisfaction and issue priorities, economic outlooks and conditions, life engagement, and mobility. The CAWI survey was run through Qualtrics and collected data in nine European countries (Germany, Greece, France, Italy, Poland, Spain, Switzerland, Sweden, and the UK) on the general population ($N \sim$ 9,000) and oversamples ($N \sim$ 18,000) of young people using quotas for age, gender, region, and education. Looking at differences in the participation patterns of younger and older people across various conventional modes of action (e.g., signing a petition, engaging in political consumerism, or attending a political meeting or demonstration), higher proportions of younger citizens than older citizens participated in unconventional ways, such as strikes and occupations. Unconventional forms of participation also tend to attract smaller proportions of individuals. On the other hand, relatively conventional activities, such as contacting or visiting

a politician or government official, generally show higher proportions for older citizens. More specifically, 18- to 24-year-olds in most countries tend to show the highest levels of protest. In most countries, we see lower levels of protest amongst 24- to 34-year-olds relative to 18- to 24-year-olds.

In terms of associational involvement, labour/trade unions; political parties; and environmental, religious, and youth organisations (amongst the youth) tend to attract slightly larger proportions relative to other organisations in defence of civil rights, human rights, and more. Our findings show that higher proportions of younger citizens tend to be involved in these groups than older citizens. More specifically, the highest levels of participation in party membership involve older respondents. This is also true in terms of membership in labour or trade unions and that of church or religious organisations. In most countries, however, higher proportions of young people tend to be members of organisations devoted to development/human rights; civil rights/civil liberties; the environment, nuclear issues, or animal rights; women's and feminist issues; LGBT rights; peace or opposing war; the Occupy Movement or opposing austerity or cuts; opposing capitalism and globalism; promoting global justice, anti-racism, or migrants rights; and social solidarity networks. Quite understandably, more young people become involved in youth or student issues compared to older people.

Our research reveals that younger citizens tend to be about as involved as older citizens are in communal participation, such as in raising money for charitable causes or working with others to solve problems in their community. Overall, higher proportions of young people tend to participate via online forms of political participation. For example, they discuss or share political opinions on social network sites (e.g., Facebook or Twitter), join or start political groups on Facebook, or follow politicians or political groups on Twitter. However, higher proportions of older citizens tend to search for political information online at least once a month.

Higher proportions of older citizens appear to follow the news every day, whether via newspaper, TV, radio, or the Internet, but results are more mixed for social media. For most types of social media, higher proportions of younger citizens appear to post political content, but the pattern is reversed or more mixed in some cases.

Regarding political efficacy, lower proportions of young people seem to feel internal political efficacy (i.e., feeling well qualified to participate in politics or having a good understanding of political issues facing the country). More young people feel externally politically efficacious, but a low proportion says that public officials do not care what young people think or that young people have no say about what the government does relative to older people. Our findings show that young people in most countries exhibit the lowest proportion of those who consider themselves well qualified to participate in politics; the same is true for those who feel they have a good understanding of their country's important political issues. In all countries, a minority of young people felt well qualified to have a good understanding of the country's important political issues. As such, a clear inequality exists between younger and older people in their feelings of being able to engage with politics; these feelings are clearly lower for younger people.

When it comes to political mobilization, our data show that younger people tend to report higher levels of mobilization requests relative to older people. The results also show that younger people receive more requests for political participation from close relationships, such as friends or family, whereas older people often receive requests to participate from political campaigns

or parties. Thus, young people might currently participate in conventional modes of engagement at lower levels than older people do because parties do not target them in their appeals to action and political campaigns (i.e., they are not being asked to conventionally participate). Older people also appear to receive more requests for political participation through online communities, which suggests that older people appear to receive more requests from distant organisations and communities. This might suggest an important inequality between young and old people, where older people are targeted more often for requests to participate by external bodies or individuals because they are perceived as more likely to engage and as a potentially more valuable constituency. This is another way in which old people can have greater political voice and influence than young people in politics and in decisions.

6. Experimental analysis

Overall, we conducted seven survey experiments: six vignette experiments and one conjoint experiment. They tested the effects of treatments on young people's attitudes and behaviours relating to social and political engagement, including protest behaviour. All the experiments focused on youths. However, some experiments compared youth respondents to the population at large, depending on the research question. The experimental analysis yielded diverse results. In terms of elite discourses and youth political engagement, we tested whether a politician's pro-youth or anti-youth statements affected young people's political trust, efficacy, and participation. We also tested whether such an effect depends on the ideological position (left or right) of the person making the statement and on that person's political role (in the government or in the opposition). In sum, we found an effect on political trust, an intention of political participation, and a quasi-behavioural measure of asking whether one would readily sign a petition urging the government to focus more on youths' needs when formulating new policies. The most important result in this regard is the impact of the discourse's orientation: anti-youth discourses tend to reduce young people's trust in politics and their intention to participate politically, but they increase young people's likelihood to sign a petition. The effect of pro-youth or anti-youth discourses seems to depend on the ideological or partisan affiliation of the politicians making the statement as well as their role as members of the government or of the opposition.

In terms of protest, repression, and solidarity across generations, the one experiment aimed to assess whether perceptions of repression in protest have a different effect on the attitudes and mobilization potential of individuals depending on their age cohort. In a nutshell, the research team cannot confirm the hypotheses via the inter-generational solidarity of young respondents or via the exclusive intra-generational solidarity among old people. Having said that, the research team observed discontinuities in the mobilization potential of mobilization agents depending on their age and on whether there was repression in a protest event; the potential also depended on the eventual age of the target of such repression.

Regarding the influence of police brutality on youths' political participation, the analyses show that reading a story about a police celebration day did not impact youths' engagement compared with the control group. Therefore, the main factor influencing the willingness to participate in politics is the brutality of the police—not its presence in the socio-political sphere. This relationship's direction turned out to be opposite from the direction we had assumed: young persons, instead of being frightened by the police and thus avoiding political engagement, have begun to declare more willingness to participate, but only in specific actions. These actions

were signing a petition, making statements on the Internet regarding local and political issues, and participating in a demonstration that may result in destroying property and fighting the police. The opposite result of the experimental manipulation (so in accord with our assumptions) appeared only in regard to donating money for social actions. It seems that young persons engage in politics if they learn of authorities unjustly treating members of society with no consequences from the government (e.g., the police officers in the fictitious survey prompt were not punished for their brutality). This conclusion aligns with system justification's negative influence on participation; that is, if we believe that our society and government give everyone what they deserve, there is no need for change.

We also examined the existing correlation between blame attribution and forms of political participation in Switzerland, specifically in the French-speaking part. The research team tested whether respondents would choose a certain type of political participation while knowing and foreseeing an actor and its corresponding political arena via an experimental protocol including six groups subjected to different treatments. The findings show how types of political practices correlate depending on which actor respondents want to blame. However, the low frequencies in the treatments must be underlined because only half of the sample was exposed to six treatments.

Regarding the effects of perceptions and misperceptions of inequality on youths' social trust and political engagement, the online experiment's main hypothesis predicted that inequality priming would lower social cohesion perception and lower social trust and intention towards political participation. The results refuted this hypothesis; inequality priming yielded higher political engagement (but not higher political engagement attitudes) compared to equality priming and higher interest in politics. Higher inequality priming was associated with lower happiness, as one may expect, further supporting the priming effect. This finding has implications for understanding motivational priming in youths and in a country like Greece. The results did not seem to differ meaningfully between youths and older groups. The country's cultural mandate may equally influence how young and old persons attribute causes of inequality and how they affect intentions and attitudes towards political engagement.

Looking at peer pressure and political action, results show that country-specific dispositions and attitudinal dispositions are more important than peer pressure. Concerning demonstrative protests, dissuasive pressure from peers leads respondents to insist on the personal readiness to participate, while persuasive pressure reinforces these dispositions. In this sense, respondents tend to subscribe to the idea that protesting is an act of individual freedom that ultimately enables them to resist peer pressure. Finally, individuals' likelihood of allowing specific kinds of demonstration depends on demonstrations' level of violence and mobilizing groups, and especially on the difference between the young and older respondents. In this respect, our results show that in the three examined countries (Germany, Spain, and Sweden) the expected violence of a demonstration strongly related to the probability of allowing such demonstration to take place. The perceived illegitimacy of violent protests is not new, but we show that no significant differences exist among young and older people in this respect. In sum, despite presenting only a fraction of the analysis, we conclude that the experiment has worked well. The randomization of the demonstration profiles and the attribute levels functioned, and the control variables (i.e., the timing and location of the demonstration) had no effects on the probability of allowing the demonstration.

7. Biographical analysis

Through in-depth interviews, the biographical analysis collected a large variety of data concerning the lives, daily routines, and major events and experiences faced by young politically active people. The target population was young individuals who identify as members of different organizations or groups involved in socio-political activities. The fieldwork's timeframe varied in the different countries, but overall it ran from February 2018 to January 2019. The 252 digitally recorded interviews lasted from one to two hours each, and participants gave appropriate consent.

Regarding life before participation, the fieldwork showed that similarities overshadow differences when looking at respondents' primary socialization. They generally seem not to have experienced any majorly challenging domestic or public situations. Therefore, the generational conflict hardly emerges as relevant across our respondents' first socialization. Most respondents come from middle-class families, and they grew up in generally permissive and supportive families. Outside the domestic sphere, the respondents were first socialized during daily time at school and via their engagement in sport and cultural activities. Regarding social relationships, the vast majority of respondents highlighted friendship among peers as an important asset during their primary socialization. This provided them with a resource to support their growth, subjectification, identity-building, and self-awareness.

In the political socialization process, respondents shifted during adolescence from being generally interested in political issues or not showing interest at all to gradually having similar political socialization processes at home and at high school during some important turning points. This shared process first involves having opportunities to talk about politics at home. At school, they then experience opportunities for collective action, such as participating at demonstrations, public events, school occupations, and so on. The experience of respondents with parents born in another country is somewhat different. These respondents were socialized into politics through discussions about their parents' home country. Most respondents said they shared their families' political standing. Only a few respondents' parents somehow opposed their political involvement. In some cases, charismatic teachers were mentioned as having a key role in respondents' political socialization by stimulating conversation on current political affairs or by proposing influential books. Being a student representative, either at the class or school level, was mentioned by respondents as a step in their political socialization. Student representation provided early experiences, evoking or strengthening an interest in politics and placing them in a better position in terms of skills (i.e., taking up responsibilities and liaising with administrative bodies and institutions) and resources, which would prove fundamental for the next step of mobilizing in an organization/group later.

Respondents' narratives suggest continuity between the previous politicization phase and their first mobilization in an organization/group. For the large majority of respondents, the motivation driving their mobilization was finding a vehicle that would allow them to produce a better society in a practical way. Public events (i.e., demonstrations, strikes, and occupations) and places (i.e., assemblies, squats, and organic markets) were important arenas for the respondents' self-engagement or for the direct recruitment of organizations/groups. From respondents' accounts, we deduced they have generally engaged in a wide range of political action repertoires over time, from election campaigning to demonstrations and direct social actions. Sustained participation is supported, according to respondents' histories, by personal connections within their respective organizations/groups and by finding a community of like-minded people with whom they share common concerns. In addition, sustained participation

involves continuous interest in the activity of the organization/group and satisfaction with their position within the organization/group, which makes them feel responsible towards the organization/group or towards society in general. The meaning it gives to their lives, the opportunity to learn more about society and gain knowledge and skills, seeing their engagement produce social impact, and young people's availability can also sustain their participation.

Finally, the respondents—from all of the countries and from various types of organizations/groups—seem to recognize the profound personal impact (usually narrated in a positive way) that political activity has had on their lives. Through participation, respondents said they acquired various skills, became more sociable and self-confident, and matured. In addition, they became more pragmatic in their political stances to achieve major outcomes, changed their priorities, and found new knowledge. On the other hand, some of the respondents suggested that participation had been an obstacle to their circle of close friends outside their organization/group. Nevertheless, the great majority of respondents declared they were willing to continue participating in politics, but only if it remains compatible with changes in their lives. Given that political participation is conceived as the most important part of their futures for a sizeable minority of our respondents, it is viewed as something that would fit around their future life activities.

8. Social media analysis

The social media analysis concerned how social inequalities manifest via the way young people actively use social media for political purposes. The analysis centred on Twitter. The goal was to see how young people in these nine countries participate and interact in the public debates around two important issues: the climate crisis and feminism. To make data retrieval operational, two case studies were selected: Twitter's debates on #ClimateStrike (a global movement, studied at the country/language area level) and the local movements on feminism occurring in each country/language area.

The social media analysis faced two important challenges regarding the project's development: (a) We had no direct access to the personal data (e.g., age, gender, or geographical location) of Twitter and Facebook users, and (b) traditional tools of social media analysis do not deliver data representative of plurilingual realities. Statistical inference tools have a bias towards dominant languages and groups. The main challenge was proposing a data collection and analysis methodology for a cross-country study covering nine European countries and creating datasets and results for each country. This implied a special effort to account for the intrinsic differences between the countries' scenarios and the issues associated with special cases.

We thus had to define special strategies to deal with countries that cannot be identified via a language (e.g., the UK, because English is spoken at a global level; Spain, with Spanish widely spoken in many Latin American countries; or Switzerland, where various spoken languages overlap with other countries). In these cases, the ability to detect the country from the user location indicated by the users was essential to filtering messages and users by country. We also had issues collecting sufficient data from Greece, so we combined different criteria to create the dataset. Then, a critical point was developing a demographic analysis of inequalities without any demographic metadata being explicitly associated to users. Therefore, inferring demographic data for each Twitter account through state-of-the-art methods was fundamental for a deeper analysis of inequalities across countries while accounting for users' age and gender.

As expected according to previous literature, we observed more men in the debates. This is generally true for the number of users involved and for activity and centrality levels. Overrepresentation of men is also the case in the debate about feminism for several countries, even though one could naturally assume women's major involvement. Women tend to be a minority, and their homophily (i.e., a higher preference for interaction with other women) is higher than men's preference for interacting with other men. Two countries from Southern Europe present an exception; in Italy and in Spain, women have a comparable presence to men in the debate on climate change and make up the majority of participants in the debate on feminism. In these countries, women tend to have a neutral preference (i.e., no preference for interacting with other women), whereas men sometimes have a higher homophily in the Spanish debate on feminism, where they are a minority.

The analysis of gender inequalities unveils that men are a majority in most networks on climate change and tend to be more active and central in these conversations, apart from the cases of Spain and Italy. In the networks built for feminism, women often tweet less but are equally or more central than men in mentions and retweets. This is the case for most countries, and especially for Spain, where women's centrality overcomes men's centrality by a big gap. These phenomena are even more marked when we restrict the analysis to users younger than 30.

Beyond gender, we also found results for age difference; however, results in this case are less representative because age ranges could only be inferred with sufficient accuracy for a minority of users, so the underlying patterns may remain partly uncaptured. In the project's scope, we could perform analyses and show results based on some relevant variables for all countries. The research team chose to focus on two relevant demographic variables (i.e., age and gender) and two main metrics quantifying activity and centrality (i.e., the number of tweets and the indegree in the interaction networks, respectively).

Further analyses could involve other variables. On one hand, further metrics of individual relevance or centrality computed for each user (e.g., page rank, outdegree, or k-index) in the interaction networks would be helpful. On the other hand, further user attributes retrieved or inferred for each user would be valuable, such as whether a user is an organization (as estimated through the M3 inference library for inferring demographic information), their seniority (based on the registration date or on the total number of tweets posted), their influence in the social network (in terms of number of followers), their growth in the number of followers during an observation period, and their geographic location.

9. Conclusion

To conclude, the EURYKA project was based on a robust comparative, multidimensional, and interdisciplinary research approach designed to conceptually and empirically enhance the understanding of inequalities and of young people's ways of doing politics. The project generated impacts in at least three areas. First, it provided a critical assessment of current democratic practices to build more inclusive and reflective societies and to reinvigorate democracies across Europe. Second, it empowered young people through participation in knowledge-sharing events such as a summer school, the project priority action roundtables, and the democracy summer camp. Third, the project improved the problem-solving capacity of civil society actors and policymakers by developing policy recommendations for more inclusive and reflective societies and by reinvigorating democracies in young people's views.

These impacts were achieved through a variety of the project's research findings. The main points are worth recalling as a way of concluding this synthesis of the project's main findings. First, young people are least often considered a group that deserves specific policy measures. As a result, they lack institutional opportunities for political participation. Second, young people are most often passive objects rather than active subjects of interventions in the public domain. As a result, they also lack discursive and institutional opportunities for political participation. Third, young people are often sceptical of traditional politics, but many participate in less institutionalized forms. Therefore, there is complementarity rather than substitution between institutional and grassroots politics. Fourth, politically active young people often share their family's political standpoint, which underscores socialization's key role in their political engagement. Fifth, active young people often take something positive from political participation. Thus, such participation has a deep, personal impact.

The project's findings led to policy recommendations, especially those targeting young people with fewer opportunities. Such recommendations are presented in a separate document more specifically from the prescriptive analysis we conducted in the project, along with additional research findings. Let us recall the key recommendation resulting from that analysis. First, the participants between 18 and 35 years old have suffered the most of all age groups, from the economic and political crises of the past decade to a need for holistic and generation-specific policy measures to address new inequalities. Second, the younger generations are at a structural disadvantage when participating in politics and in public debate; a diversity of young people should be encouraged to take leading and decisive roles in debates about the future of Europe and the future of politics and society in each country to address this structural disadvantage. Third, even after the worst of the economic crisis has past, young working people will be significantly disadvantaged due to short-term contracts, weaker protection of rights, and weaker unionization. Therefore, policymakers must empower young working people to defend and advance decent working conditions and job security at regional and national levels by prioritising young workers in the European Labour Authority and creating youth ombudsmen. Fourth, young people have successfully placed combatting climate change and protecting the environment at the top of the political agenda, and European democracy has an interest in young people being politically empowered to play a leading and decisive role in how it meets these challenges. Fifth, young people are asking for more and better political and civic education to prepare them to participate equally in politics. European countries and institutions have a strong interest in helping young people practice democracy at school and in civil society organisations while learning about the history of political change.