



EURYKA

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

**Integrated Report on Organisational Analysis
(Deliverable 3.3)**

Workpackage 3: Organisational Analysis

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Executive Summary

The main objective of this work package was to collect data on the organisational opportunity structures for young people in nine European countries using qualitative and quantitative methods and providing comparative accounts of how young people engage. We specifically aimed to highlight inequalities and key aspects of young people doing politics on the meso-level, that is, with respect to organisational infrastructure within and across different European countries.

Mapping the Organisational Fields: Key Results from the Quantitative Analysis

- Historical trajectories are central to understanding national contexts of opportunities for young people: New organisations were often established in the wake of political transformations and, hence, incorporate specific historical legacies. Related to this, the relative age of youth organisations (YO) in Northern Europe contrasts with Poland and the Southern European countries.
- The political structure clearly impacts how youth organisations are operating: In federalist countries like Germany and Switzerland, youth organisations also establish multi-layered structures, whereas in other countries, such structures are either more centralised (for example, Sweden) or less developed (for instance, Poland).
- The aims that youth organisations highlight as their focus of activities, as well as patterns of beneficiaries, activities, and how they try to reach their aims, are surprisingly similar across countries. Recreational activities are central, followed by education. Focusing on democracy promotion, as well as the promotion of values (for instance, friendship, citizenship, cooperation) and self-empowerment are also widespread among otherwise non-political organisations like the scouts.
- Almost 26% of all coded websites described the youth organisations as being youth-led. Moreover, in more than 30% of the cases across countries, youth are actively involved in coordinating their organisations' activities. Just short of 70% of the coded websites report that young people are active participants, including scouts, athletes, and musicians.
- Just under 60% of the organisations say they provide services for passive beneficiaries (such as soup kitchens, educational programmes, or by providing information), or engage in activities for young people (like lobbying for youth rights).
- Youth organisations tend to offer active participation to youth in general (sometimes including specific groups explicitly), whereas specific groups are more likely to be targeted as passive beneficiaries by specialised organisations.

- More than 80% of the websites analysed did not mention any political orientation, while another 9.4% explicitly defined themselves as non-partisan. The majority of YO across countries in our sample are not unpolitical in their actions (see Table 13) and while they do not connect with specific political ideologies, they do portray themselves as issue driven.

Understanding Opportunities and Restrictions: Key Results of the Qualitative Interview

Analysis

- Authorities understand the period of youth as one of transition, and recognise some of their specific needs: asserting independence, forming an identity and entering the labour market. The main obstacles delaying these processes are: the lack of affordable housing, difficulties in finding a job (or a traineeship) and the lack of spaces for leisure. Other salient problems are: isolation, addiction and poor mental health, but also spatial segregation in their cities and the stigmatisation of young people from some working-class neighbourhoods.
- The general perception is that young people are not always interested in institutionalised political action, but they are at least interested in issues such as environmentalism and protection of gender and sexual diversity.
- There is no unanimous diagnosis when it comes to youth participation: Some interviewees argued that the cities offer enough chances and that enough young people were active, while others lamented the lack of participation of young people and the lack diversity in public debates.
- Participation is different between milieus. Still, the role played by inequalities (social, ethnic, gender, academic and even spatial) is a point of dispute. While the majority of interviewees admits that inequalities influence political participation, some of the stakeholders argued this has more to do with interest.
- Social media and digital mechanisms of participation were mentioned as innovative ideas to increase youth participation, reduce logistical hurdles, explore creativity and allow for more horizontal communication.
- Further instruments for promoting participation are: information and activities in foreign languages targeted at young refugees and new migrants; decentralising activities and engagement in participatory budgeting as strategies to tackle the lack of participation in different (in particular, deprived) districts; creative initiatives (for example, mock elections) as attempts to get young people interested in electoral politics.

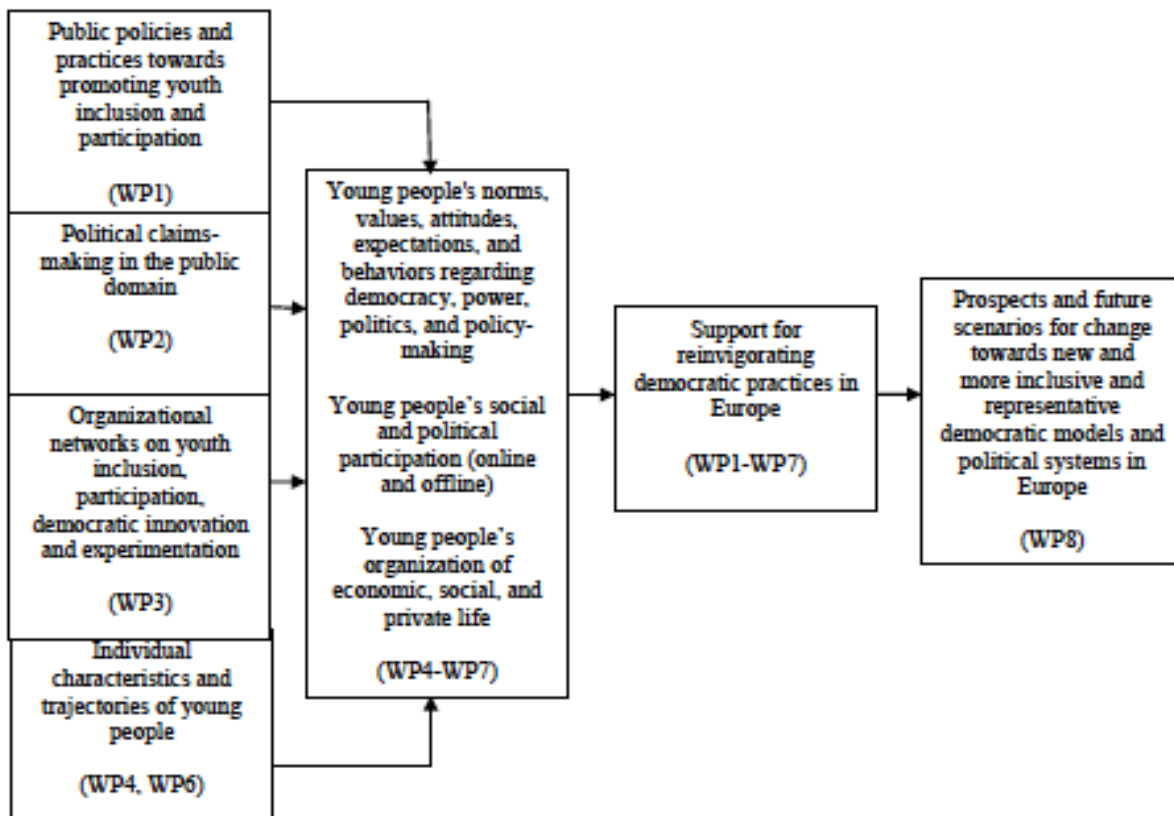
Methods Used and Data Base

- Research was based on a quantitative analysis of 4,500 websites of youth-related organisational fields in the nine countries under discussion, and a qualitative analysis of 270 semi-structured interviews in nine cities. Data are not fully representative of the total population, but provide important insights into the field.

Objectives of the Organisational Analysis

This work package aimed to look into young people's ways of doing politics by investigating youth involvement in organisations. In other words, we were interested in the organisational opportunity structures for young people and how they differ between countries. The work package and consequently our research strategy aimed at mapping and describing the networks and activities of organisations that are active in the field of youth and at youth-led organisations engaged in activities of social and political inclusion of diverse youth groups, for instance, when considering gender, educational level, class and ethnic belonging. Last but not least, we endeavoured to collect examples of democratic innovation and experimentation at national (including local) and transnational levels. Compared to the other parts of Euryka's work-plan, Work Package 3 intended to grasp the meso-level dimension (see Figure 1 for an overview of the different work packages or WPs).

Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the research and relation to workpackages



WP3 was designed in particular to reconstruct the patterns of the organisational field (goals, activities, constituencies, networks) to learn more about the opportunities that civil society organisations may provide for enacting democracy and elaborating different models of

representation (including digital), and participation in decision-making within countries. We set out to examine which organisations are active in each country and how relevant these organisations are in terms of size, population coverage, territorial density, and so on. We were interested in their goals, methods and activities, what networks they have built among themselves, and how important young people are within the organisations in terms of membership, goals, activities and identities. Moreover, we wanted to investigate positive impacts on the reduction of inequalities and the promotion of alternative politics and models of democracy young people can achieve through the organisations. In sum, we were interested in:

- organisational features of youth organisations
- organisations' resources for participation
- organisations' values and aims
- a cross-country comparison of possibilities for youth to become active
- aspects of (social, economic, gender, ethnic) inequality and how they relate to political participation

We divided the tasks in this work package into two parts, one consisting of the coding of a sample of websites of youth organisations in each of the countries covered by EURYKA (namely France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK), the other one consisting of a series of interviews in an urban region selected in each of the respective countries. With this combination of methods, we aimed at providing both a representative assessment of the organisational opportunity structure in each country, including a mapping and network analysis of youth organisations, and in-depth studies of how young people engage in youth organisations, how they use existing opportunities for participation, and how they perceive inequality and cope with different dimensions of inequality. Part I of this report will provide the reader with results from the website analysis; Part II consists of case study reports for each country based on the interviews conducted.

PART I – Website Analysis

Report by: Johannes Kiess and Christian Lahusen

Introduction

The main objective of this work package was to collect data on the organisational opportunity structures for young people in nine European countries using qualitative and quantitative methods, and providing comparative accounts of how young people engage. Part I of the work package employed a quantitative Action Organisation Analysis that focuses on identifying unmediated activism, including formal and informal organisations, offering sufficient information for a systematic analysis following political events and protest case analysis, on the basic features of Action/Solidarity Organisations, using hub-websites. The unit of analysis was defined as Youth-related or Youth-led Organisation (YO), namely, a collective body/unit which organises youth and voices claims in one or various issue fields and forms of activity – as depicted through the organisation’s website. Coders in nine European countries underwent rigorous training and coded 500 websites per country following a common codebook. The resulting dataset consists of 4,500 youth organisations, including a great variety of types of organisations and national contexts for the explorative analysis of the supply side of youth engagement.

In the following, we first describe our methodology and the academic background of this study. In the subsequent section, we describe our database and the differences between countries regarding field access, sampling strategies, and coding experiences. We then turn to a descriptive analysis of the key variables of our dataset. In the conclusion, we summarise our main findings and discuss limitations and possible consequences for the future use of this data.

Methodology: A Cross Country Online Mapping and Assessment of Youth Organisations

Methodological Approach

The analysis on which this report is based followed a relatively new methodological approach (see the following: Kousis, Giugni and Lahusen, 2018). The method of Action Organisation Analysis builds on protest events (Tilly, 1978), protest case (Kousis, 1998, 1999), and political claims analysis (Koopmans and Statham, 1999), taking into account the rise of online sources and new

ways in which people interact and participate in politics. The approach has recently been created and applied in two cross-national projects, namely LIVEWHAT, funded through the Framework Programme 7, and TransSOL, funded by the Horizon 2020. This approach aims to:

- identify and encompass a ‘population’ of unmediated online digital activism
- include formal and informal groups
- offer sufficient information for a systematic analysis following political events and protest case analysis

by

- focusing on the basic features of Action/Solidarity Organisations and
- using hub-websites

The unit of analysis is the:

- formal or informal group or organisation (for example, producer-consumer initiatives, cooperatives, self-help groups, non-governmental organisations)
- engaging in strategic contentious and/or noncontentious collective actions in the public sphere with claims on behalf of their beneficiaries or participants, about their interests (for instance, economic and/or social/cultural well-being)
- neither operated nor exclusively supported by mainstream economic and political organisations—that is, corporate, state, or EU-related agencies

The unit of analysis in this specific study is the Youth-related or Youth-led Organisation (YO), namely a collective body/unit which organises youth and voices claims in one or various issue fields and forms of activity – as depicted through the YO website. The contentious or non-contentious activity is given when the website is available and describes, even very basically, what the organisation does for young people or what young people do in the organisation, respectively. We include youth-led (group leaders/main persons are young people) and other youth-related organisations (for example, professionally run by adults, offering services/activities for youth) to cover various passive and active forms of engagement. In addition to the website analysis, automatic retrieval of online content provided us with word counts, most frequently used words, links to partner organisations listed on each youth organisation’s website, and the social media channels of each organisation.

The mapping of youth organisations was organised into two stages. First, each participating team gathered information on the country-specific organisational field based on various sources, such as public documents, academic literature and explorative interviews with experts and practitioners. Secondly, we conducted a systematic data retrieval of the active organisations to construct a “universe” of all relevant organisations. This was accomplished, on the one hand, by using available

hubs, such as European umbrella organisations (e.g. <http://www.youthforum.org/about/member-organisations>), databases (for instance, https://europa.eu/youth/evs_database), official information made available by governments and institutions (such as the charity registry in the UK), and national umbrella organisations like the Bundesjugendring (Federal Youth Ring) in Germany. On the other hand, we searched Facebook with keywords (youth, young, student, and various permutations of these depending on the languages of the countries included) for organisations' pages to expand the variation of organisations, groups, and initiatives. Both sources were data crawled automatically using scripts developed by a subcontractor¹ with expertise in data mining. The hub websites were searched for links to partner organisations, and Facebook pages of youth organisations were identified and compiled into a list for each country.

To build one uniform dataset available for statistical analysis, we only coded websites. Organisations identified via Facebook were only coded if they provided a link to a website outside Facebook. This has the disadvantage of excluding some of the less formal organisations, in particular, local branches of, for example, political party's youth wings, trade unions, and so on. We address this and important country differences in this regard below. In addition to providing us with a uniform dataset (Facebook pages would have provided different information compared to normal websites), our final data set is independent of Facebook. During the project's lifetime, Facebook has imposed rigorous restrictions on using API, this and other recent data protection measures by Facebook make it increasingly difficult to automatically search and retrieve information. Moreover, our decision to focus on www websites rests on the presumption that the websites, and how organisations present themselves on these platforms, are accessible to young people without having a Facebook membership. Last but not least, we had the opportunity of coding additional variables (for instance, links to other organisations, different structures/opportunities of the websites, documents like annual reports, and the like) which would not be available on social media pages. Regarding the hubs and Facebook pages, we sought technical support to retrieve the website URLs and Facebook pages, respectively. This task was subcontracted but closely supervised. Close collaboration was necessary because of the language sensitivity of the task, difficult and differing structures of hubs across countries, and the institutional variance across countries. We address these difficulties below in more detail. The subcontractor provided us with two lists, one deriving from the hub websites, one deriving from the keyword search of Facebook pages. Both lists contained noise (mostly dead links, government bodies, commercial organisations, non-youth related organisations) and were not fit for any type of analysis. One substantial part of the subsequent work

¹ The company responsible for these tasks was Eurecat, based in Spain: <https://eurecat.org>.

by the coders in each country was, therefore, to select the websites following our requirements as specified in the codebook. According to this, a youth organisation's website was coded if:

- it focuses – through its goals, activities and/or constituencies – on youth (in general or on specific youth groups) and/or is led by youth (see the same logic in WP2)
- it has social or political topics, aims, repertoires of actions, even if the main goals are cultural or leisure related (such as sports clubs with a political agenda, the scouts emphasising empowerment, culture groups that help refugees)

Cases excluded were:

- state entities as leaders/sole organisers (for instance, municipalities, schools, universities, and so on), organisations that are part of the (local) administrations
- profit-oriented, economic entities as leaders/sole organisers (for example, companies run by youth or selling products to/for youth)

Our dataset aims at comparing the organisational opportunity structures for youth engagement across countries. However, we provide methodological notes for each country separately below that help to explain the data; we also need to point out some general restrictions and difficulties. First of all, not only do youth policies differ between countries (see the report for work package 1 of this project), but also institutional contexts. First of all, this means the issue of state involvement. While we find some sort of youth departments on different spatial levels in all countries, their coverage, resources, and involvement differ widely. In some countries, youth clubs are part of the municipalities and were, therefore, excluded from our analysis when this was indicated, while in other countries, such youth clubs are organised by the civil society (however, often the state or the municipality is the main funding source). This should not lead to the assumption, of course, that state-oriented frameworks provide fewer opportunities for young people. Furthermore, in some countries, we found a highly institutionalised civil society with corporatist structures (for example, Germany), or a central registry for all organisations with charitable goals (such as the UK), while in other countries, we have similar well-mobilised civil society but less formal structures (like Italy), or a less-well organised civil society in general (for instance, Poland and Greece). Such differences were apparent in the research process and biased our data. Any interpretation needs to keep these issues in mind. Second, in some countries, we have strong umbrella organisations that we used as hubs, whereas in other countries, these did not exist (especially in Poland and Greece). This results in some over- or under-representations of specific groups (such as the scouts). While there was no straightforward way of avoiding such biases, we still hold what the most (online) visible organisations are in each country, and can thus use this as an insight into the different organisational opportunity structures for young people. In this respect, this study has to be characterised as

explorative in its scope, especially in terms of its representativeness.

Third, since we excluded organisations and groups that are active only on Facebook, we are unable to cover many of the local (branches of) youth organisations. This is particularly true for youth wings of political parties (especially in the UK and Italy, but not true for Germany), but also other less formal political groups (for instance, in Spain) and social movement organisations. Again, this results in bias between countries and between different forms of youth organisation (such as the fact that political groups are under-represented in the UK and Italy). However, the advantage of our approach is that we are trying to cover a very wide area of organisations including inter alia sports clubs, young business organisations, political groups, the scouts, religious groups, charities and welfare providers, and more. Moreover, we were able to balance this shortcoming by including local and less formal social movement related groups in the qualitative interviews (see Part II of this report). Therefore, while we cannot claim representativeness for our data, we are confident that the data offers explorative insights into an important segment of the organisational opportunity structures for young people.

Codebook

The codebook used for the analysis of websites presenting youth-oriented and youth-led organisations was developed on the basis of previous research projects (Livewhat², TransSOL³). In particular, we were able to design the codebook more economically, concentrating on the variables that previously proved most important, and we were able to build on the experiences that coders have had with particularly difficult categories and variables. Based on these earlier works, a common codebook for the content analysis of websites was developed and discussed over the course of several months by the leading team from Siegen University, but with the participation of all the partners. It was then tested in all countries in order to guarantee a maximum of validity, reliability, and comparability. It includes questions about the organisations' goals, structure, membership, territorial scope, location, activities, and networks. The final version of the codebook is accessible through the EURYKA project website:

<https://unige.ch/sciences-societe/euryka/outputs/deliverables/>

² The documentation for this project and the codebook used in work package 6 to study alternative action organisations during the crisis and through their online presences are available here:

<http://www.unige.ch/livewhat/outputs/instruments>

³ The documentation for this project and specifically work package 2 devoted to the study of transnational solidarity in times of crisis through their online presences are available here: <https://transsol.eu/outputs/reports/>

Coder Training and Intercoder Reliability

Coder training is essential to this type of analysis. Consequently, the involved teams and researchers spent a considerable part of their time and resources allocated to this work package on familiarising every coder with the objectives and variables, on developing the codebook based on training experiences and national context specific feedback, and on ensuring a satisfactory level of agreement in the coding itself (inter-coder reliability). The stages of the coder training stretched over more than six months, and included:

- compilation of a first version of the codebook
- two video chat sessions to introduce coders to the method and aim of the WP (session 1) as well as the codebook and the variables (session 2)
- first test coding to familiarise everyone with the codebook
- two-day coder workshop in Barcelona with variable by variable, category by category discussion and joint test coding
- test coding with changes to the codebook discussed at workshop
 - o Feedback by mail and reworked codebook
- Reliability training Round 1 to 4
 - o Video calls to discuss issues, feedback by mail, medium changes to codebook
- Coding of nine websites as final reliability test
- In one country, one coder had to be replaced. The new coder was trained individually and his scores, based on the same websites, were added to the reliability test.

After the preliminary tests during the training, in the last round of test coding, all participating coders, as well as the supervisors of the coding work, were asked to code ten websites. One was identified by all as not being youth oriented, leaving nine websites for the concluding reliability test. Due to the nature of the codebook, some of the variables were not coded across all these nine websites (individual categories in WEBSTRCT, ORGSTRCT, ORGAIM and AIMRT, in particular). This is insofar unproblematic as coders were able (with a satisfying rate) to identify the right categories within these sets of dummy variables. In total, the reliability test showed agreement across websites, coders, and all variables of 83.3 %. Within the aforementioned sets of dummy variables, we did have variation, but the total agreement within these sets was also satisfactory (for example, ORGSTRCT = 87.1 %, WEBSTRCT = 83.2 %, ORGAIM 84.2 %). For others, like YOACT, YENG and YPAS, we decided to only use the main categories (ACTPRC = 81.5 %, YENGPR = 82.5 %, YPASPR = 67.9 %). We decided to use only the main categories for the central variable YOTP, too, since the number of cases per sub-category would have been too low in many instances. The table of results of this reliability test for all variables is available from the work

package leading team upon request.

A principal problem with such reliability tests when applied in comparative settings is the fact that we only coded British websites during the tests. Thus, while the British coders coded websites of organisations within an institutional context they are familiar with (and indeed achieved higher agreement across variables and websites), this was not the case for all other coders. Even perfect reliability among coders regarding UK websites (achieved through more training and familiarisation with the UK case) would not necessarily guarantee reliability of coding of national samples. The aim of the training and reliability test was therefore not to ensure the highest possible intercoder reliability alone. Above all, the aim was to familiarise coders with the codebook and the objectives of the research, and to sensitise national teams to the coding of their national material.

While intercoder reliability across national teams is satisfactory for most variables, the coding process showed that the comparative dataset needs to be handled with care. Comparative findings, for instance, in regard to the relative formalisation, size, or inclusiveness of different national organisational opportunity structures, must always be interpreted with the specific national contexts in minds. To assist in this, in the next section of this report, we provide methodological notes that reflect on the coders' experiences during sample cleaning and website coding.

Database and National Contexts: Preliminary Observations from the Field-work

General Description of the Data

The fieldwork related to our work package was from the outset not guided only by methodological concerns. Coding requires considerable knowledge about the country-specific field of youth organisations, and training of national teams also implied to make this knowledge explicit and useful for the overall coding process. This was the reason, why the process of data retrieval was organized along to aims, a quantitative, and a qualitative. In regard to the quantitative dimension, teams had to fulfil the sample quotes agree upon in the project description.

The goal of the work package as stated in the EURYKA grant agreement was to sample and code up to 500 websites per country, a number high enough to allow for statistical analysis, but that still reflects budgetary limitations common especially to comparative research projects and this kind of methodology. After the collection of youth organisations websites via hubs and Facebook pages, the sampling strategy was decided country by country. In countries where we expected a large overlap between websites from Facebook pages and websites from hubs, we limited the Facebook

sourced websites to 100 because it was harder to clean the lists of entries not containing a website or not being relevant (for example, no youth orientation or commercial enterprise). In countries where websites were retrieved via Facebook, adding to the diversity of the overall universe mostly by being less formalised organisations, we adjusted the sampling strategy as well. In all cases, we discussed the sampling strategy after the first 50 websites from both sources and, in the end, agreed to the following distributions:

Table 1: Distribution of Websites Coded Across Countries

Country	Websites Coded
France	502
Germany	500
Greece	502
Italy	499
Poland	500
Spain	500
Sweden	499
Switzerland	499
The United Kingdom	500
Sum	4,502

*note: In a few cases, a coding was not correctly stored on the database and was thus deleted.

Therefore, the number deviates from 500 in some countries.

In qualitative terms, teams were asked to provide accounts of the knowledge acquired previously or during the coding process about their sample. In particular, the starting point of the sampling process and subsequent approach differed because in some countries, central organisations structure the field or state entities operate public database, while in others, the procedure was stepwise and oriented towards covering issue fields comparable to the other countries. This knowledge needs to be complied with before we move on to the description of the quantitative findings.

In sum, we have a sample of 4,502 coded websites, equally distributed across nine countries. Due to the very different “universes” (that is, the overall collection of websites) and the base population (more explicitly, the actual existing diversity of youth organisations), we have to caution the reader. Moreover, and as we have already noted, our methodological approach is mostly explorative, and future work should build not only on our findings, but also on our experiences during the research

process. In the following, we therefore provide methodological notes on the sampling and coding by country.

Country Specific Observations Made during the Fieldwork

In this subsection, we provide country-specific notes written by the national coder teams on observations they made during the coding phase. These include assessments of the (hierarchical) structure of the field, for instance, if national umbrellas exist and how far they dominate the organisational opportunity structure for young people, or how far youth work and youth participation generally follow (federalist) political structures. Consequently, the sampling procedures differ between countries, hence we report central aspects of the national specifics. Moreover, the teams reported difficulties in coding and potential shortcomings in the different contexts that are critical for interpreting the data presented below.

FRANCE

The majority of websites in the French sample is composed of two groups, namely the scout groups and charities. Scouts seem to be very present because of national level umbrellas and hubs comprising the universe of websites. The second major group consists of associations operating under the framework of law 1901 on non-profit associations, notably associations of popular education. For their formal structure and (often) manifold goals, objectives and activities, we categorised them (in the majority of cases) as ‘charities’. The Facebook sample was more heterogenous: ranging from very well structured organisations that have similar goals and similar organisational features, such as “Youth Information Centres” (Centre d’Information de Jeunesse), “Youth homes” (Maison de Jeunesse) and “Youth Centres” (Centre de Jeunes), “Youth religious organisations” (Christian, Catholic, Muslim, Evangelical) or organisations that intend to develop associational and volunteer life, associations/ organisations active in the field of LGBTQ rights and career development and professional and social integration (job market related activities). At the same time, the sample drawn from Facebook also included (as intended by our sampling strategy) less formal groups, notably groups active in the field of ecology (especially climate and environmental protection), or young women’s groups.

Many French associations and organisations join or form federations, often rather loose platform organisations that bring together associations and groups with similar scopes and/or are active in the same field. Without impacting the structure of the respective entities, or necessarily yielding any

tangible benefits, such federations intend to make the activities of their members more visible and provide expertise, project management know-how, and technical assistance to their members. For example, most student associations, groups, and organisations are federated within the platform organisation Fage (“Fédération des associations générales étudiantes”). One of Fage’s main initiatives is “AGORAé”, solidarity groceries accessible on social criteria, implemented by almost all coded student associations, adding an important social component to the often student-life oriented, as well as education and representation focused activities. In terms of founding, traditionally, endowments and charitable trusts, providing funding to other associations, are not very active in France and they seem to be less significant than state sponsorship, private donations and membership fees.

Also in terms of activity level, French specificities have to be highlighted: Many associations and organisations active in the field of professionalisation, career development and Europeanisation or with job market focused activities act as hosts for the European Voluntary Service and Erasmus+. These two programmes are, then, the privileged avenues for exchange programmes right in front of humanitarian volunteering and cross border scout activities. The ‘Europe Houses’ (Maisons d’Europe) are key actors in providing information on EU mobility, EU politics and organising EU-related events. Local activities related to providing direct aid (housing, for example) and/ or counselling (such as legal advice) to vulnerable populations are mainly carried out by state sponsored organisations, such as the ‘Centres Sociaux’ and the local branches of (inter-)national charities. The Local Missions (Missions Locales), state (and often EU) sponsored youth agencies, play a key role in professional integration (‘insertion professionnelle’) of “underprivileged” and “underperforming” youth, hence, young people encountering problems with institutionalised schooling and market generated expectations regarding CV development. Further, many local associations and/ or branches of (inter-)national charities focus on personal development, or the development of active citizenship (for instance, the Leo Lagrange Federation).

Groups, associations or organisations active in the field of ecology, notably newer actors dedicated to fighting “climate change” engage in awareness raising campaigns, as well as direct actions. Not surprisingly, a broad scale of demands and points of reference can be observed, ranging from environmental protection, sustainable development to alternative consumption or unconventional forms of farming. Most associations did not mention their political orientation, apart from cases stating “secular” (laïc) or “républicain, which refers more to a pledge to the French Republic than to a clear political leaning, and has, consequently, been coded as “Unclear/ non stated”.

During the coding, we encountered several difficulties: In the website sample, 236 of the links provided in the list were detected as not working (overall possibly more), because they were either

Twitter or Facebook accounts, or did not qualify as youth organisations or organisations active in the field of youth (mainly websites of cities). In addition, the majority of websites sampled using Facebook included groups/ organisations that were either not located/active in France (but in Canada, Tunisia, Marrakesh, Congo, Belgium, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Colombia, Peru, Japan, Vietnam, Haiti, Kadiogo, Senegal), or not relevant for the study (for instance, commercial content, not youth related). Oftentimes, the websites the Facebook pages linked to did not exist at all, were not properly functioning or did not include any information. Moreover, in the French sample, many websites were blogs rather than websites of organisations, resulting in an absence of stipulated goals, and/ or lacking a who we are section (“Qui sommes nous”). In many cases of stipulated goals, the goals were rather a listing of, sometimes, very broad objectives and convictions, posing problems to disentangling and identifying the main goal. The blog structure of many websites made it particularly hard to gather information regarding the organisational structure, decision-making processes, and so on.

The strongly represented local groups of ‘Scouts et Guides de France’ are a good example of how different individual groups presented themselves online (and thus of how carefully some of the variables need to be interpreted): The local groups sometimes reproduced the goals of the national SGdF movement, and they also resurfaced in their activities. However, equally present were groups that copied such goals without having any relevance to their activities. Often, there was no mention of goals at all, but everything was developing around outdoor activities. Further, some SGdF groups mentioned membership fees and a few mentioned donations, while many others did not mention any funding source. It is reasonable to believe, though, that all these local groups rely on membership fees. Similarly, SGdF being a Catholic scout organisation, some groups made clear references to religion, offering religious services as regular activities and/ or stipulating goals of developing spirituality, while others never mentioned religion. Likewise, sometimes youth advisory boards (or at least a reference that young people are the leaders of their group and the groups establish the agenda together) were brought forth, while for others this was not the case. In almost no case was a clear reference to decision making processes codable, leaving aside a formal constitution or statutes.

GERMANY

In Germany, three pillars of formal youth organisations exist (the Bundesjugendring, the youth wings of political parties, and sports organisations). These constituted the starting point of the organisational analysis. First of all, the *Bundesjugendring* (Federal Youth Ring) organises federal

level youth organisations (including the scouts, environmental groups, the Red Cross, music groups, firefighters, religious groups, and others), as well as the youth rings on the *Bundesland*-level. While the national members organise their respective regional and local members, the regional youth rings organise the regional youth organisations, as well as the local youth rings. Thus, this amounts to a principle of dual membership within the Federal Republic. Most youth organisations active in Germany are members within this framework, often including alternative youth centres on the local level with backgrounds in radical politics, as this incorporation and formalisation is key for government funding. Youth parliaments or counsels are also an institutionalised part of this framework; however, their relevance differs widely across local contexts, for example, some even have their own budgets, whereas in other municipalities, they do not exist at all. Moreover, like the *Bundesjugendring* itself, for many organisations (firefighter youths, socialists, Christian groups), the end of the Nazi-regime marks a turning point and many, even if they existed before 1933, refer to their founding or re-organisation in the immediate post-war period.

Constituting the second pillar of formal organisations, youth wings of political parties are not members of the youth rings which is meant to keep the latter non-partisan representations of youth interests. The youth wings of the democratic parties (CDU/CSU, SPD, Greens, Left, FDP) are similarly structured according to the federal system, although only the major Christian-Democrats and Social-Democrats have established consequent nation-wide coverage and therefore make the majority of local groups. The green and left youth groups are important in local contexts, but do not exist everywhere. On the extreme right, the JN (youth wing of NPD) and JA (youth wing of AfD) only have a very limited presence and are both subject to investigations by the intelligence agencies authorities. At the universities, the youth wings are also present in student groups. Depending on the *Bundesland*, these are elected to the student parliament, or act in addition to the student union bodies.

Last but not least, the third pillar of youth organisations consists of the sport youth organisations which represent different sports with varying visibility. The analysis of German websites covered local and regional sports associations, as well as some sports clubs through Facebook searches and the local and regional youth rings as this was the most efficient way to collect youth-specific organisations without dealing with the huge number of sports clubs. If possible, a representative sample of youth organisations with all sports clubs given the same chance to be coded would have resulted in a different composition of the data set.

For most organisations, it is common to have a website (or at least a page on their parent organisation), though the main channels of communication are often social media platforms. Recently founded and/or less formalised organisations, like the Fridays for future protest groups,

could only potentially be covered via Facebook and are therefore basically not visible in this analysis. Then again, these groups make up only a very small portion compared to the large number of institutionalised and incorporated organisations of the three pillars described. In this sense, the organisational opportunity structure for youth in Germany is highly formalised.

The general experience of coding the selected websites can be summarised as follows: Youth groups, to a large extent, seem to be embedded in highly institutionalised organisations operating on every level in Germany (regional, national, local, in numerous cases even with purely organisational structures at district level). The best examples are the THW (Emergency measures), DLRG (life guarding), fire fighters, Malteser, Johanniter, and so on. Here the youth organisations in most cases do not have independent websites with information regarding their goals and values. They are rather attached to the websites of the “adult” organisations with a small section on the website to represent them. This changes at the regional organisational level, where most youth organisations have a distinct website whose purpose is mostly to attract new members and disseminate information, and do youth work (*Jugendarbeit*, including civic education, outdoor activities, empowerment, and the like). The majority of such organizations offer participation of young people on all levels of organization. Starting from local branches, in every nation-wide operating youth organisation, you will find organisational features on regional, sub-regional and/ or district level as is the case with the “adult” organisations, but entirely run by young people. This federalist structure sometimes results in websites of local branches not offering much information and one may assume that communication about projects, events and news is done via Facebook and other social media platforms.

A remarkable exception to the aforementioned visibility of youth groups in highly institutionalised organisations are religious youth groups. Here one finds distinct youth organisations on all levels (regional, sub-regional, local) that at least seem to be entirely independent from the churches as their parent organisations (there are also cases where the relation is much closer). Even on the local level, one can find very informative websites. The organisations in most cases seem to be entirely run by young people with small exceptions (usually there is a priest devoted to youth work in the organisations). Thus, some religious youth organisations seem to be much more independent from “adult” organisations than the non-religious ones.

Last but not least, even though not all explicitly state it, there are likely only very few organisations that do not in some way gain funding from either municipalities or the regional or national government. This derives from the highly structured, corporatist welfare system in Germany in which the state delegates youth work and civic education to third-party civil society organisations.

GREECE

Due to the absence of central registers or (federalist) structures, the Greek sampling process was developed step-wise. The investigation started by looking at the most formal youth organisations. The team looked for the Greek partners of the European Youth Portal, which offered mostly NGOs providing various services to youth, and which are both youth and non-youth led. Similar cases were obtained from the Greek branch of the Anna Lindh Foundation. In order to ensure that all the large youth-led organisations were covered, the sample also included the members of the Greek Youth Forum. In an effort to be as inclusive as possible, additional lists and hubs of squats and autonomous youth centres, youth student unions, as well as lists of university students' groups and voluntary groups were integrated into the sampling. Overall, the Greek sample consists of both formal and informal organisations. Formal organisations tend to hold well-structured and updated websites, while informal and less resourceful organisations tend to use Facebook pages or weblogs. Based on the coding process, several issues and particularities have to be clarified.

Youth-related NGOs, charities and youth-led enterprises usually operate elaborate web presences. Their intention here may be to demonstrate that they are trustworthy and professional possible partners in research, cultural, educational or service delivery projects. However, there is also a great number of less resourced organisations, both formal and informal, such as university student groups, cultural associations, self-managed collectives and others, which mainly inform their potential audience via Facebook and personal contacts. Groups that only use social media pages are not included in our analysis, and those groups providing a website but focusing communication on social media appear in the data sometimes as less well organised or professional than they actually are. However, the maintenance of a website is also resource intense, and many groups and organisations lack these resources to hire skilled personnel to construct and run a website. This interpretation is substantiated by the observation that in many cases, organisations on their Facebook page name a URL which was not valid, for example, because they lost the right to the domain name. Similarly, in other cases, poorly funded youth organisations had working websites which provided only outdated information, or the website was an easily manageable weblog (especially in cases of self-managed youth organisations), which only offer limited information.

European funding is a valuable source of resources for the majority of formal Greek youth organisations since most of them participate in various projects or youth exchange programmes. In particular, Erasmus+ and similar projects are an important opportunity for youth mobility (offering easy and cheap ways of travelling) and in some cases, that is the only activity that youth organisations focus on. Moreover, many youth-led formal organisations organise EU-funded educational actions such as conferences and workshops, mostly about youth entrepreneurship and

start-ups. In sum, the EU contribution is crucial for the viability of youth organisations in Greece, even if it is not in all cases explicitly mentioned on the websites. Adding to this, the refugee crisis was and continues to be an opportunity for formal youth organisations (especially large NGOs) as they have EU and UNHCR funding in order to organise activities related with young refugees, such as language lessons, rights, integration projects or projects against hate speech. It is clear that youth organisations have used the broadening of activities to gain access to supranational funding because opportunities for national funding are relatively limited in Greece.

Moreover, the presence of youth branches of political parties is limited due to the fact that these types of youth organisations mostly have only one central website, while the local branches mostly use Facebook and do not operate a website or even a blog. Hence, our analysis included youth political parties at the national level only. With respect to university-related political groups, our analysis includes rather radical left and political action groups. The larger student organisations connected to the mainstream political parties such as DAP (student branch of New Democracy Party), PASP (student branch of PASOK) or PKS (student branch of the Communist party) do not operate webpages. They use Facebook pages and profiles for their everyday communication and then direct users to the national level webpage. Contrary to that, radical left student organisations do not belong to a national level umbrella and they operate independently in each university department. For instance, in Athens Technical University (Metsoveio), there are nine different schools-departments in which eleven different radical left groups operate (all of them with their own websites). Finally, the presence with websites of far-right youth political or student groups is, although present in Greece, very limited.

Institutionalised forms of youth political participation, such as youth local councils, are absent from our sample, not because we were not able to trace them but due to the fact that they do not operate at all in most Greek municipalities. Despite the fact that the Greek law about local governing mentions that municipalities should foster the creation of youth councils, in practice this does not happen.

We also have to mention that the appearance of sports groups is limited as we did not manage to find any hub that includes athletic and sports associations. We also contacted the ministry of sports in order to find a record of athletic associations, youth or otherwise, but they also did not report any. However, in our analysis we have some groups which are mostly self-managed sports clubs. Also limited is the appearance of church-related youth organisations, since only the big charities operated by the Greek Orthodox Church or Caritas have websites. Hence, our analysis includes mostly non-youth led religion related organisations which offer youth services.

Finally, with respect to the environmental groups, we did not manage to find any youth-led

environmental organisations. However, we found youth organisations that also conduct environmentally-related activities, such as voluntary beach cleaning operations. Moreover, we found some large transnational environmental NGOs which organise awareness raising campaigns that target young people, as well as educational activities that address secondary education students.

ITALY

In Italy, central organisations exist but due to the comparatively low coverage in terms of numbers and issue fields, we added a number of issue-related small hubs. Consequently, some specificities and methodological limitations have to be mentioned for the data collection in the Italian case. Generally speaking, we observed a dense network of associations and organisations for social promotion, non-profit, religious, and the like, a very extensive system of ‘welfarism’, networks of solidarity, characteristic of the Italian context, given the lack of infrastructure and institutional/state welfare.

Concerning political opportunity structures and resources, there are different ‘frameworks’ into which YOs in Italy are incorporated. Some of them are mainly or exclusively concerned with funding opportunities for YOs: the major examples are the Agenzia Nazionale Giovani (National Youth Agency), a public body supervised by both the national government and the European Commission, managing and distributing the financial resources coming from the European Union (through the Erasmus+ programme) to different YOs; from 2018, it also became the body managing the European Solidary Corp programme. In addition, there is the Servizio Volontariato Europeo (European Voluntary Service), managed by the EU, and the Servizio Civile Nazionale (National Civil Service), overviewed by the national government. Many organisations dealing with different topics include and engage young people through these frameworks, although they may not focus on youth issues; the age-range of the young people who can be involved in these different frameworks also varies. Mostly, they work as “hosting” institutions for a small group of young people each year, who are given the opportunity to work with them. To take advantage of these opportunities, calls are advertised by the different organisations to which young people can apply. Some of them include European, or to a lesser extent, global exchange programmes.

Moreover, there is Informagiovani, linked to municipalities at the local level (more professional, career oriented in terms of services), Consulte, also part of the municipalities (focusing on policies affecting youth and implemented by local government) and Forum dei Giovani, the largest platform (hub) for the broad spectrum of YO organisations all over Italy. These are often ‘significant’ opportunities for youth to get involved, but they are often part of the municipality, state institutions

or have them as sole organisers. Arciragazzi is the national umbrella organisation for the promotion of the UN convention on youth and children, and is one of the main platforms/umbrellas through which many organisations work throughout the national territory. However, it focuses more on children and teenagers, questioning again the presence and visibility of older youth, particularly at the university level, as part of collectives, student groups, informal initiatives, and the like.

We have to address certain shortcomings of our data: The majority of YOs works through FB pages, particularly the ones linked to political parties – they have switched over to social media in past years, and do not use websites anymore (the only exception may be for the national branch). This is also the case for many student organisations, as well as leftist and anti-fascist groups, collectives, self-managed centres, along with others. Therefore, organisations in the field of social movements are in large part left out since they are not present as websites. Another limitation is that large organisations (expressly, an environmental organisation) often have a ‘youth group’, but they have no visibility on the website, so the user is usually redirected to social media. For methodological reasons – and our focus on websites – these branches of organisations are not included in our data. Last but not least, many websites, especially when self-managed by young people themselves, are in the form of a ‘blog’, with dispersed, minimum information. Most likely, such domains are usually free of charge, and maintaining such websites is generally easy. Overall, the local level is covered through social media and not on the web. In Italy, there is a significant number of initiatives, groups, and networks – particularly grassroots and informal, but not exclusively – that only have a Facebook and social media presence.

Another Italian specificity concerns associations of young professionals (young lawyers, young businessmen, and so forth) which usually do not organise young people below 35. This may be specific to Italy, where to enter the job market in a stable way and thus be part of such associations, individuals are generally older than 35, but still considered ‘young’. Last but not least, there is a significant number of organisations (platforms mostly, but not exclusively) that focus on international/European mobility, youth exchanges, particularly through the frameworks explained above. They almost seem to replicate each other, and are loosely linked to each other; the presence/visibility of the EU is clearly stated on the website (through logos, in the description, and so on). A good example of this kind of platform is: <https://www.you-net.eu/chi-siamo.html>

POLAND

The field of Polish youth organisations lacks centralised (or federalist) structures and also large national member organisations. The Polish sample of websites, therefore, contains data obtained

from three sources, namely Eurodesk, ngo.pl and Facebook. There were no other sources that could be added to this. The first hub, Eurodesk, contains information mainly about large, highly formalised NGOs with a high variety of actions. Ngo.pl, on the other hand, is the largest database of NGOs in Poland and is constructed based on the way the organisations speak/write about themselves and their actions. Cases drawn from this database, therefore, contain formal organisations that specified youth-related activities in their statutes. The third source, Facebook, included a great deal of noise – only about 10% of the Facebook pages retrieved automatically contained a link to a working www page. Thus, while many more Facebook pages were operated by relevant youth organisations, it seems that most (particularly informal) youth groups in Poland perceive Facebook as the most adequate way of communicating with the public sphere, other organisations and their beneficiaries. Organisations which had a working link to a working www page were mainly youth groups operating within other, larger organisations. Most of them were Catholic youth organisations connected with local parishes, but often information about them was very basic and placed on a subpage of a larger organisation website. Second, large group of organisations derived from Facebook which could not be coded were local groups from a sizable right-wing organisation – All-Polish Youth. This organisation has a highly-formalised central structure which coordinates the actions of many local youth groups. These groups, however, are generally informal and prefer Facebook websites as a way of informing other people about their actions, and to recruit new members.

One important issue regarding the selection of key words is worth mentioning: A preliminary analysis of organisations' names from the Eurodesk and Facebook databases shows a common cluster of words “dzieci i młodzieży” (children and youth). This derives probably from unclear and often contradictory definitions of children and youth in Polish legislation and everyday language. From the project's way of defining youth, we should (and did) exclude organisation working only with infants and young children. However, the upper scope of youth definition is probably under-represented. In other words, the vast majority of organisations we have coded work with youth defined as non-adults and only a few of them offered their actions to university students or other groups of young adults. Consequently, the young adults' category (variables YBEN and YPAS) is almost absent in the database.

Another potential problem involves analysing organisations' sources of funding. Very often, the only funding source reported on local and small organisations' websites was a request to donate 1% of taxes in annual tax settlements. Polish law offers citizens the opportunity to donate 1% of their annual taxes to any public benefit organisation. Considering the fact that this kind of financial help

for organisations is possible only once a year and that often this was the only funding source reported on websites, this could imply that the organisations' budgets are rather small and their functioning is based mainly on voluntary participation.

In regards to the characteristics of the 500 organisations selected for coding, most of them were local and not highly institutionalised welfare organisations funded by 1% of annually donated taxes and local businesses. Moreover, numerous organisations coded during the WP3 were graduate associations operating in close proximity to the members' former high schools. Both types of organisation do not seem to network with other associations or the local government, and depend mainly on the work of members and volunteers. Larger, more professional and networked organisations were also present. Usually these represent older organisations established before the political transformation in Poland and operational today on the national level with European and global contacts. Last but not least, what should be considered specific to Poland is the low number of organisations even at the regional level (not only those operating locally) that have paid staff and form networks with other organisations and (local) government.

SPAIN

The Consejo de la Juventud de España (CJE, Council of Youth of Spain) is a central platform of youth entities in Spain, legally established in 1983 and formed by the Youth Councils of the Autonomous Communities and youth organisations at the state level. Its main goals are encouraging the participation of youth in political, social, economic and cultural development, as reflected in Article 48 of the Spanish Constitution. At present, 60 youth entities are part of this common project. In addition to this, several issue field specific hubs were included to build the sample.

For the Spanish case, a few peculiarities are important to mention. Despite declining religiosity in Spain, particularly among young Spaniards, the websites coded included a significant number of religious organisations, mostly run by adults and centred on service provision for youth. Although their level of formalisation varied, almost all of these focus on offering recreational and educational activities to young people, and on promoting religious faith (which might in fact be their primary goal). Regarding a second large provider of youth opportunities, the state, we came across many municipal and regional youth entities that offered services and activities to young people, but these were not coded as they were solely state organised. Thus, it has to be kept in mind that in addition to the opportunities offered by the organisations in our sample, there is also a state-led sector adding to the opportunity structure for young people in Spain.

As a result of the difficulties that Spain faces in terms of youth unemployment, we noticed a significant number of young entrepreneurs' organisations (there is also a large network of these types of organisations – Asociación de Jóvenes Empresarios), as well as organisations that offer extra-curricular training to promote the employability of young people, or organisations that promote international exchanges for young Spaniards (for instance, Erasmus+, volunteering platforms).

Youth branches of political parties often do not have their own website. They are usually present on the main party website, but their information is often limited to one or two pages explaining their activities and role. Moreover, non-party affiliated political groups and social protest groups most often do not have highly-formalised websites. In many cases, they seem to solely rely on social media pages. Therefore, one important limitation of the dataset for Spain is due to the methodological approach only focusing on ordinary websites. We had to discard a large number of organisations that are active (whether place-based and/or on social media) but that do not have any website. In addition, youth-led organisations tend to have less formalised websites (or no website) and will thus carry less weight in our sample. When they have a website, in many cases they are blogs, with little – and often not updated – information on the organisation.

SWEDEN

The starting point of the sampling procedure in Sweden was the National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations (LSU) consisting of 82 independent, democratically constructed, national youth organisations from varying fields. Several of the 82 organisations are also hubs for different sectors or issues. In addition, we included issue specific hubs (for example, one girl oriented and one migrant oriented platform). Moreover, data from the national agency (see next paragraph) was used to build a diverse and inclusive database. Last but not least, as in the other countries, additional websites were identified through a keyword search on Facebook.

In Sweden, a rigorous support system for YOs exists, which is enforced by *The Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (MUCF)*. Apart from compiling statistics and sanctioning special projects deemed to benefit youth's ability to organise, the agency also distributes a general grant every year. This grant is conditioned to having local and regional member organisations in at least five regions, and is greatly amplified if the national organisation applying is an umbrella organisation with a multitude of member organisations (rather than individual members). Many national organisations receive substantial grants each year but this income is rarely mentioned by the organisations on their sites. Apart from the general grant given to youth organisations, there are special grants for

organisations working with LGBTQI-related questions and organisations working with the disabled. These are also administered by *MUCF*. In addition to these grants, several regions and municipalities also have extensive benefit programmes; the failure to mention these on their website is also apparent. In general, there is limited mention of incomes and/or public recognition and thanking of donors among the investigated YO's.

Another limitation concerns scout organisations, an important pillar of the supply side of youth engagement (like in most countries): *Scouterna*, the national Swedish scouting association, has what appears to be a standardised website system for their member districts and squads. Many of the websites look exactly the same although there is great variation in the content. Some of these sites have simply not been customised since they were launched and still contain meaningless default texts. The default texts were not coded as they did not contain any relevant elements, but it can be important to the interpreter to be aware that features that occur quite often among scouting organisations partly do so in correspondence to the standardised website design. The standard content reads as follows: *“About the Squad. Our squad consists of X members and our activities mainly takes place in Y. To us it is important to Z.”*

Last but not least, regarding the sampling procedure, some organisations found through the Facebook-based-selection had links to their umbrella organisation's general websites. These sites then linked back to the original organisation's Facebook-pages making a loop. These organisations were not coded since no unique website or page on the umbrella website was found.

SWITZERLAND

For Switzerland, we used as a basis for our sampling procedure a number of issue specific (for example, the scouts, sports clubs) umbrella organisations since no central body exists. In addition, organisations were identified via a keyword search in Facebook.

Most importantly, the characteristics of the Swiss political system account for some specificities of the structure and network of organisations found in Switzerland. First, the federal system of the country, characterised by a highly decentralised structure comprising three levels (commune, canton, federal), account for the high embeddedness of lower-level organisations: a large share of local organisations are part of umbrella or platform organisations at the cantonal level. In turn, the latter organisations are usually part of a national federation. However, there are also variations of this general pattern. For example, some mid-level umbrella/platform organisations may encompass several cantons. Examples of such umbrella/platform youth organisations in Switzerland are (non-exhaustive list) the scouts, the Swiss Alpine Club, Movetia (provides educational mobility), the

Swiss Youth Parliaments Federation (DSJ), the Swiss Students Union (VSS), church-related organisations (namely, the YMCA/YWCA Switzerland (CEVI), BESJ, Jungwacht & Blauring), sports federations and youth wings of political parties. Due to this formal structure, some information (for example, with regard to funding) is only available on umbrella websites and not on local (or even cantonal) organisations' websites.

Second, because of the different linguistic regions of the country, some organisations exist only in a part of the regions or cantons. For example, 'Jungwacht Blauring Schweiz' is present only in the Swiss German part of Switzerland. In addition, some regional differences exist in terms of the type of organisations found in each region. Typically, in the German-speaking part of the country, more religious youth organisations can be found.

Third, by Swiss law, it is very easy to create an association (see article 60 of the Swiss Civil Code). This needs to be done in writing (statutes) and requirements exist regarding the structure, which explains why the majority of associations has written statutes available on their website (however, sometimes the statutes cannot be found on the website, although they do exist). The typical structure includes mainly two features: a general assembly, which is the highest organ of the association, and a board, which is the governing body of the association. Hence, if the statutes of an association are available on its website, a general assembly and a board also exist (as well as the president's position and membership fees).

A few potential shortcomings of our data need to be mentioned. First, large civil society organisations often have a 'youth group', but they have no visibility on the website. It is therefore difficult to code distinct youth organisations. Usually, social media play the role of a distinct Internet platform for such organisations. Second, organisations in the field of social movements are in large part left out since they, too, do not operate websites. Conversely, sporting associations usually have their own websites. Therefore, we had to exclude some of these sports' organisations in order to avoid coding too many (we only coded every second one in the sample). However, they still make up a high share in our data. Fourth, some organisations do not report any headquarters other than a registered office at the president's home (according to the statutes). However, the president's home address is usually not available online. Fifth, some variables (ORGSTRCT1-12, ORGAIM1-17, AIMRT1-9 and to a lesser extent, UMB, UMBPRT, ORGSTRDATE, POLOR, DEMODE1-3, and so forth) depend heavily on the presence of statutes. In other words, such variables are likely to be underestimated (for instance, have fewer organisational features) when the statutes are not available on the website, but, in fact, do exist as required by law.

THE UNITED KINGDOM

The main sources of websites for the UK were the charity registers of England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. From the resulting, very large lists we sampled websites roughly in proportion to the population of the parts of the country. As an additional source of websites, as in the other countries, we used Facebook. In the UK, many local level youth organisations, particularly leisure and recreation focused youth organisations, were funded directly by local authorities prior to the introduction of austerity measures in 2010. Local authorities remain an important source of funding; however, many of the organisations included in this sample, but particularly recreational youth clubs, noted recent funding difficulties or temporary closures due to local government-level financial cuts. Many organisations had undergone recent changes in leadership, structure, and income generation in response. These challenges and changes are not captured by this data set.

More recently, there has been renewed government investment in volunteer-run uniformed youth organisations; this covers military and uniformed public services cadet groups, scouting and guides' groups, and certain faith-based groups. In this instance, governmental funding from different departments is managed and channelled into uniformed youth organisations through both a charity and a platform organisation. There is a significant number of uniformed youth organisations included within this sample, most notably Scouts and Sea Cadet groups. Most, but not all, cadet groups are sponsored by the Ministry of Defence, by branches of the armed forces, or by local branches of their respective uniformed service. In some cases, it was not clear whether or not local and regional branches of these organisations are direct recipients of government funding; many Scouts and Sea Cadet groups, for example, only list membership and activity fees on their website. These organisations are highly institutionalised, and, as in Germany, many of these organisations' websites are folded into the websites of the parent organisations.

In addition to an abundance of uniformed youth organisations, there are many sports' focused youth organisations within this sample, including a number of youth football clubs and leagues. Again, the websites of many individual sports teams are folded into the websites of their respective leagues. It is important to note that a great many organisations have received funding from the National Lottery Community Fund, whose income is generated through the sale of lottery tickets. The National Lottery Community Fund is a non-departmental public body which is sponsored by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, although it operates with some autonomy. This source of funding was coded as "State".

Comparative Findings

In this section, we turn to a preliminary descriptive analysis of our data. We first provide maps showing the spatial distribution of the youth organisations whose websites we coded. Second, we discuss key results for selected variables – for example, founding year, type of organisation, main activities, organisational features, different ways of youth engagement, aims of the organisations – depicted in comparative tables. We also explain what was measured with the respective variables. For better readability, we shortened the descriptions of individual categories, which, in the codebook, also included coding instructions. Moreover, in some cases we summarised the categories. For the full lists of categories, we once again refer to the codebook. For all variables, coders were instructed to strictly follow the rule to only code what was explicitly stated on the websites. Therefore, the following frequencies only depict what the YOs reveal about themselves on their websites; they are not a description or analysis of the YOs themselves. For a full list and a thorough explanation of all variables, see the codebook available on the EURYKA website (Deliverable 3.1). In the following, we mainly describe frequencies of our main variables.

Geographical Distribution

The following maps show the geographical distribution of youth organisations of the websites coded. As expected, the maps show agglomerations of organisations in regions more densely populated. In particular, capital and metropole regions are clearly visible (and the markers overlap). Most importantly, in all countries we reached a plausible coverage across the countries. Comparing the metropolitan regions with more peripheral parts of the respective countries, we observe clear centre-periphery divide. However, from our relatively small national samples, we cannot assess further if there are regions that have more or less rich opportunity structures. In fact, in most countries, national programmes and umbrella organisations may aim to provide opportunities across the country, while the quality and availability will nevertheless depend on local resources and other circumstances (such as overall funding of organisations and national schemes, regional politics, relationships between local, regional and national politics). For details, see the country specific notes above. To assess specificities of the national opportunity structures, we employed a number of variables that are described below.

Figure 2: Geographical distribution of coded websites in France

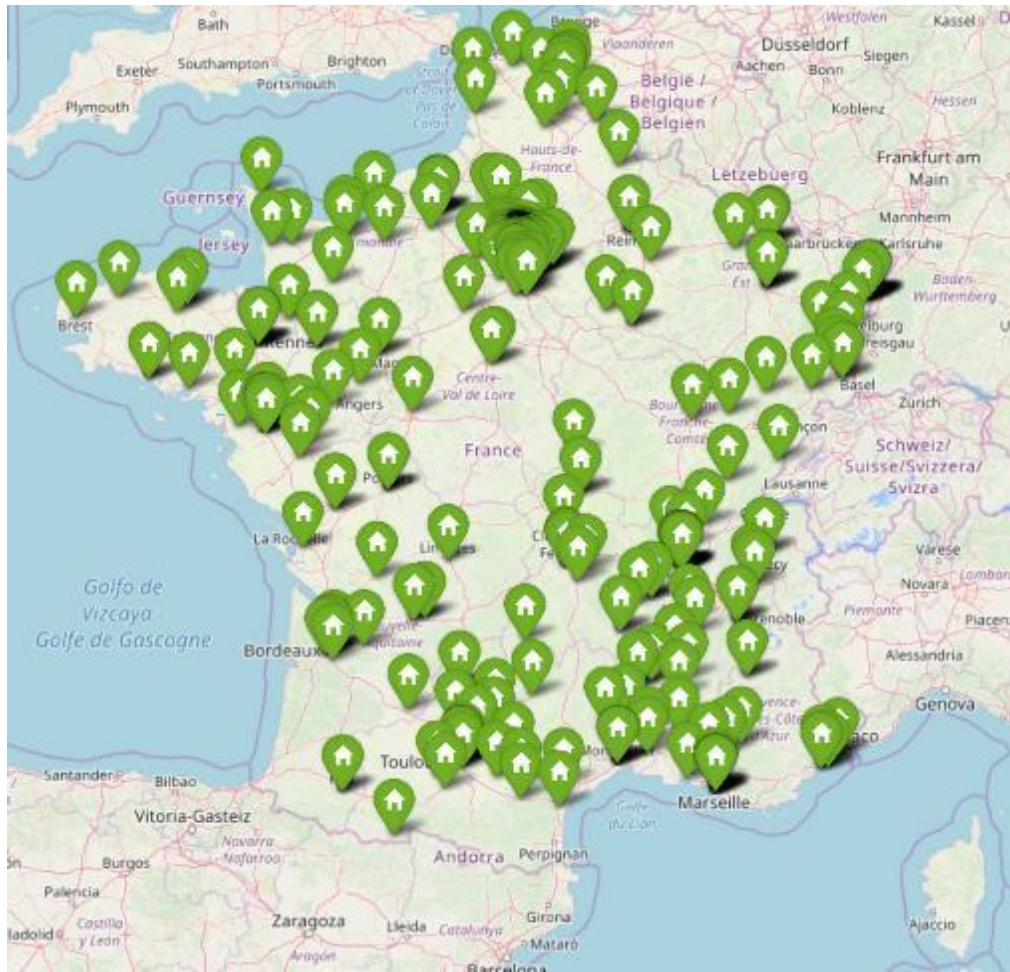


Figure 3: Geographical distribution of coded websites in Germany



Figure 4: Geographical distribution of coded websites in Greece

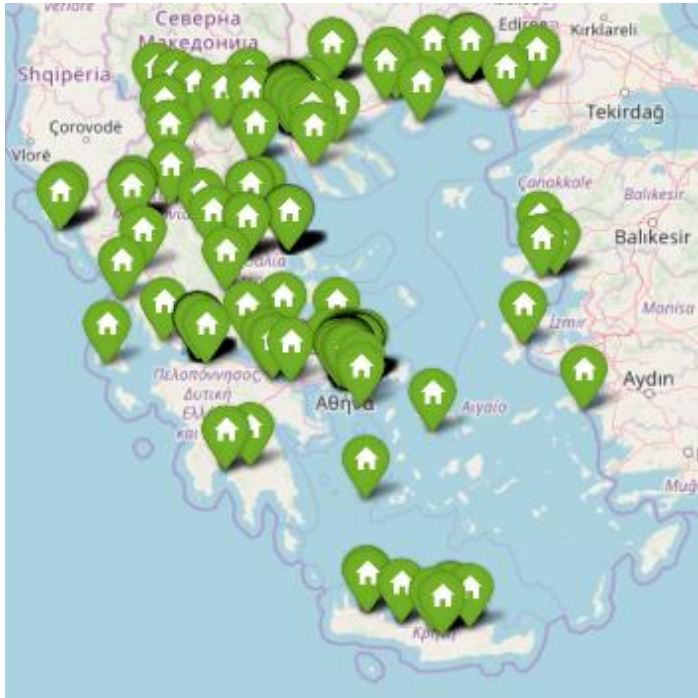


Figure 5: Geographical distribution of coded websites in Italy

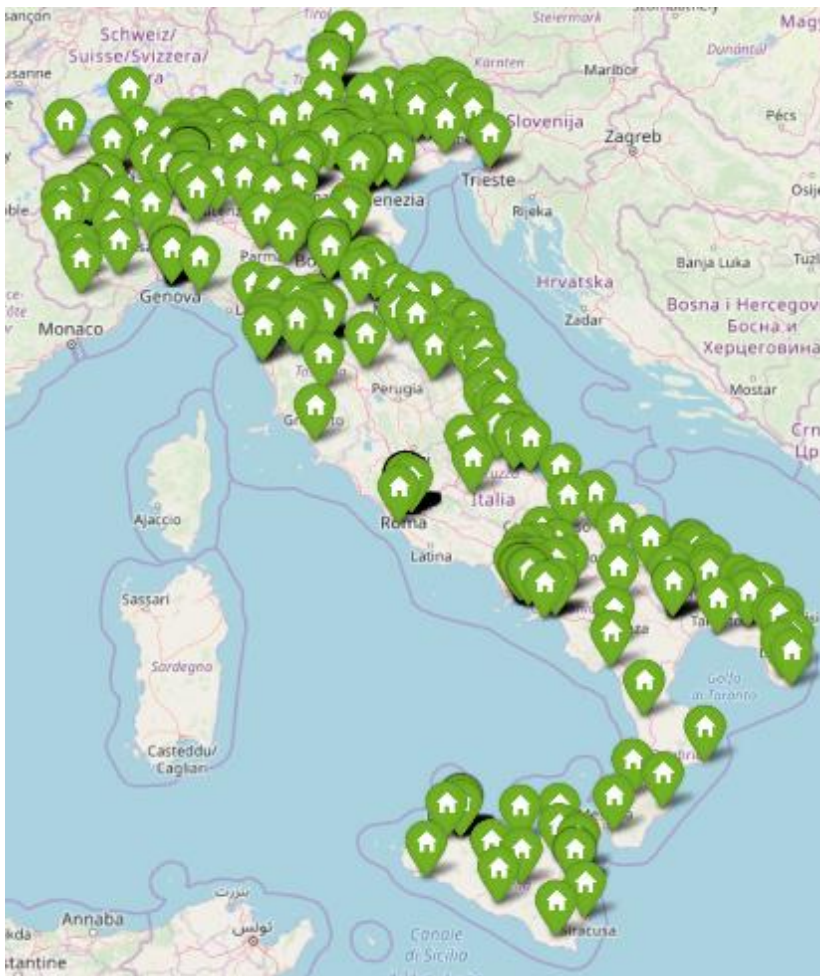


Figure 6: Geographical distribution of coded websites in Poland



Figure 7: Geographical distribution of coded websites in Spain





Figure 8: Geographical distribution of coded websites in Sweden

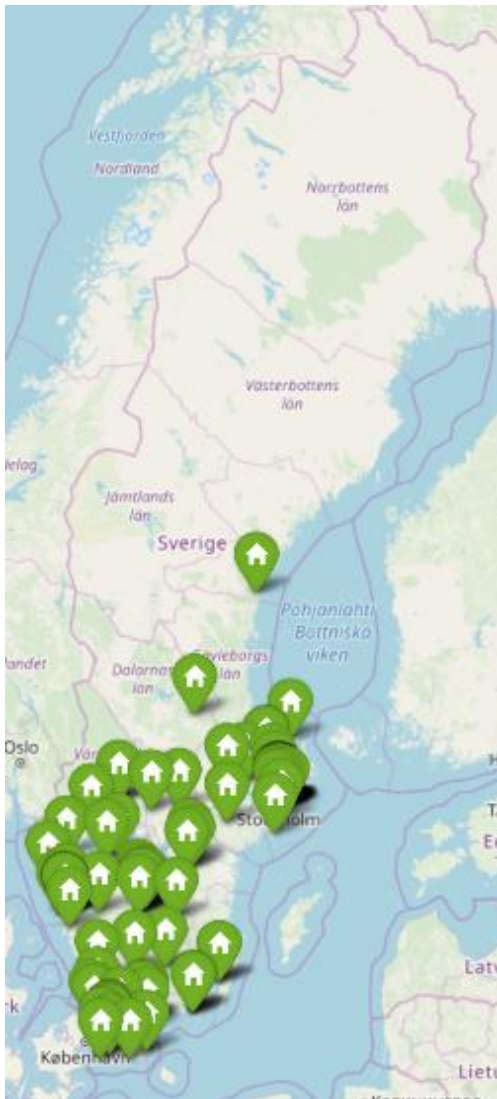


Figure 9: Geographical distribution of coded websites in Switzerland

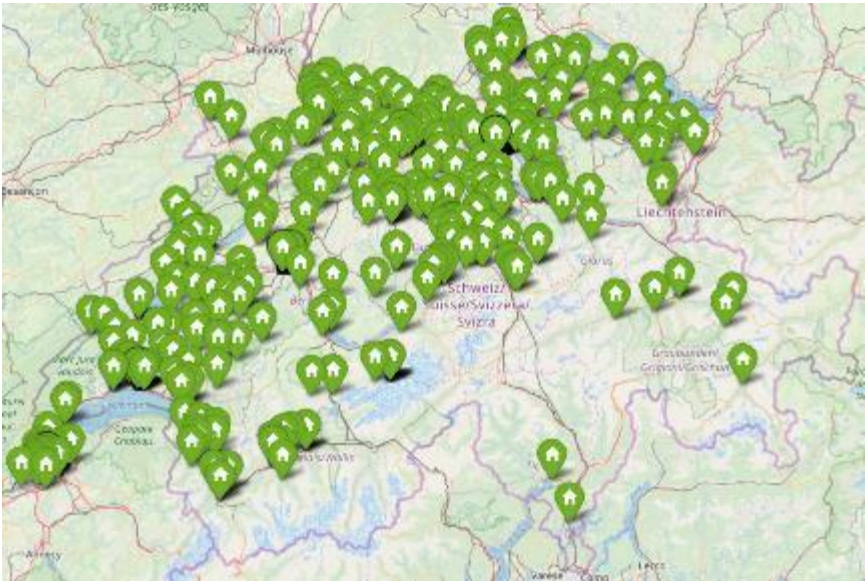


Figure 10: Geographical distribution of coded websites in the UK



Founding Years of Youth Organisations

Starting with the coded age of youth organisations, Figure 11 provides an overview of the coded founding date of YOs by country. While approximately one in three organisations did not report a date, the graph still reveals a number of interesting country specifics: For Sweden, the data shows a relatively high number of new YOs in the early 20th century when the social-democratic welfare state was established. In Germany, the peak just after the defeat of Nazi-Germany stands out. Many YOs (like other civil society organisations) were founded (again) in the immediate post-war period and also explicitly refer to this in their self-description. Indeed, the Bundesjugendring as a federalist structure was established with the explicit aim of democracy-building. In Poland, we observe a relatively high number of new organisations around 1990, around the EU admission in 2004 and around 2010, whereas in Spain the first visible increase of new organisations appears to have followed the end of the Franco era. Regime change, we can assume, explains much of the country variance. Moreover, there is a clear North-South (and West-East) pattern. Differences between countries are considerable: In Sweden, the mean year of establishment is 1962, in Switzerland 1964, in Germany 1966, in France 1983, in the UK 1987, in Spain 1992, in Italy 1995, in Greece 1997, and in Poland 1998. Last but not least, youth organisations are relatively young with many being established in the last decades. As a result, and including traditional, often old organisations like the scouts, religious groups, the mean year of establishment of all coded YOs (with the date of establishment available on the website) is 1984.

Figure 11: Founding dates of coded youth organisations in France, Germany and Switzerland

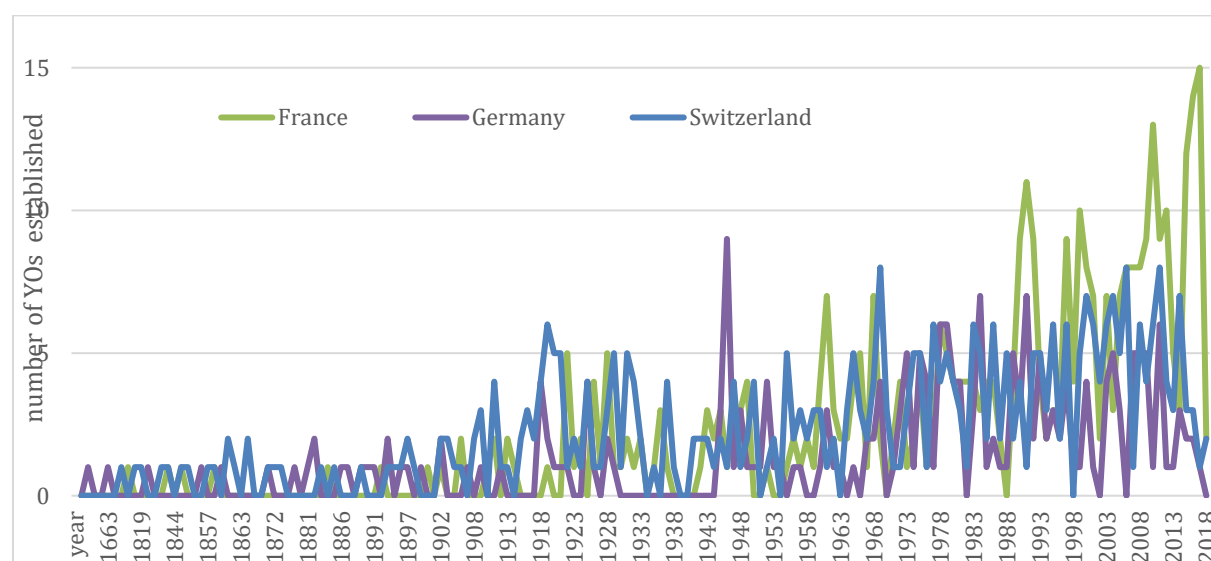


Figure 12: Founding dates of coded youth organisations in Greece, Italy and Spain

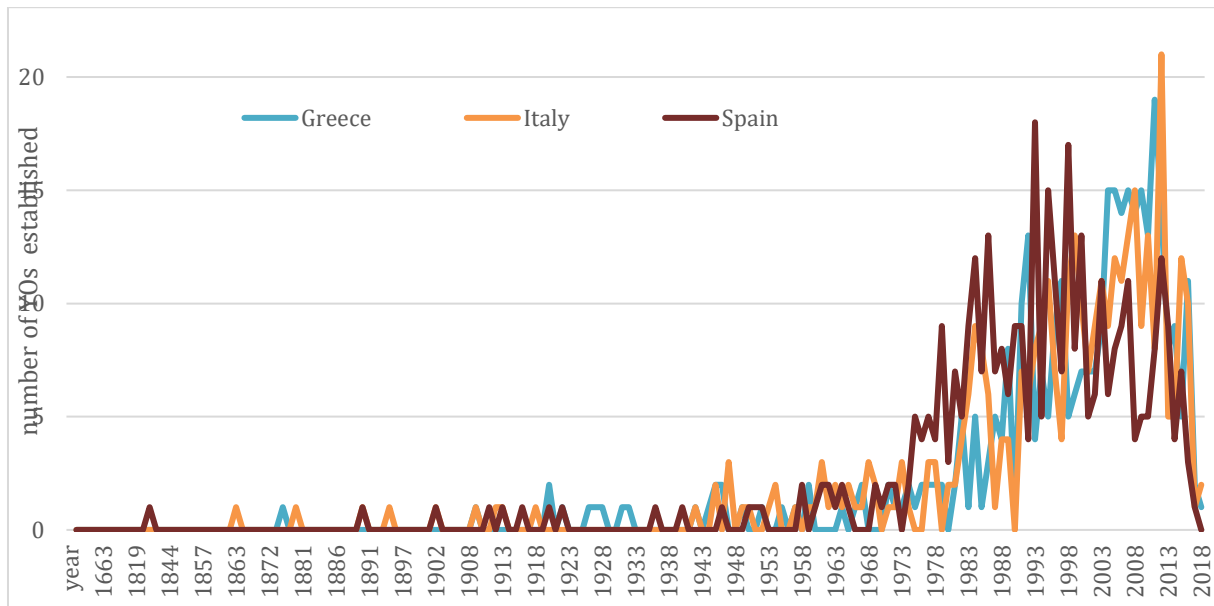
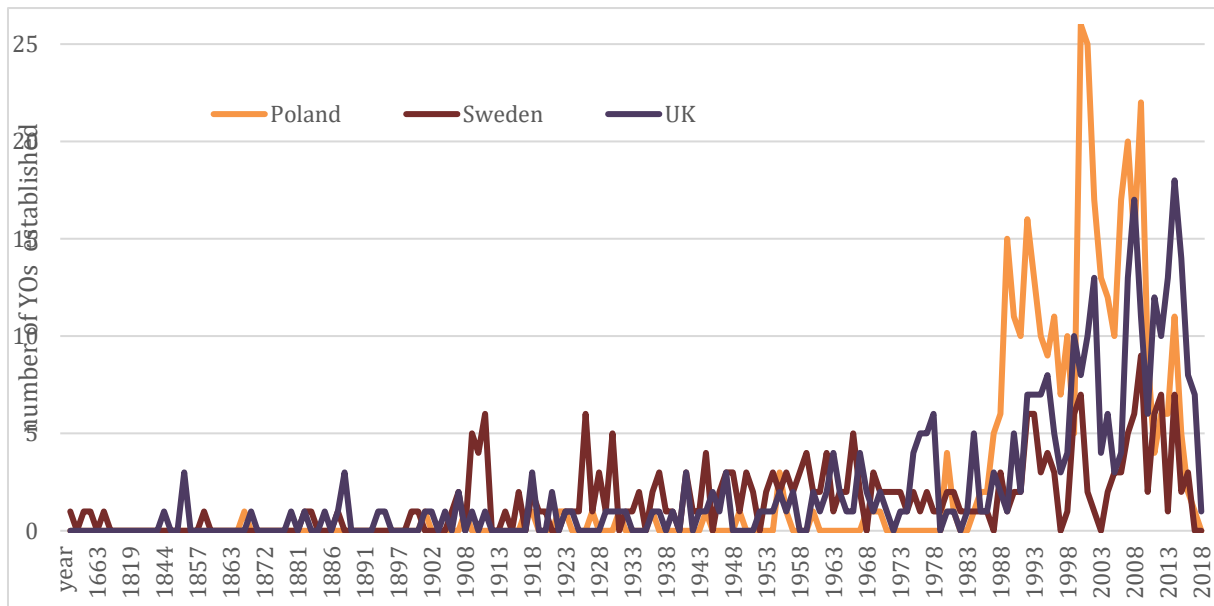


Figure 13: Founding dates of coded youth organisations in France, Germany and Switzerland



Types of Youth Organisations

As a general overview, Table 2 shows percentages of types of youth organisations by country. In our sample, we have relatively high numbers of political action groups in France, Greece and Spain, whereas in the UK and Poland, such groups make up only a very small portion of our cases. In all countries, we have to assume a bias in our sample since many such groups may stick to social media

for mobilisation and do not operate a full www website presence. We have a similar bias regarding the youth wings of political parties: Only in Germany do the local groups operate their own websites (or at least pages on the national organisation’s website), in most other countries local groups stick to Facebook. Still, our data might present a hint of how formal they are, especially the two major youth wings in Germany, the social-democratic Jusos and the Christian-democratic JU, in comparison to youth wings in other countries. Greece sticks out in our data since many organisations seem to be student-based, traditionally a strong pillar of civil society and political mobilisation in the country.

Religious organisations play an important role in all countries, although here we have different overlaps which are sometimes not easy to distinguish and, therefore, difficult to compare: Some (national) scout movements emphasise their religious background (we coded the scouts as “leisure organisations”), many charities do so as well (two examples in Germany are the Diakonie and Caritas, major civil society organisations with Catholic and Protestant backgrounds respectively, providing various welfare services and also operating youth wings). Religious organisations in the table below only include those explicitly offering religious services (for example, bible reading groups). The category “charities” further includes all welfare organisations that offer services and benefits to (struggling) young people.

Leisure organisations constitute another large portion of our sample and include sports clubs, the scouts, and cultural organisations (such as orchestras, theatre groups). While these groups concentrate predominantly on leisure activities, this is considered by many as important for building values and personalities (see the variables measuring activities and the aims of organisations below). Last but not least, in terms of political opportunity structures, in all countries we find youth parliaments or similar institutions. While they are few in our sample, they arguably are an important pillar in democracy education and could be interesting to investigate further.

Table 2: Frequencies of types of youth organisations by country (summary categories in %)

	France	Germany	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland	UK	Total
Political action organisations	17.33	6.4	22.51	8	2.4	15.2	8.82	3.61	3.8	9.8
Political party youth wings	2.59	11	5.18	6	1	1.8	2.2	3.61	0.8	3.8

Student organisations	9.96	1	25.9	9.6	1.6	3.2	7.41	3.61	10.8	8.13
Economy/work related	7.7	3	3.98	8.8	2.2	11.4	5.01	3.01	3	5.35
Charities and religious organisations	34.26	37	19.52	49.8	77.4	51.6	18.44	21.24	51	38.92
Leisure organisations	24.3	38	14.54	13.8	13.8	12.6	56.71	61.12	38.2	30.32
Youth clubs and parliaments	1.2	3.6	2.79	3.4	1.2	1.2	1	2.81	2	2.13
Other	2.59	0	5.58	.6	.4	3	.4	1	.4	1.55
Total (N)	502	500	502	500	500	500	499	499	500	4502

Activities and Activity Levels

Another main variable, strongly connected to the type of organisation, is the main activity of the YO (Table 3). The codebook also includes a variable in which all activities could be coded and, hence, we have also a measure of diversity of activities. However, coders reached a much higher reliability score for this summary variable presented here and we, therefore, confine ourselves to this. Overall, the most common primary activity was sports and recreational outdoor activities (including scouting). Arguably, this is not only a (health) relevant opportunity structure for young people to have fun, but also to build friendships and character (see below the variable on organisational aims). In Spain, we found not only the largest share of groups focused on educational activities, but also many organisations focused on employment-related activities. Education – including activities for refugees, school drop-outs, young people from vulnerable families/communities – is an important aspect in all countries and so is providing information – including again various issues like sex or health education, or help with social services. Political action as the focus of activities varies considerably between countries; in Poland and the UK, relatively few YOs focus on politics, while in Greece, in relation to the high share of student groups, the relatively highest share engages in politics as the main activity. We have to consider that political groups, young groups, and particularly more radical and/or social movement related groups are underrepresented because we focused our analysis on formal www websites (instead of, for

example, online activity more broadly). Again, however, our – explorative – data shows a great diversity of activities that youth organisations engage in and offer to young people (below we also present variables capturing the different types of youth involvement).

Table 3: Main type of youth activity (in %)

	France	Germany	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland	UK	Total
Basic/Urgent needs (e.g. housing, food, health)	6.18	.2	5.58	3.4	13.2	.8	2.2	.6	5.6	4.2
Education (e.g. school tutoring, language lessons for migrants)	10.16	7.8	10.36	19	13.6	31	7.21	4.21	10	12.59
Aid to vulnerable groups such as abuse/ violence victims	1.59	.2	.6	3.6	3.6	6.6	1.2	.4	1.4	2.13
Aid to juvenile/youth delinquents	0	0	.2	0	1	0	.4	.2	.2	.22
Humanitarian aid (incl. for refugees)	1.79	2.6	.2	3.2	.6	1.4	1.4	1	1.2	1.49
Activities related to preventing hate crime	1.2	.6	1.2	.2	1.4	4.2	.2	0	0	1
Providing information, counselling	13.94	4.2	21.31	15.6	23.2	16	7.8	3.81	13.2	13.24
Platform/umbrella activities for other organisations	10.56	13.8	1.59	11.6	1.6	0	5.4	5.61	4.2	6.22
Lobbying	2.59	7.4	3.19	3	2	.6	4.61	2.81	2.6	3.2
Voting related activities	3.39	2.6	12.95	1.4	0	2.8	.2	2	1.2	2.95
Conventional/Soft protest actions	2.59	2.8	4.58	5.8	.2	1.2	.6	2.4	.2	2.27
Demonstrative protest actions	1.99	.6	4.98	1.6	.2	.8	.2	.6	.6	1.29

Confrontational and Violent protest activities	0	0	.6	0	0	0	0	0	.2	.09
Employment/Job related activities	6.97	1.2	2.19	7.6	2.4	10.6	2.2	2.61	4.8	4.51
Alternative consumption/ food sovereignty/green alternatives	2.99	0	.8	1	0	.6	0	.2	.2	.64
Social movement/ subcultural	0	0	5.78	.8	0	0.2	0	0	0	.76
Self-help/mutual aid actions	0	.4	.8	.2	.8	.6	.4	0	.2	.38
Other (e.g. self-organised coffee shop)	0	0	.6	0	0	0	0	0	.2	.09
Cultural activities	5.98	8.2	13.55	7.8	12.2	3.6	3.01	6.61	7.2	7.57
Sports/recreational (outdoor) activities	20.32	28	5.18	6.4	14	8	53.51	61.12	31.6	25.32
Social hangouts, youth clubs/cafés	1	14.2	.8	1.8	2	1.4	5.21	1.4	7.2	3.89
ICT-related activities	.6	1	.2	.2	.2	.2	.2	.2	.8	.4
Religious/Spiritual activities	3.19	3.6	1.39	5.8	7.6	3.4	6.01	4.21	6.8	4.66
Other	2.99	.6	1.39	0	.2	.6	1.8	0	.4	.89
Total (N)	502	500	502	500	500	500	499	499	500	4502

In all countries comprising our sample, YOs tend to organise their activities on the local level followed by the regional and national levels (see Table 4). Given that many local branches (especially of political parties, trade unions, and other nationally organised and mass organisations) do not operate their own websites (but often use social media instead) and were therefore not included in our sample; regional and national level organisations are overrepresented. Given that they structure opportunities on the local level, this is not a shortcoming of our data because it allows for investigating the overall opportunity structures across countries, while the interviews conducted

in addition to this data focus on local level (see Part II of this report). In fact, we can see that regional activities were relatively more often coded in countries with a federalist political system, for instance, Germany, Italy and Spain. In the case of the UK, we included a category “subnational” which, additionally, helps us to differentiate between the regional and Scottish, English, Welsh and Northern Irish focus of youth organisations, respectively. Interestingly, in some countries our sample includes relatively few internationally-oriented organisations (Germany, Sweden and Poland), whereas in others, the focus is more on international activities, particularly in the Southern European countries. In Italy, for example, this is due to a high number of organisations involved in European exchange and cooperation schemes, which German, Swedish, Swiss, or British YOs do not seem to focus on much.

Table 4: Main level of Activity (in %)

	France	Germany	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland	UK	Total
local	42.43	54.6	50.8	41.4	61.8	22.8	71.14	27.66	54.2	47.42
regional	21.12	36.6	13.94	19	11.8	42.6	5.81	30.06	16.2	21.9
Subnational	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.4	.49
national	30.88	7	17.53	14.8	19.6	14.4	17.43	36.27	16.8	19.41
European	2.99	1.4	12.75	17	5.4	8	1.2	.6	.8	5.58
global	2.59	.4	4.98	7.8	1.4	12.2	4.41	5.41	7.6	5.2
Total (N)	502	500	502	500	500	500	499	499	500	4502

Funding and Organisational Features

Across issue fields and countries, a key question for policymakers and youth organisations is funding. From the selection of countries, we expected to observe different patterns due to variations in political contexts. Table 5 shows that the two main sources of funding as reported on the websites are services (including membership fees) and private donations. However, we suspect that donations do not play a decisive role in most countries (here, a simple link on the website was sufficient to justify coding the category), whereas state funding is likely to be underreported in our data. For example, in Germany and in Sweden, most organisations get some sort of direct financial aid, be it through institutionalised schemes (for example, the corporatist German welfare state civil society organisations take over tasks and get remunerated by the state) or project-based funding. In these

countries, this is not always stated and merely taken for granted. In Poland, however, we know that the importance of private donations is considerably higher because of the relative absence of state funding (see country note above). Despite the obvious problems of this variable (at least in comparative terms), the UK is a particularly interesting case since only 7.6 % of YOs do not report any funding source while 27.2 % report fundraising activities. This indicates a relatively higher level of transparency, probably due to regulations (the UK charity register lists all civil society organisations and is publicly accessible), but is also related to the need to raise additional funds (and a more developed culture of doing so): For fundraising and acquiring private donations, transparent and online accessible information about funding sources is, arguably, more important than it is in countries where most of the funds are channelled through public schemes, like in Germany and Sweden, or funding is scarce anyway like in Greece and Poland. It is also noteworthy, that YOs in net-receiving countries of EU funds also report this source of funding much more often, as the data for Greece, Italy, Poland and Spain show.

Table 5: Sources of funding across countries (multiple answers, in %)

	Franc e	German y	Greec e	Ital y	Polan d	Spai n	Swede n	Switzerlan d	UK	Total
Municipality	33.27	10.4	6.18	23. 6	22.6	32.2	8.22	11.22	14. 2	17.9 9
State	36.06	11	18.13	21. 6	29.2	48	8.22	24.45	23	24.4 1
EU	15.34	1	23.11	24	21.8	29.2	1	0	3.2	13.1 9
Private donations	37.85	41	33.67	36. 6	65.8	49.4	31.26	61.12	60. 2	46.3 1
Services (incl. fees)	36.25	54.2	27.09	36. 2	18.6	51.8	54.51	68.74	40. 4	43.0 7
Fundraising	8.57	13.6	20.72	10. 8	6.6	6.2	5.81	6.01	27. 2	11.7 3
Self-financing/ relying	2.79	2.8	13.75	7.6	.2	2.8	.2	.2	.2	3.4
Other sources	1.99	2	3.98	.8	.8	0	2.2	2.61	5.8	2.24

No information	33.07	25	39.44	32.	20.4	23.4	31.86	13.23	7.6	25.2
				8						1
Total (N)	502	500	502	500	500	500	499	499	500	4502

The organisational features of youth organisations (see Table 6), as described on the websites, were coded for the individual information contained by each category (such as the frequency of youth advisory boards), but also to have indicators for the degree of formalisation and professionalisation (or rather the presentation of such characteristics). Frequencies are obviously highly dependent on what national laws ask from organisations. In Switzerland, organisations must have a statute, which is not always but relatively often mentioned on the websites. In Germany, too, groups and organisations are usually established as “eingetragener Verein” (listed associations) which comes with specific obligations, like having a board, a (annual) general assembly, and a statute. But once again, there is no obligation to actually point this out on the website and our data show whether YOs consider it important to mention such structural features on their websites. The most common feature among youth organisations, as depicted in Table 6, is that websites name a president or chair person, and the second most common feature is a board. Youth advisory boards are common only in some countries. Again, we can see that the Greek organisations, in large part follow organisational logics common in social movements by pointing out their neighbourhood assemblies. Operational and administrative staff, as well as mentioning a treasurer, varies from country to country and shows different degrees of formalisation and probably also size. Celebrities or ambassadors are a feature most common in France and the UK, whereas in Spain, Germany, Greece and Italy, this is almost completely absent. In sum, this variable will later help us detect within country variance in regards to how well organisations present themselves, and how formal they are in structure.

Table 6: Organisational features of youth organisations across countries (multiple answers, in %)

	France	Germany	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland	UK	Total
Written constitution	21.71	26.8	17.53	31	58.4	28.4	30.26	39.88	13.6	29.72
(Annual) reports	24.1	43.2	15.74	31.6	40.4	35.8	20.44	31.66	16.8	28.85
(Annual) General assembly	19.72	28.6	22.11	34	19.4	16.4	21.44	45.89	8.8	24.03
Neighbourhood assembly	1	7.2	20.52	2.4	.4	2	.2	.4	1.2	3.93
Board	33.27	43.6	40.44	51.2	57.6	51.4	69.34	86.57	63.4	55.18

Youth advisory board	8.57	8	2.39	3.6	1	11	6.41	1.6	9.2	5.75
Operational staff	52.19	33	20.32	26.2	27.2	39.6	42.48	25.65	52.4	35.45
President/Coordinator/CEO	62.55	72	38.05	60.8	72.8	56.2	72.14	87.98	68.2	65.62
Administrative staff	51.39	26.6	28.49	38.8	31.6	36	31.66	44.09	36.2	36.1
Treasurer	49.8	38	27.29	31.6	32.8	36.6	50.5	68.74	34.4	41.07
Spokesperson	35.46	15.2	9.76	19	4.2	22.2	8.62	33.47	5.6	17.06
Celebrities/ambassadors	6.57	.8	.8	.4	4	.8	3.61	1.6	6.2	2.75
Total (N)	502	500	502	503	500	500	499	499	500	4502

Youth Engagement and Target Groups

Particularly interesting for the EURYKA project was the question of how young people are involved. While Part II of this report gives much more detailed and in-depth accounts, Table 7 here shows frequencies of four general categories of youth involvement: Almost 26% of all coded websites described the YO as being youth-led, with this number being lowest in Poland and highest in Greece (once again connected to the high number of student groups). With regards to Poland, we need to emphasise that “youth-led” was only coded if this was explicitly stated or obvious from the self-description (for instance, “we are a self-organised group of young people”). In more than 30% of the cases, youth are actively involved in organising the activities of the YO. Just short of 70% report that young people are active participants, including scouts, athletes, musicians. Fewer than 60% of the organisations provide services for passive beneficiaries (such as soup kitchens, educational programmes or providing information), or engage in activities for young people (like lobbying for youth rights). These categories highly overlap, of course, since an organisation could be youth-led, with young people organising activities with young people as active participants and passive beneficiaries. With this variable, we will be able to distinguish those organisations opening opportunities of participation for young people from those focusing more on representation and services for young people.

Table 7: Youth involvement in youth organisations across countries (multiple answers, in %)

France	Germany	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland	UK	Total
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Young people lead	19.52	28	42.23	37.6	11.4	29	25.65	26.65	13.2	25.92
Young people organise activities	29.88	46.2	41.04	31.6	17	33.4	36.47	25.45	24	31.67
Young people engaged	34.66	70.6	65.34	69.8	44.8	79.2	91.78	85.77	73.8	68.39
Young people as passive beneficiaries	75.7	52.8	81.47	55.2	67.6	83.6	34.47	21.64	51.2	58.22
Total (N)	502	500	502	500	500	500	499	499	500	4502

Accordingly, Table 8 differentiates which categories of young people are targeted by the organisations in the nine countries as active participants. Most organisations are open to youth in general (age 11 to 30) or at least all young people under 18. An important specific category is higher education students, especially in, but not limited to, Greece. Religious youth are addressed as active participants particularly in Poland, but also in other countries. As aforementioned, churches and religious organisations play a considerable role in offering opportunities. YOs in Poland and Spain also offer opportunities specifically to youth in poverty and from poor communities, while in other countries, this is rarely mentioned. Around 5% of organisations in Greece, Poland, Spain, and the UK focus on (mentally) disabled youth as active participants, while few YOs in the remaining countries do so. In sum, we see some plausible differences (religious youth in Poland), but, overall, most YOs target a broad audience.

Table 8: Main group of engaged youth beneficiaries by country (in %)

	France	Germany	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland	UK	Total
Teenagers (age 11-17)	31.61	35.69	1.83	4.58	26.34	4.29	2.4	13.79	31.52	15.11
Young adults (age 18-30)	13.22	1.42	20.73	20.63	8.04	10.35	.44	2.34	2.72	8.09
Youth (age 11-30)	33.91	46.18	28.66	46.99	23.66	51.01	71.4	69.39	27.45	47.43
Only young men/ boys	0	.85	1.22	0	1.34	0	0	1.17	.54	.55
Only young women/ girls	0	.57	.3	0	2.23	1.01	2.62	3.5	2.45	1.56

Secondary education students	0	1.7	.91	3.44	4.46	.25	1.09	.47	2.45	1.56
Higher education students	14.94	1.42	35.06	8.6	5.36	6.06	13.1	2.34	11.96	10.59
Young workers	.57	1.98	.3	3.72	0	3.03	.22	.47	2.45	1.49
Unemployed, NEETS	0	.28	0	.57	0	0	0	0	.54	.16
Young LGBTIQ	1.72	.57	1.22	1.43	0	5.05	0	.7	0	1.2
Religious youth	1.15	6.52	1.52	4.3	14.29	6.57	5.68	4.44	7.88	5.75
Minority/migrant youth	1.15	1.7	1.83	1.15	1.34	2.27	.66	.47	2.17	1.4
Youth in poverty, homeless	1.72	0	1.22	2.87	4.91	4.55	0	.23	2.45	1.82
(Mentally) disabled	0	.85	4.57	1.43	7.14	5.56	1.09	.7	4.35	2.76
Substance (ab)(mis)users	0	0	.3	.29	0	0	.22	0	0	0.1
Victims of abuse/violence	0	0	0	0	0	0	.22	0	.27	.06
Youth in alternative communities/subcultures (e.g. Emos, Goths)	0	.28	0.3	0	0	0	.22	0	0	.1
Young criminal offenders	0	0	0	0	.89	0	.66	0	.82	.26
Total (N)	174	353	328	349	224	396	458	428	368	3078

While country differences in the groups of young people who are targeted appear to be minor, we are able to point out differences between engaged youth beneficiaries (Table 8) and passive youth beneficiaries depicted (Table 9). Among YOs mentioning their focus on passive service provision, it is particularly interesting that they name vulnerable groups more often compared to active engaged youth. For example, youth in poverty and disabled young people are targeted more frequently across countries. We also find (a small number of) organisations across countries with very specific target groups like victims of abuse or violence, substance (ab)(mis)users, but also employment related groups. Thus, YOs across countries tend to offer active participation to youth in general, whereas specific groups are more likely to be targeted as passive beneficiaries.

Table 9: Main group of passive youth beneficiaries by country (in %)

	France	Germany	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland	UK	Total
Teenagers (age 11-17)	25.53	24.24	4.16	6.52	16.57	5.98	5.23	9.26	14.12	12.67
Young adults (age 18-30)	7.63	1.52	14.18	3.99	2.37	6.94	0	1.85	1.96	5.57
Youth (age 11-30)	41.05	48.86	25.18	42.39	19.53	47.85	34.3	48.15	29.02	36.49
Only young men/ boys	0	0	.24	0	0	0	0	0	.39	.08
Only young women/ girls	2.89	1.14	1.96	0	.3	.24	5.81	1.85	2.75	1.64
Secondary education students	0	3.41	4.65	5.07	7.4	0.48	4.65	3.7	3.92	3.47
Higher education students	6.84	1.89	28.85	11.59	1.78	3.35	18.6	8.33	12.55	10.46
Young workers	1.84	3.79	.73	5.43	0	5.98	1.16	3.7	2.35	2.75
Unemployed, NEETS	.26	0	.24	1.45	.3	.72	0	0	.39	.42
Young LGBTIQ	1.84	.76	1.22	1.81	0	4.78	0	1.85	0	1.56
Religious youth	2.11	4.92	.73	4.71	4.73	2.87	6.4	5.56	2.75	3.4
Minority/migrant youth	1.05	4.92	4.65	3.62	.59	3.11	3.49	3.7	4.31	3.13
Youth in poverty, homeless	5.53	1.14	4.16	6.16	11.83	9.81	10.47	3.7	11.37	7.25
(Mentally) disabled	2.63	1.89	7.33	3.26	30.47	7.42	5.23	7.41	12.16	9.01
Substance (ab)(mis)users	.26	0.38	.49	1.45	1.18	.48	.58	0	.39	.61
Victims of abuse/violence	.26	.38	.98	2.54	2.37	0	2.33	0	1.18	1.07
Youth in alternative communities/subcultures (e.g. Emos, Goths)	0	0	.24	0	0	0	.58	0	0	.08
Young criminal offenders	.26	.76	0	0	.59	0	1.16	.93	.39	.34
Total(N)	380	264	409	276	338	418	172	108	255	2620

Outreach and Connectedness

As already mentioned above, YOs were only included in this dataset if they operate a website. However, most YOs also operate social media presences. With our study design, we excluded many local and informal groups that solely rely on such social media platforms for communication purposes. Still, as Table 10 shows, the websites coded also linked to the social media presences of the respective YOs, revealing noteworthy country differences: Spanish websites are especially well connected to social media platforms, followed by French, British and Greek websites. In Poland, while we know that many organisations exist that only rely on Facebook, and were thus excluded, those organisations included in our sample use social media channels less frequently – across platforms. Moreover, Swiss and German YOs, also link to social media platforms less frequently and use their websites in a rather traditional way. Given the high user rates of some of these platforms, there is some potential for YOs in these countries to increase interactivity and, in effect, to potentially reach more young people.

Table 10: Frequency of selected social media links by country (in %)

	France	Germany	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland	UK	Total
Facebook.com	78.49	67	72.51	86.37	65.6	82.8	71.54	65.73	76.2	74.03
Twitter.com	60.56	35.2	40.64	55.91	19.6	76.4	51.5	26.45	66.6	48.1
Instagram.com	34.66	33.2	21.12	35.67	12.2	43.6	44.69	32.67	33.8	32.39
Youtube.com	41.43	25.2	43.82	46.09	33.4	57	18.64	23.65	32.2	35.73
plus.google.com	15.94	5.8	13.15	17.64	12.4	17.2	3.01	6.41	8.4	11.11
linkedin.com	25.1	4.4	14.14	23.25	6.4	29.8	13.23	9.82	18	16.02
tumblr.com	3.98	1.6	4.18	2.81	2	4	1.2	1.4	2.6	2.64
reddit.com	.6	.4	1.59	1.4	.8	3	.4	.4	1.2	1.09
pinterest.com	5.58	2.4	5.58	8.02	4.4	9.8	2.61	2.4	4	4.98
vimeo.com	5.58	5.6	6.37	5.21	2.6	7.4	10.22	5.01	4.8	5.87
Total (N)	502	500	502	499	500	500	499	499	500	4501

Moreover, Table 11 shows means, standard errors and confidence intervals for two variables,

namely the number of links from the coded website to external websites and links to social media platforms. The first measure (and the specific links) helps to highlight the network structure of organisational opportunities, while both measures are also indicative of interactivity and interaction. Websites include on average between 18 (Germany and Switzerland) and 30 (Italy) external links. As already described above, German and Swiss websites are also less likely to include a higher number of social media presences, whereas this is most common in Spain. It is possible that in Germany and in Switzerland, the majority of clearly structured and hierarchised organisations can spare these forms of outreach more easily.

Table 11: Average number of social media links and links to external website per coded website by countries

	France	Germany	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland	UK
<i>external links</i>									
Mean	25.84	17.83	28	29.9	18.8	28.71	17.96	19.24	21.47
S.E.	1.72	1.35	3.08	9.53	1.8	1.82	1.36	3.47	2.22
95% Conf.	22.46 - 29.21	15.17 - 20.48	21.97 - 34.03	11.23 -	15.29 - 20.62	25.14 -	15.29 - 20.62	12.45 - 26.04	17.12 -
Interval				48.59		32.29			25.82
<i>social media links</i>									
Mean	2.83	1.89	2.33	2.99	1.65	3.53	2.24	1.82	2.57
S.E.	.09	.08	.09	.1	.08	.1	.08	.08	.09
95% Conf.	2.65 - 3.02	1.73 - 2.04	2.15 - 2.50	2.8 - 3.18	1.49 - 1.80	3.34 - 3.73	2.08 - 2.4	1.66 - 1.97	2.4 - 2.74
Interval									
Total (N)	502	500	502	500	500	500	499	499	500

Democratic Participation

Still describing the way young people are addressed and engaged in YOs across countries, Table 12 depicts two measures for democratic participation opportunities. Researchers were asked to code whether YOs on their website explicitly mentioned democratic decision-making procedures, and whether they described decision-making explicitly as including specific groups (for instance, young

women, migrants, disabled). It stands out that German organisations referred to such decision-making processes most often, possibly connected to the relatively high number of political party youth wings, and to the importance of the Bundesjugendring and subsequent norms. This umbrella was established in direct reaction to the Nazi-era and thus emphasises its role in democracy education. This does not mean, that YO in other countries adhere less to democratic decision-making norms, but that they are apparently less eager to emphasise this on their websites.

Table 12: Explicitly mentioned characteristics of democratic participation by country (in %)

	Franc e	German y	Greec e	Ital y	Polan d	Spai n	Swede n	Switzerlan d	UK	Total
Website explicitly states that decision-making processes include young people and follow democratic principles	28.09	45.4	32.67	28.4	6.6	6.8	7.82	8.82	17.6	20.26
Decision-making explicitly inclusive of specific groups (e.g. female, minorities, disabled)	9.96	18.8	3.78	2.6	0.8	2.4	.2	2.2	8.4	5.46
Total (N)	502	500	502	500	500	500	499	499	500	4502

Aims and Political Orientation

Connected to the variables “type of YO” and “primary activity” (see Tables 2 and 3 above), the third most central variable in our codebook measured aims mentioned most frequently on YOs’ websites across countries (see Table 13). We observe that YOs most frequently connected their activities to promoting or facilitating recreational activities (34.6%, including sports, outdoor activities and culture) followed by education (26.6%). Aims of organisations actually show considerable diversity and also include promoting democracy (13.8%), cultural exchange (11.9%), employment related aims (10.7%), reducing poverty (8.9%) protecting the environment (6%), combating different forms of discrimination (5.5%) and human rights (4.2%). In particular, German websites have been coded to state only a few aims; in general, country differences can be related to different cultures of stating these aims, but also due to diverging coder attention.

Table 13: Aims of youth organisations across countries (in %)

	Franc e	German y	Greec e	Ital y	Polan d	Spai n	Swede n	Switzerla nd	UK	Tota l
Reduce poverty, hardship, economic exclusion	15.74	5.4	7.77	11. 8	16.6	5.6	5.81	2	9.2	8.88
Improve employment, working conditions	19.52	6.6	13.35	13. 6	6	19.6	2.2	4.01	11. 2	10.6 8
Promote/facilitate health or inclusion of disabled	14.34	5.4	10.96	17	31.6	11.6	3.41	7.41	23. 8	13.9 5
Promote education	35.66	21	17.93	45. 4	26	45.2	9.42	11.42	27	26.5 7
Promote democratic practices (enabling young people to make themselves heard in the public political sphere)	26.89	17.4	17.33	25. 4	6.6	8.2	4.41	8.02	10	13.8 2
Facilitate political equality for specific groups	12.35	9.8	4.38	3.6	2.8	9	1.6	1.8	2.8	5.35
Fight for a different society / political system	2.59	2	22.91	9.6	.4	10.8	1.6	2.4	.2	5.84
Facilitate recreational activities (sports, arts, etc.)	32.07	26	13.15	21. 8	27.02	18.4	54.91	64.73	53	34.5 6
Promote cultural exchange, intercultural communication between and within countries	17.13	11.6	12.35	21. 4	9.4	21.2	2.61	7.41	3.6	11.8 6
Combat racism/sexism/ anti-Semitism	6.77	9	8.96	6.2	2.4	8.4	2	4.21	1.8	5.53
Support/defend the nation	1	.8	2.39	1.6	1.2	1.2	0	1.2	.2	1.07
Promote religion/ spiritual values	7.71	13.4	2.19	9.8	8.8	12.2	7.01	9.62	7.4	8.62

Crime prevention	1.39	1.6	1	.8	1.8	0	2.2	.4	2	1.24
Protect the environment	12.75	10	8.57	5.6	4.2	4.4	1.6	4.21	2.2	5.95
Promote peace/ end wars	2.59	4.4	2.39	3.6	.2	1	0.6	1.6	.8	1.91
Promote human rights	8.17	1.8	10.16	4.8	2	4	3.01	2.2	1.2	4.15
Other	.2	1.6	25.5	3.2	1	2.4	18.64	1.8	.8	6.13
Total (N)	502	500	502	500	500	500	499	499	500	450

2

The variable “AIMRT” was introduced to measure what routes YO presented on their websites to achieve their goals activities (see Table 14). Most YOs engage in some sort of direct action. Only very few coded websites mentioned only informational activities, PR, legal, or political activities. Particularly in France (31.5%), but also 13.4% of YOs across all countries mention that they lobby for the interests of young people. Another 8.8% engages in protest action and almost 20% launch PR campaigns or try to attain public awareness. Taken together, and against the background of our sampling strategy that allows us to include also “unpolitical” YO like scouts and sports clubs, many YO actually engage in politics, thus, offering young people not only a voice but, oftentimes, also opportunities to speak up themselves. Only few describe their efforts as radical or anti-system (with the exception of Greece). Even for these cases, democratic participation and (political) self-awareness of young people seem to be important (following the aims of YOs).

Table 14: Ways used by youth organisation to reach their aims across countries (in %)

	Franc e	German y	Greec e	Ital y	Polan d	Spai n	Swede n	Switzerlan d	UK	Tota l
Protest action	18.92	9.8	22.31	9.4	.8	8	2.81	3.41	3.4	8.77
Public awareness/ PR and media campaigns	51.2	29.6	25.5	16. 8	11.2	14.6	7.41	11.62	3	19.0 1
Lobbying	31.47	10.8	15.54	14. 2	5.6	12.8	10.22	10.42	9.6	13.4 2
Direct actions (sport/cultural	93.82	94.6	75.3	98. 2	94.6	97.4	90.38	93.39	98. 8	92.9 4

activities, education,
services)

Legal route	5.78	1.6	1.2	1.4	.2	2	1	.2	.6	1.55
Change government	1	1	1.39	.4	.2	.4	.2	.2	1.2	.67
Subvert system/establishment	.4	.2	9.16	1	0	1	.2	.4	0	1.38
Not specified	.4	3.6	8.37	0	3	.2	7.82	1.6	0	2.78
Other	.6	0	3.78	.6	0	0	3.21	0	0	.91
Total (N)	502	500	502	500	500	500	499	499	500	4502

We also coded the political orientation as described by the YOs on their websites (Table 15). Most (more than 80%) did not mention any political orientation, while another 9.4% explicitly stated they were non-partisan. This is common, especially in Sweden and Switzerland, but also, to a lesser extent, in Germany and Italy. In the UK and Poland, the percentage of non-stated political orientation is highest. This variable is probably biased by the country-specific samples. For example, in Germany, where we were able to include a relatively high number of local political party youth wings, the frequency of social-democratic and Christian-democratic groups is higher. Still, the majority of YOs across countries in our sample is not unpolitical in their actions (see Table 13). Thus, while they do not connect with specific political ideologies, they rather portray themselves to be issue driven.

Table 15: Political orientation of YOs as stated on websites by country (in %)

	Franc e	German y	Greec e	Ital y	Polan d	Spai n	Swede n	Switzerlan d	UK	Total
Conservative	0	1.8	0	.2	.4	.4	.4	.4	.2	.42
Christian-democratic	.2	5.2	0	.2	.2	0	0	.2	0	.67
Liberal	.6	0	.2	.4	.8	.2	.2	1.6	.2	.47
Progressive (e.g. pirate party)	.4	.4	.6	0	.2	1.2	0	.4	0	.36
Feminist	4.98	1.2	0	0	0	2.6	.8	.4	0	1.11

Social-democratic	.4	4	.2	3.6	0	0	1.4	.2	.2	1.11
Socialist	1	1.6	.6	1	0	1.2	.2	1.4	.2	.8
Green-alternative	6.18	2	1	.2	0	.2	.6	.6	.2	1.22
Anarchist	0	.2	5.38	0	0	0	0	0	0	.62
Communist	.2	0	2.39	.8	0	.2	.2	.4	0	.47
Nationalist	.2	0	.8	.4	0	.2	0	.4	.2	.24
Fascist/ultra-right	.4	.2	0	.4	0	0	0	0	0	.11
Other	2.19	0	12.15	.6	0	.2	.2	.2	0	1.73
Explicitly non-partisan	4.18	9.4	0	15.4	1.6	7.4	21.04	24.85	1	9.42
Unclear/non-stated	79.08	74	76.69	76.8	96.8	86.2	74.95	68.94	97.8	81.25
Total (N)	502	500	502	500	500	500	499	499	500	4502

Summary and Concluding Remarks

Summing up our main findings, we firstly need to highlight the historical trajectories that appear in our data: the vivid landscape of Greek student organisations and, at the same time, the relative absence of other organisations is one example, others being the peak of new organisations in Germany after World War II, after the political transformations in Greece, Spain, and Poland, and around the EU accession of Poland. Related to these observations, the relative age of youth organisations in Northern Europe contrasts with Poland and the Southern European countries. In addition, the political structure clearly impacts how youth organisations are operating: In federalist countries like Germany and Switzerland, youth organisations also establish multi-layered structures, whereas in other countries such structures are either more centralised (such as Sweden) or less developed (like Poland). In some countries, laws impose specific rules for associations, like in Germany and Switzerland; in others, a central “charity register” exists (the UK) that reflects the role appointed to youth organisations. These factors (among others) appear in our data to impact political orientations, organisational structures, the way activities are organised and other characteristics of youth organisations across Europe.

However, especially in light of these considerable institutional and contextual differences, the aims that youth organisations highlight as their focus of activities, as well as patterns of beneficiaries, activities, and how they try to reach their aims are surprisingly similar. Recreational activities are central, followed by education. Especially in France, Germany, Greece and Italy, youth organisations also focus on democracy promotion. This and the promotion of values (for instance, friendship, citizenship, cooperation) and self-empowerment are widespread also among otherwise unpolitical organisations like the scouts.

The youth organisations included in our data offer different ways of engagement: First of all, the high number of youth-led organisations is noteworthy: Almost 26% of all coded websites described the YO as being youth-led, while this number was lowest in Poland and highest in Greece (which relates to the high number of student groups in Greece). Moreover, in more than 30% of the cases across countries, youth are actively involved in organising activities of the YO. Just short of 70% of the coded websites report that young people are active participants, including the scouts, athletes and musicians. A little less than 60% of the organisations say they provide services for passive beneficiaries (for example, soup kitchens, educational programmes, or providing information), or engage in activities for young people (such as lobbying for youth rights).

While country differences regarding what groups of young people are targeted appear to be minor, we are able to point out differences between engaged youth beneficiaries and passive youth beneficiaries. Among youth organisations mentioning they focus (also) on passive service provision, it is particularly interesting that they name vulnerable groups more often compared to active engaged youth. For example, youth in poverty and disabled young people are targeted more frequently across countries as passive beneficiaries. And we also find (a small number of) organisations across countries with very specific target groups like victims of abuse or violence, substance (ab(mis)users, but also employment related groups. In sum, youth organisations tend to offer active participation to the general youth (sometimes including specific groups explicitly), whereas specific groups are more likely to be targeted as passive beneficiaries by specialised organisations.

Last but not least, more than 80% of the websites analysed did not mention any political orientation, while another 9.4% explicitly stated to be non-partisan. The majority of YO across countries in our sample is not unpolitical in their actions (see Table 13). Thus, while they do not connect with specific political ideologies, they rather portray themselves to be issue driven.

Our findings are far from definite because the sampling strategies had to diverge due to the lack of comparable databases. This, however, also points at a more general pattern and an interesting aspect of this analysis: Youth is not an autonomous field like some of the issue fields that were incorporated might be (for instance, the youth wings of political parties, education-related organisations, or

service-oriented charities). In this sense, youth and, consequently, youth organisations are more likely to be part of existing policy fields. This means that differences regarding these policy fields across countries, in turn, structure the supply side of youth engagement. Moreover, youth are also not a collective actor that can organise as such. Exclusion and inequalities, then, depend even more on country-specific structures of issue fields. The fact that our observations are the same for youth-led and adult-led, youth-oriented organisations supports such an interpretation.

It could be that our impression that organisations follow general policy fields is only an artefact of our focus on websites. However, the part of the organisational field where organisations operate a website is likely to be the more formalised and stable part. For political participation and opportunities for youth, this might be the more relevant part anyway. Last but not least, we aimed to amend the websites collected through hubs in each country with websites identified through keyword searches in all countries (in the respective languages) in Facebook to include also organisations not part of centralised structures identified through hubs. While the variety of organisations was slightly increased, our overall picture did not change. Again, this supports our reading that it is rather difficult to identify one policy field for youth, and that youth organisations rather connect to existing issue fields.

With this quantitative analysis, we were not able to collect detailed information on how youth engages in the different countries and across different types of organisations. Also, an in-depth analysis of inequalities across ethnic backgrounds, gender, class, or educational backgrounds is not possible with this data. We anticipated these shortcomings and for the second part of this work package, we conducted semi-structured interviews and engaged in a qualitative analysis of youth organisations.

PART II – Interviews with Representatives of Youth Organisations

1. Youth participation in comparative perspective

Report by: Lía Durán Mogollón

Introduction and Methodological Remarks

The qualitative leg of this work package is a comparative analysis based on 270 semi-structured interviews with organisational representatives and stakeholders in nine European cities (Athens, Barcelona, Bologna, Cologne, Geneva, Paris, Sheffield, Stockholm and Warsaw). Each national team conducted 30 interviews split as follows: 20 interviews with organisational representatives and 10 with community stakeholders.

The objective of the organisational interviews was to provide us with thick descriptions of the experiences generated by youth-led and youth-related organisations in the form of opportunities, activities, and instruments to foster inclusion and participation of young people. We sought to understand their views on youth participation, as well as the challenges they faced, and the strategies developed by these organisations to involve young adults in social and political life.

The interviews with stakeholders aimed to collect information about the social, political, and discursive context within which youth-related and youth-led organisations operate. Moreover, we expected to obtain robust contextual accounts for an analysis of the opportunity structures offered by the cities under investigation. This chapter is structured as follows: First we will present our sampling strategy and methodology; second we will present the main topics mentioned by stakeholders (instances of participation, role of inequalities, perception of youth); third we will discuss the main findings of the organisational interviews (perceptions of youth concerns and participation, repertoires of action, innovative strategies); and last we will present a brief discussion with our preliminary conclusions.

Sampling

The teams worked in the same cities they had worked in for WP6, all of which are large urban areas with universities and active civil societies. WP6 was a qualitative study of the life-trajectories of activists in nine cities. Researchers sought to capture the broad diversity of activists' experiences, motivations, trajectories and profiles. Thus, researchers interviewed activists from organisations/groups with different profiles, sizes, orientations, levels of structuration, such as political parties, trade unions, feminist groups, environmental organisations, and squats, among others. The same cities for this work package were used to facilitate the sampling (since researchers

could consult some of the contacts made during WP6), and also because the prior knowledge of the field could help researchers form an overall robust image of the frame of opportunity. The total population to draw the sample from consisted of all youth-led or youth-related organisations active in each city. The first criterion of selection was to choose organisations with a clear emphasis (but not necessarily an exclusive one) on participation, namely the social and political inclusion of young adults. In the case of larger organisations that do not focus exclusively on youth (such as religious organisations, trade unions, political parties) the researchers were expected to concentrate on their 'youth department' and address the people specifically involved in youth-related projects. In addition to an explicit emphasis on youth, organisations were selected taking their focus on social and political participation into consideration, as well as their engagement with democratic innovation.

Organisational Interviews

Each team sought to assemble a sample that mirrors the depth and diversity of the organisations operating in the city. The teams gathered a sample of organisations engaged in different sectors, with various inclinations exemplifying different expressions of social and political participation and inclusion: trade unions, political parties, religious organisations, LGTBQI organisations, feminist groups, student associations, migrant organisations, environmental groups, sports clubs, alternative youth centres, social aid/assistance, and so on. The sampling followed an iterative process; thus teams were able to add categories/ organisations to their initial selection once they had more knowledge of the field. Researchers tried to maintain a balance by including similar numbers of youth-led and youth-oriented organisations.

The interviews used semi-structured questionnaires which consisted of five thematic blocks: I) Introduction and organisation activities, II) Experiences with youth engagement, III) Repertoires of action, IV) The societal context for youth participation and V) Open question: Interviewees were asked to give their final remarks and an overall balance of their experience and the societal context for youth engagement. The organisational interviews were conducted face to face and lasted approximately 60 minutes. Interviewees were asked to sign a consent form allowing the researchers to record the dialogue. All interviews were anonymised prior to the analysis and drafting of the national reports.

Interviews with Stakeholders

The stakeholders were defined as representatives from public and private institutions who had a mandate related to the social and political participation of young people. Additionally, stakeholders

were expected to have ample experience in this field and, therefore, provide robust contextual information about the frame of opportunity in each city. In order to ensure variability, teams sought to include stakeholders from the public sector (policy makers, youth dependencies) private sector (media, foundations) and civil society with different trajectories and areas of expertise.

For this specific task researchers had two sampling possibilities that could be combined: to find the names of those people or institutions using official documents or information available online, and to follow a snowball sampling procedure. Those who opted for the latter, turned to informants contacted for WP6 and for this work package's organisational interviews, and asked them to name community stakeholders who have a say in youth-related matters, and who can offer relevant and accurate information about youth participation in the city. The researchers repeated this process until they completed at least ten interviews with stakeholders.

Given that the aim of these interviews was to assemble robust contextual data about the political opportunity structure, the sampling followed the principle of 'saturation'. Once they had assembled enough information about one specific aspect, researchers used their further interviews to check the robustness of this information and/or talk to actors that provided 'new' knowledge about aspects that had not been sufficiently addressed up to that point. This research task was closer to expert interviews in the sense that the interviewees were expected to have privileged access to information and understanding of the field under study. These interviews were also based on semi-structured questionnaires split into four thematic blocks: I) Introduction/ Sector/ Organisation, II) Experiences with youth engagement, III) The societal context of youth engagement, and IV) Open question: interviewees were asked to give their final remarks about youth participation in their city. These interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes, most of them were conducted face to face, but a few were conducted via Skype. Stakeholders were also asked to sign a consent form allowing the researchers to record the interviews. All interviews in this segment were anonymised prior to the analysis and drafting of the national reports. Each team interviewed ten community stakeholders. The sample includes young politicians, other policy makers, public servants in charge of youth programmes, entrepreneurs, researchers, representatives of youth umbrella organisations, expert journalists, representatives from private foundations.

Interviews with Stakeholders: The Frame of Opportunity

Youth and Their Concerns

The vast majority of the stakeholders considers that young people have particular social, personal and economic needs: the search for identity, the need to assert independence from parents and

family, the need to transition from school into the workforce. Therefore, many of the discussions about youth are to do with education, entering the job market, and gaining social and personal life skills. In this sense, the grievances identified by stakeholders deal with the obstacles young people face in trying to find their place in society. Stakeholders in Paris, Athens, Bologna, Barcelona and Sheffield argued that young people are facing an insecure and precarious labour market which negatively impacts their (political, social, economic) integration into society. In Athens and Sheffield, stakeholders specifically mentioned the austerity policies (cuts on welfare provisions, cuts on social and family services, the flexibilisation of the labour market) as the source of many grievances for young people in these cities.

Stakeholders from Bologna and Barcelona expressed different views about the 'NEET' phenomenon (young people, usually 18 to 25 who are neither in education nor in employment) among young people. While those in Bologna see this situation as one of the main problems affecting youth, experts in Barcelona questioned the salience of this topic and warned that the NEET phenomenon is a narrative used by mainstream media and that it is a mistake to focus on this since it helps normalise the attribution of negative characteristics to youth in the public sphere.

Interviewees from Stockholm, Cologne, Geneva, Bologna and Paris argued that both the lack of affordable housing and open non-commercial spaces where young people can meet are among the main problems affecting the youth in their cities. Three of the stakeholders in Cologne elaborated on this problem by explaining how it compounds with stigmatisation and racial discrimination, because young people who meet at parks and public benches are usually reprehended by the community, even more so when it comes to 'foreign-looking young men sitting in public spaces at night'. According to them, these groups are often perceived as dangerous and suspicious. In Geneva, the dismantling of squats and other self-managed spaces has been an issue of contention between young people and policy makers.

Some of the stakeholders in Athens, Warsaw and Barcelona have also identified a problem with affordable housing; Athenian interviewees argued that this is to do with the boom in tourism and the expansion of platforms like Airbnb. The aforementioned are, admittedly, problems that also affect the older cohorts in these cities, but stakeholders argue that affordable housing shortages and a lack of open non-commercial spaces have particular effects on young people because they delay their process of maturation and keep them from asserting independence from figures of authority.

In regards to education, interviewees in Cologne, Barcelona, Warsaw and Stockholm argued that there are significant differences in terms of the quality of schools, and this is associated with the districts they are in. In Stockholm, this is the result of a policy of 'municipalisation' which granted

districts autonomy to manage their own schools and resulted in significant differences between the quality of education in the different districts. In Warsaw, the differences are a consequence of the housing problem: Migrants from other Polish regions move to the city and, given the high housing prices, end up living in the peripheral districts. This, in turn, puts more pressure on the school and social services in these districts. In Barcelona, school failure and school dropout rates are directly related to immigration rates. This question is reflected in the city map, through geographical inequality by neighbourhoods. In fact, some of the stakeholders in Geneva, Cologne and Barcelona claimed that the district of birth or residence strongly determines the quality of education that a person receives and also their chances of going to university.

Stakeholders in Athens added that the remaining economic and psychological effects of the financial crisis are still creating concerns for young people. In a similar vein, interviewees in Stockholm, Sheffield, Warsaw and Bologna added that mental health problems, social isolation and addiction are among the most significant problems faced by young people in these cities. In Stockholm and Warsaw, the interviewees described mental health problems as consequences of pressure to do well at school and a lack of social contacts, whereas in Sheffield this issue was discussed from the demand side (young people facing a more precarious labour market, increased uncertainty), but also from the supply side (social services having faced severe cuts due to the austerity measures and thus unable to cope with the demand for mental health services).

In spite of recognising differences, there are a few traits that most stakeholders recognise in this particular generation: environmentalism, (ethnic) diversity and tolerance for sexual and gender diversity. While these issues are not solely represented by young people, stakeholders do consider that, compared to older cohorts, this generation of young people is more concerned with environmental protection and gender diversity. Furthermore, in cities like Cologne, Stockholm, Barcelona and Paris, the younger generation is (ethnically) more diverse than the older cohorts. Lastly, certain 'disenchantment' with traditional politics has also been mentioned as one of this generation's most salient traits.

In regards to the perspectives, opinions are split. Some of the more pessimistic stakeholders think that this generation faces an increasingly uncertain future (most of them considered climate change, gentrification of the cities, precarious labour conditions, inequalities, isolation), whereas the more optimistic interviewees argued that, in spite of the aforementioned challenges, this generation enjoys great access to communication, networking and travel which can help them find new economic and social opportunities.

Intersectionalities and Inequalities

The majority of the stakeholders recognises that young people are affected by different forms of inequalities that influence their access to social, economic and political participation. Still, the extent to which these inequalities affect young people's participation was a point of disagreement. Likewise, the adequacy of the institutional/social responses to inequality was also an issue of contention.

Socio-economic Inequality

Concerns about the effects socio economic inequality have on young people's access to opportunities and participation were voiced by stakeholders from all of the cities studied. Stakeholders in Paris, Geneva, Cologne, Bologna, Barcelona stressed how working-class youngsters are usually more affected by the problems described above: lack of open spaces, expensive housing, are experienced differently by less affluent youngsters with little or no financial support from their families. Moreover, inequalities in financial and social capital also make a difference when it comes to finding opportunities and integrating into social and political life:

"Disadvantaged youth are more vulnerable, and less conscious that they have a role to play in the society...an important factor of differences in participation among youth is the socio-economic background" (Stakeholder Stockholm).

Some stakeholders in Cologne argued that socio-economic differences do not simply determine the chances of accessing a good education, but also the chances of enjoying leisure activities (by joining clubs and associations). Moreover, parental background was also described as an important factor in determining young people's chances to participate, since children from educated and involved parents are said to be more likely to also become socially and politically engaged. One of the Athenian stakeholders added that in order to be politically engaged, people need to spend time and resources:

"A problem with participating in municipal bodies is that this participation necessitates spending a lot of time during the day to go and visit public structures and officials, which needs to be done during working hours, meaning that one will not be able to work, whereas there is no payment for this engagement."

The lack of resources from an economic perspective are important factors in hindering participation. A Parisian interviewee claimed that young people are primarily preoccupied with being able to become independent: "Am I going to find a job, can I leave my parents' house and earn a living on my own? [...] If we want young people to participate politically, we have to give economic and social answers, especially about employment. The rest is a bit of literature".

This resonates with the comments made by some of the Polish stakeholders, who argued that socio economic inequality is on the rise in Warsaw. The interviewees claimed that young people from other Polish regions lack the financial support that young Warsawians have, and this financial pressure ultimately becomes an additional hurdle to participation. Also, some of the interviewees in Barcelona consider social class a crucial issue when defining the frame of opportunity. It is, according to them, the social background what defines the limitations of capitalising on the opportunities provided by the local youth policies. One of these stakeholders described this:

“It is important not to limit the opportunities’ concept to the employment, education or housing issues. The recognition of class inequalities is a key point. The collateral effects of the crisis still have more impact destroying opportunities than creating new ones.”

Spatial Inequalities and Segregation

Inequalities and high housing prices are making cities like Cologne, Stockholm, Paris and Geneva increasingly segregated. Most of the stakeholders in these cities claimed that the cities have ‘peripheral’ neighbourhoods or districts that concentrate low income population, and frequently also migrants and refugees. In Cologne, Sheffield, Stockholm, Geneva, Paris, and Bologna, these districts are said to be poorly connected with the rest of the city, to have few leisure opportunities and open spaces, and even lower quality schools. Furthermore, in Stockholm, Paris and Cologne, the stakeholders also admitted that young people from these neighbourhoods are also heavily stigmatised and sometimes have fewer chances latter on. An interviewee from Paris described this situation as follows:

"It is not easy because there is a part of the population geographically apart, it is the young people of the suburbs, but inside the capital itself, there is a part of the youth that is in a very difficult social situation, poorly integrated, socially, culturally and politically. And there is a relationship of distrust that has been created with the city for a long time, which is too complicated to reverse. It's a real challenge "

Interviews suggest that in these particular cities, the district of origin not only has a strong influence on a person’s chances to integrate into social, political and economic life, but also on the way in which the person is perceived externally. Moreover, this spatial distance also affects the perception that young people living in these peripheral areas have of politics and society. A representative from a self-organised youth group in Cologne added: “The political parties, they don’t come here (Mühlheim). Not even the SPD which is the workers’ party... not even the left really opens here and works with the people here.”

Ethnic Inequalities

Migration permeated the discourses about youth in eight of the cities studied. The experiences with

migration are diverse, but in cities like Geneva, Paris, Stockholm and Cologne, migration is a ubiquitous term: It describes the 'second-generation' migrants, as well as the newly arrived refugees and migrants. Albeit with differentiated migrant groups in mind, stakeholders in all cities considered migrants and refugees to be among the most vulnerable milieus of young people. Additionally, stakeholders recognise that discrimination and stigmatisation make their access to social and political participation more difficult. While most of these discourses about migration usually refer to non-EU migrants, in Warsaw, internal migrants (Poles from less affluent cities and regions) were among those considered vulnerable. In Barcelona, however, the unaccompanied minors have received the most attention from the media and the administration. Stakeholders in Cologne, Stockholm, Geneva and Paris commented that several of the institutional and organisational initiatives are designed precisely to tackle the problems faced by migrants and refugees. Still, they stressed that second generation migrants continue to face a great deal of discrimination. A German stakeholder stated that:

“Every employer would deny this, but everyone knows that’s how it is... when you get applications and there are some foreign names, particularly Turkish, then the employers say mmm no... unless there is a shortage of qualified workers, or if they come from certain districts...”

Conversely, in Barcelona, second generation migrants are seen by the administration as “a very positive factor on society as they are extraordinary people that bring multiculturalism and will help to explain this complex world we are in.”

As with socio-economic inequalities, ethnic inequalities imply that young people with migrant backgrounds are differently affected by the lack of housing, the uncertain labour market and the lack of open spaces. Furthermore, interviews suggest that second generation migrants and newly arrived migrants and refugees experience these inequalities differently: While second generation migrants are affected by discrimination and by their parents' lack of social capital, newly arrived migrants also face uncertainty, and lack language skills, further hindering their participation. Stakeholders in Barcelona mentioned that while unaccompanied minors receive a fair amount of institutional attention, these minors are expected to emancipate between the ages of 18 and 21, which is considered challenging considering the average age for emancipation is 30. An interviewee in Cologne summarised the situation of young migrants and refugees by arguing that they are usually objects of political discussion, but are rarely seen as interlocutors in these discussions.

Gender Inequalities

In most cities, gender inequality was not explicitly mentioned among the main issues of concern. Nonetheless, some of the stakeholders still recognise that young women continue to be less visible than young men in the public sphere, and that at least in institutionalised instances of participation, young men tend to be over-represented. Stakeholders in Stockholm mentioned that desertion from leisure and sport activities tended to be higher among migrant girls, whereas school desertion primarily affected boys and young men. Besides this, they argued that when it came to developing infrastructure and facilities for young people, it was mostly young men that were taken into account. Two of the stakeholders in Cologne recognised the under-representation of young women (and of sexual and ethnic minorities) as a reflection of what happens in society at large, and one of them asked: “Why should we expect more from the kids?”.

Instances of Participation

Most of the cities studied have (more or less structured) initiatives to promote the participation of youth (in this case, participation was usually given a rather broad definition and included economic, social and political participation), and these include permanent instances (fora, youth parliaments, umbrella organisations, and so on), policy and legal frameworks, as well as concrete projects, contests, scholarships and festivals. Moreover, in all cities there are active civil societies which offer numerous possibilities for engagement and participation.

Still, the instances and spaces of participation appear to have two main deficiencies: passiveness (either they exist but are not really active, or they lack credibility among some youngsters) and lack of diversity. Interviewees in Cologne, Warsaw and Paris questioned the real relevance of their respective youth fora/ assemblies/ parliaments, and argued that, in most cases, they are not really taken seriously. One of the Polish stakeholders commented: “The most popular pattern in relations to youth is based on teacher-pupil model” which, according to this view, is based on the idea that young people need to be taught and guided.

Furthermore, these spaces tend to be occupied by rather homogeneous groups of young people, namely people from middle-class households with academic backgrounds. In a sense, these issues suggest that the problem is not a lack of instances of participation but a problem reaching those segments that are underrepresented. In several cases, the stakeholders mostly concentrated on institutionalised mechanisms of participation (like voting or joining a political party) and therefore expressed concern about the low levels of interest.

The interviews indicate that the initiatives are still not reaching the disenfranchised youngsters; usually those who have spent less time in education, those whose parents are neither politicised nor

have attended university, and (frequently) working-class youngsters with migrant backgrounds. Given that several stakeholders recognise schools and universities as crucial spaces for political socialisation, it becomes clear how young workers, trainees and others who are not enrolled at universities are not reached by initiatives destined to promote political socialisation. The same is true for some school pupils in contexts with highly differentiated school systems; the three-tier school system in Germany was seen as a mechanism of exclusion in political socialisation. A stakeholder from Bologna elaborated on the distance between policy makers and youth:

“Young people and institutions never meet; there is no direct relationship between these two subjects. When they meet, they do so in a conflictual way, or via delegation to reference figures that liaise with the institutions. [...] Youth institutional participation is stationary because the image that is reflected back to young people is that of a distant policy, incapable of producing room for participation. [...] Institutions promote a model of youth participation that is instrumental to their own idea of participation. This is a limited attempt, and it brings out the discrepancy and difference between what young people really ask and desire, and what institutions offer them” (SI7).

On the subject of distance between young people and the local authorities, a stakeholder from Barcelona argues: “We do not need to generate more infrastructures and equipment, but to make them more accessible. It is not that the administration allocates many resources for participation, but that it democratises those that already exist.”

The stakeholder argued that even though there has been a significant investment in developing instances of participation, and some of them have opened new arenas that allow young people to feel more engaged; the problem is that the multiplication of services does not necessarily engender greater inclusion of people from different backgrounds.

Blame Attribution

Albeit admitting the importance of inequalities, a few stakeholders still considered that some of the obstacles to young engagement are the lack of will and interest in institutionalised mechanisms of participation. As a stakeholder in Stockholm argued: “Long-sightedness and long-term engagement are often important to make change happen, but young people do not always have that” (SSWE3). Furthermore, in Athens, Bologna and Cologne some of the interviewees argued that with all their inherent shortcomings, these cities are usually better in terms of youth participation than other cities in the same countries.

In spite of the ‘distance’ from institutionalised politics, many interviewees recognised that young people are interested in the environment, in societal issues and are willing to mobilise for the causes they care about. Stakeholders in several cities mentioned the Fridays for Future

demonstrations as a salient example of this willingness to organise and mobilise. Some of them praised them and some considered that they still need to go through the institutional channels if they expect to see any change. Solidarity was also seen as a mobilising factor; some interviewees in Cologne recalled the support offered by young students and pupils towards the refugees after 2015, and in Athens, the crisis incentivised solidarity initiatives among young people. An interviewee from Athens explained: “The crisis has played a significant role in turning youth interest towards undertaking action in supporting homeless people and the needy” (OG18). This was criticised by some of the stakeholders who argued that young people are only interested in ‘issues’ (like the environment, identity politics, solidarity initiatives), but are rarely so interested in institutionalised politics and/or in the institutionalised mechanisms of participation. A Swiss stakeholder illustrates this:

“At 18 years old, when young people get the right to vote, they use it but then the turnout decreases quickly. In this sense, there is some work to do to explain the importance of political participation. However, there are other forms of participation (as shown by the recent climate strikes). We suddenly see many young people mobilised for a cause that they do not know very well, but thanks to social networks something is happening (in terms of mobilisation capacity). The question is whether this mobilisation will take other forms. Then how to make the youth understand that in a democratic state, there is the rule of law, and there are some venues to participate.”

Organisational Interviews

The organisational interviews included a diverse sample of organisations with different mandates, orientations, sizes, ages and levels of structuration. All of the organisations selected were either youth-led or ‘youth-oriented’ (meaning they have a direct mandate related to promoting the social and political participation of youth). In some of the cities (for example, Stockholm and Athens) the division between both was not so clear-cut. On the contrary, in Barcelona, the difference between youth-led and youth oriented is notorious and relevant. The organisations contacted include youth-wings of political parties, trade unions, religious organisations, self-help groups, young explorers’ groups, migrants’ organisations, feminist groups, youth LGBTQ organisations, squats and autonomous groups, environmental organisations, student unions, artistic collectives, sports’ organisations. The diversity of national interview samples was important in order to get a more authentic and accurate account of youth-related participation, given that interviewees had different experiences and views.

Young People and Their Concerns

Most of the organisational representatives agree with the problems identified by stakeholders; the lack of affordable housing, the lack of open non-commercial spaces for young people to meet, the

precarisation of the labour market, deteriorating mental health and the negative consequences of the austerity policies. In Barcelona, young people were troubled by other problematics: As EURYKA searchers were conducting these interviews, the process of Catalanian independence was unfolding. This influenced the concerns of most of the youth organisations, like, for instance, some of the members of the student union who were imprisoned because of their active participation in the street demonstrations.

In some cases, youth-oriented organisations cooperated with public dependencies and, thus, expressed similar views on the cities' opportunities of participation for young people. However, the organisational interviewees had different views on the opportunities for participation; some considered that, at least compared with other cities, their cities were open and supportive of young engagement, while others operated from a more social view of participation, and some others argued that the cities need to take young engagement more seriously and that the present structures are not that inclusive. In this respect, organisational representatives in Stockholm claimed that youth needs to be visibilised and not just mentioned in negative contexts. One of the interviewees claimed: "Youth issues in Stockholm are hardly talked about at all, on a visible level". Other interviewees in Stockholm and Cologne shared this view and stressed the negative visibilisation of young people with migrant backgrounds, of young men from the cities' outskirts, and the fact that young people are frequently topics of discussion but not really regarded as equal interlocutors. An organisational representative from Warsaw described this situation:

"Many initiatives are often refused or treated not seriously only because they are proposed by young people, not older ones. Only if they are formulated or signed by serious, old, fully adult people or organisations do they receive any attention"

Moreover, most organisational representatives also acknowledge the role of inequalities in shaping young people's participation and development. A representative from an organisation in Geneva stated:

"Inequalities affect everybody. It is a question of social class. Youth from the proletariat are discriminated against in terms of educational access. You can see it with the statistics of university students who largely come from families where the parents have studied at university, too. There are also labour access inequalities. The wealthier the social class you are in, the fewer struggles and inequalities you will face."

Some of the representatives from youth-led organisations also acknowledge these inequalities and their role in hindering participation and integration. In Warsaw, inequality(ies) as an issue of concern, was particularly salient in the interviews with less conventional organisations. A German interviewee from a political party's youth-wing referred to the over-representation of university

students, middle-class youngsters in the group: “It is still very homogenous... if you were to randomly pick a handful of us, chances are that most (of the people you pick) would be male, white, middle-class and studying economics or law”.

The spatial segregation and the distance between milieus was also mentioned by some of the organisational representatives, who were especially worried about the impact these inequalities have on young people’s life chances. A Parisian interviewee sums it up:

“Children from an early age benefit from strong educational support, extra-school teaching, or better private schooling, while in other milieus, parents have too many financial worries... In fact, some parents can facilitate access to internships in various companies and institutions, while other families do not have this type of opportunity.”

The underrepresentation of young women in certain circles was, albeit not as salient as other forms of inequality, but an issue of concern for some organisational representatives. An organisational representative from Sheffield stated:

“Certainly girls are less likely [to make a verbal contribution to meetings]. If you have a lot of people [who] are a bit nervous about making contributions or asking questions, girls will tend to be more likely ... and it always seems to work like if one year you get a core group of girls who do speak a lot, that can work well for other members of the group, but if another year you do not get so many of those... some years it has been almost an exclusively male group, and that's a tricky one”.

Similarly, in Barcelona, political organisations have also noticed the underrepresentation of young women in their groups. This was considered an issue of concern, and organisational representatives said that they are trying to develop initiatives to change this situation

The inequalities mentioned tend to mirror those discussed by the stakeholders, evidenced by the programmes and repertoires of action that some of the organisations are involved in. Some of the organisational interviewees worked with specific segments of the population; youngsters with disabilities, young migrants, young women, young people living in disadvantaged districts. These usually offered services to their constituencies and often engaged in advocacy activities.

Blame Attribution

When it comes to the reasons why young people are not more engaged (and why some groups of young people are even more under-represented in the public sphere), organisations tend to have different opinions. On the one hand, some of the organisations argue that this is a reflection of what happens in the political sphere at large, and thus, expresses the reproduction of already existing processes of invisibilisation. Along this line, some of the organisations considered that policy makers need to do a better job when it comes to communicating their initiatives to promote youth

participation (this referred to youth councils, youth fora, and similar instances) because as it stands, they only seem to reach young people who are already engaged and well informed. Moreover, in some cases, interviewees argued that young people are only visible when they organise protests or ‘do something spectacular’ to paraphrase a Polish interviewee.

The lack of diffusion was one of the main weaknesses of the current instances and opportunities, since most young people do not know about them; spaces are usually filled by those who are already mobilised and engaged. Likewise, it was argued that the recruitment processes of many organisations tend to favour academic, middle-class and non-migrant background youth, either because there are dynamics of discrimination or stigmatisation, or because of unrecognised biases in the spaces of recruitment (the university as a frequent scenario of recruitment was mentioned to exemplify the latter). Several representatives from both youth-led and youth-oriented organisations added that young people do not feel they are taken seriously by the older cohorts and certainly not by policy makers. A Polish interviewee claimed:

“Youth audience consultations often deal with non-serious issues, like cultural participation, leisure-time or sport infrastructure; in other cases, the results of youth opinion pools are not taken into consideration”

This situation demotivates many young people from participating. A Parisian interviewee said: “Young people are fed up by the demagogy surrounding public institutions dealing with youth” (OI5), or “They tell us that the government is listening. But does it really? We say it doesn’t work, there is no change” .

The interviews in Barcelona also identified this poor visibilisation of young people and their issues. Thus, they argued that young people should be independent in their way of claiming their spaces of political participation and, therefore, the promotion of autonomous or self-managed ways to access the public sphere are very important.

Conversely, some of the organisational representatives alleged that young people are mostly preoccupied with satisfying their material needs and solving short-term issues (like finishing school, socialising, finding a university/ vocational school and so on) and this is the reason why some of them do not participate more in social and political life. Some interviewees considered young people to be ‘disinterested and uninformed’ as an Italian interviewee claimed: “Barely out of ignorance, they don’t care much about what’s happening” (OI4). In Barcelona, this problem was also identified by interviewees who claimed that young people who cannot fulfil their basic needs are neither engaged nor mobilised. Furthermore, they do not vote because they have more ‘pressing’ needs.

Some of these interviewees recognise that satisfying these material (and social) needs is remarkably easier for those from the educated middle-class milieus, which leaves them more time and energy for engagement. Some of them also think that political education and youth fora are not the only thing that the disadvantaged youngsters need in order to participate, because as it is, they often do not seem to find these spaces. On the contrary, they believe that in order to reach these instances of (social and political) participation, young people need to first and foremost receive emotional, personal, academic and social counselling and guidance. This is seen as a strategy to mitigate the absence of parental guidance, social, cultural and economic capital. They believe that marginalised youngsters need to boost their self-esteem and develop stronger academic, social and personal life skills in order to fully participate. One of the German interviewees described this as “strengthening the individual”.(what the education psychology calls building resilience). The organisations had broad ideas of what participation means, which is reflected in their offer; participation involves entering the labour force, having access to education, having a social network, having a say in cultural and political life.

Decision-making Processes

Most of the national case-studies suggest that the differences in decision-making and functioning are mainly to do with the age and the level of structuration; larger and more established organisations usually had more hierarchic structures and a clearer division of tasks. Still, many of the youth-orientated organisations have feedback mechanisms so that young people (clients, volunteers, and counsellors) can give their opinions about the programmes and suggest activities or campaigns for the future. Many of the youth-oriented organisations have young adults as volunteers, interns, staff members and consider this a good way to ‘stay in touch’ with young people’s needs. Youth-wings of larger organisations (political parties, workers’ unions, environmental groups) mentioned they are autonomous from the mother organisations, and that they can organise their own events and campaigns. They are, nonetheless, expected to adjust their events and programmes to the organisations’ mission and to the budget available.

Conversely, the smaller grass-roots organisations usually had less formalised and more horizontal decision-making processes. They often mentioned direct deliberation and consensus as their preferred decision-making mechanisms, and a few of them claimed not to have a specific leader. A grass-roots organisation in Geneva explains:

"We have developed a functioning system based on sociocracy or holocracy. Radical collaboration is our way of organising. We have published a "guide book" to explain how [we] work, how we organise our internal processes: we rely on self-management and we self-evaluate among ourselves; there is no leader".

Repertoires of Action, Innovation and Digital Forms of Participation

The organisations had diverse outlooks and strategies, and their repertoires of action usually respond to their organisational outlook. Some of them offer direct services to young people (which include learning support, personal and professional counselling, leisure and sports activities, artistic activities, media trainings), advocacy and political education. Several of the organisations have overlapping programmes that combine services, political education and advocacy activities. Many of these organisations developed activities intended to promote civic values and to foster social capital and trust.

Among some of the frequent repertoires of action, researchers found: language courses for migrants and refugees, academic support services (including learning support for school assignments, IT workshops), personal counselling, vocational counselling (including application workshops, interview trainings), spaces for artistic creation, sports' activities, vacations and excursions. Besides these services, some of the organisations organise round tables and discussions about social and personal issues, lectures, campaigns. Some of the youth-led organisations also offer services, engage in advocacy activities, and organise social events for their members and supporters.

Innovation and Digital Forms of Participation

Some of the interviewees understood the questions about democratic innovation and digital forms of participation such as mechanisms to facilitate access and communication with young people; others mentioned strategies that aim to connect young people with policy makers; yet other interviewees understood this as initiatives taken to promote inclusion of under-represented groups and to develop horizontal and inclusive deliberation.

When asked about the innovative strategies used to promote youth participation, a number of interviewees mentioned the use of social media and digital participation. Some organisations used social media as a way of promoting horizontal communication and reducing logistical hurdles, others used Youtube or Instagram as channels to let young people express their creativity. In Stockholm, some organisations use digital platforms for their daily work (chatrooms, streaming of main events) and a digital platform for meetings between politicians and young people, the 'digital valuga'. In spite of highlighting the advantages of social media for these purposes, interviewees also stressed the importance of face-to-face contact and collaboration. In Barcelona, many of the organisations and institutions have also resorted to

digital ways of participation, like *Decidim* Barcelona, as an attempt to create spaces that are closer to young people's interests and practices. Still, interviewees in Barcelona tended to define innovation more in terms of promoting co-creation and originality in language and content. An interviewee from a youth-led organisation said:

“We generate a lot of interactive content. This helps us to establish constant dialogue with young people in the city and, at the same time, it helps us to register and measure the feedback we receive. We have a discourse strategy that consists of not using formal/institutional language, but a mix of serious information with informal, funny, ironic language. We use gifs, images, icons...”.

Some interviewees have resorted to sports and artistic activities as a way of promoting comradeship, cooperation and civic values among young people. A few of the organisations have included flyers and activities in foreign languages in order to include newly-arrived migrants and refugees. Most of the organisational interviewees admitted that maintaining a balance between leisure and 'work' (whether this is educational or political) is key to keeping a base of young people engaged. Some of the smaller grass-roots youth organisations include campaigns promoting conscious consumption, 'cleaning parties' and exchange parties as mechanisms to change the negative perception of environmentalism and attract other young people. An Athenian interviewee explained that they want to incorporate their beliefs and values in everyday activities:

“We do not remain restricted in the idea of serving food; we want to celebrate difference, that's why we regularly organise ethnic festivities, like the Persian food night with traditional music, or the board game night”.

The authorities in Bologna launched what has been considered an important example of an innovative policy: a participatory budgeting project that allocated one million euros to citizen-designed initiatives that gave a special emphasis to young people. Two interviewees in Cologne mentioned a similar experience in some districts of the city, where young people were guided by some public servants to draft petitions for infrastructure projects that benefit them. One successful petition was the construction of a skater park, and a rejected one was the construction of a Rhine hut. In Cologne, a major obstacle is informing young people about this possibility. In Paris, there have been experiments with trips through the city, organised and designed by young people in order to help them appropriate the urban spaces. In Warsaw, local authorities launched an initiative called Young Warsaw Programme which is considered an innovative initiative in Poland⁴. This is a cooperative programme (the goal is to involve NGOs, young people and other political actors so

⁴ Description of programme: <https://warszawa19115.pl/-/program-mloda-warszawa> [access 01.01.2020]

that it is not a top-down action) that aims at activating young people and including them in democratic processes by giving them real influence on actions and changes in their environment.

In Sheffield some of the organisations have implemented a 'protected seats' mechanism for people according to gender, sexuality, ethnicity and other under-represented characteristics. This is thought to help the groups maintain some diversity. In Geneva and Athens, some of the organisations have been using clouding, snap chat and similar technologies to increase responsiveness and make the deliberation processes more open and horizontal.

General Remarks and Discussion

The interviews show that this generation of young people is a highly differentiated segment meaning that they are differently affected by societal problems. Still, there are generational traits recognised by most of the interviewees, like concern for the environment, more tolerance to difference and a sense of facing more precarity and uncertainty in the labour market.

The analysis of the interviews suggests that some young people are simultaneously affected by different axis of inequality, the most frequently mentioned were socio-economic and ethnic inequality. These inequalities affect their access to social, economic and political participation and one of the main problems identified by the stakeholders in several cities is that the institutional initiatives are not reaching these disenfranchised circles.

Given that many interviewees were concerned with the lack of affordable housing and the lack of open and non-commercial spaces, it is important to highlight that there is a common perception that urban planning is not really considering the needs of young people, or at least not of all young people. Even more, the poor connections and infrastructure in some 'peripheral' districts creates another obstacle preventing young adults from fully integrating into the cities' social, political, cultural and economic life. To address this, decentralising the instances of participation and some of the initiatives while improving the infrastructure and access to transport in these districts would be important steps. Additionally, protecting and supporting alternative centres and free spaces for young people is all the more relevant considering the concerns about poor mental and social isolation, as described by interviewees in Stockholm, Sheffield, Warsaw and Bologna.

The search for autonomy should be at the heart of the initiatives for participation. Given that some of the stakeholders and organisational representatives in all cities claimed that young people did not feel like they were being taken seriously by policy makers, and considering the salience of those concerns about open spaces, it is important to consider that not all the programmes for youth need to be structured and coordinated by a figure of authority (namely a 'mother institution', or a

foundation, a social worker, a teacher, and so on), but that dialogue on an equal basis and respect for autonomy are important when it comes to integrating young adults.

2. France

Report by: Henry Rammelt and Rosa María Lechuga

Introduction and Urban Context

Paris is the capital city of France. Located in the north of the country, it has a population of 2,220,445 inhabitants (December 2018), covers an area of 10,540 hectares and has a density of 21,067 inhabitants per km², one of the highest in Europe. Demographically, Paris is the fifth largest city in the European Union. It is noted that the number of inhabitants has decreased slightly compared with the figures for previous recent years. This decline, which began in 2011, is predicted to continue for several more years⁵. This is all the more striking, given that many other French cities have gained inhabitants over this same time period. This trend can be explained by the fact that many people come to study in Paris, to start a professional life, to eventually start a family, and then leave the capital when their family expands or when they retire. Stress, pollution and the high cost of living are the main contributing factors to this phenomenon.

Paris is a young, dynamic city. Students and young active people [15 to 44 years old] are great in number. The average age of inhabitants is 39 years old.

Figure 2. Distribution of age groups over total population (in comparison with the average in other French cities)

Data 2015	Number of inhabitants	% of the population	% of the population in other cities (on average)
Under 15 years old	312 251	14.2 %	18.1 %
15 - 29 years old	514 644	23.3 %	13.5 %
30 - 44 years old	498 914	22.6 %	18.5 %
45 - 59 years old	404 781	18.3 %	21.8 %
60 - 74 years old	305 908	13.9 %	18.1 %

⁵ https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2019/01/22/la-population-de-paris-risque-de-diminuer-jusqu-en-2025_5412989_3224.html

Data 2015	Number of inhabitants	% of the population	% of the population in other cities (on average)
Over 75 years old	146 162	6.6 %	8.9 %

Paris is also a city of economic migration, that is, it is a gateway to French territory for foreigners. The migrant population of Paris accounts for 20% of the total population when one includes all those who arrived in Paris as foreigners, even if they have since acquired French nationality.⁶

Socio-political Issues

As the capital city of France, Paris is very active and politically oriented. National demonstrations usually end with a procession of people marching in the streets of Paris so as to challenge the national authorities and take advantage of the media exposure afforded to the capital city. Long considered a bastion of right-wing politics, the city has tilted to the left since 2001. As a symbolic city, it is now fiercely fought over by both sides.

Over the past three years, several leading social movements have developed in Paris. One such example is the "*Nuit debout*" movement, which began on 31st March 2016 following a demonstration against Labour law and the flexibilisation of the labour market in particular. The *Nuit debout* movement took the form of a series of gatherings organised in public squares. Without a leader or spokesperson, the movement organised itself into committees, and decision-making was made by consensus at general meetings on the basis of direct democracy. The movement was very popular among young people, spread out over a hundred cities and was particularly strong in Paris until May 2016. Another recent example is the mobilisation of the "Yellow Vests" movement which has been notably strong in Paris with its dense context of associations and civil society activities. There are ca. 65,000 active associations in Paris, with 5,000 associations being created each year, and 550,000 volunteers engaged in one way or another. Finally, we should emphasise that Paris and its suburbs regularly experience severe urban riots with regular conflict with the police. Sectors of the youth living in deprived neighbourhoods are affected by unemployment rates of around 40% and serious forms of segregation.

⁶ <http://www.linternaute.com/ville/paris/ville-75056/demographie>

Sample

We ran eight qualitative interviews with local stakeholders (five males and three females) and experts on youth participation in Paris, as well as 20 qualitative interviews with representatives of organisations and groups involved in youth socio-political participation. This selection aimed to mirror Paris' cultural, political, social and economic diversity. Accordingly, the sample included associations, organisations and authorities that represent different strands of young people, including those who focus on sports and leisure, sexual orientation, education, migration, political participation, socio-economic regeneration, and so forth.

We have thus interviewed the representatives of:

- the Paris branch of a national network of youth associations that aim to advance peace and cross-national understanding through mobility programmes for young people, as well as offering youth camps and volunteering opportunities (O12);
- one large student group, consisting of a territorial federation of university students bringing together students from Paris with the aim of defending their rights and representing them vis-à-vis other organisations and institutions in France and abroad (O13);
- the Paris branch of the National Network of Junior Associations, which is a flexible network enabling any group of young people, aged 11 to 18 years, to set up projects and foster associative dynamics (O15);
- a youth association active in the field of fighting prostitution, mainly by assisting young prostitutes and those who escaped prostitution, through information campaigns in schools and universities (O14);
- an association providing affordable housing and acting as a club for migrant youth, with a particular focus on young people benefitting from social assistance for their children (ASE) (O16);
- an association working in the field of information activities, experience sharing and professional services for homo-parental families, their children and future homosexual parents (O18);
- the Paris branch of a national network of youth associations with scarce resources, so as to give young people a voice for intervening directly in society (O17);
- an association active in the field of humanitarian aid since 1980, offering volunteering opportunities for young people and having a special (migrant) youth group in its organisation (O11);
- a 'Youth and Business Association', focusing on the employment of young people mainly by promoting the education-business dialogue (through young people meeting up with

professionals), as well as various actions designed to respond to specific problems and concerns, generated by young people for their professional future (O19);

- the Paris branch of a Christian movement of rural youth, who organise a variety of youth-oriented educational and cultural actions, as well as providing support for young people who move from rural areas to Paris (O10).

The eight stakeholders were chosen because of their mandate, experience and expertise in the field. They come from different sectors: the public service, research, education, sport, and social issues.

- three are part of the city council, focusing on social inequalities, sports and education, respectively (O1, O2 et O3);
- one is part of the first French think tank devoted to youth and education (O4);
- one is a researcher/specialist on youth in France and Europe (O5);
- one is part of an association devoted to the development of community projects in disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the Parisian region (O6);
- one is part of the Parisian branch of a large network of associations, unions and political parties (O7);
- one is part of a private foundation which offers free accommodation and financial support for students admitted to preparatory classes for the 'Grandes Écoles' in Paris (O8).

Interviews with Stakeholders

The City Context for Youth Participation: Opportunities and Constraints

Young people in Paris stand out for their heterogeneousness in terms of social characteristics and geographic origin, with many young people from foreign backgrounds. Precariousness is also a crucial characteristic, with major concerns over lack of employment, housing and health. This is evident in the words of O7, who said that "youth can be considered as a social class, defined by social criteria". It should not be forgotten that a significant part of the youth sector in Paris is invisible, or hardly visible in the eyes of public authorities. In the words of O8:

"It is not easy, because there is a part of the population that is geographically apart; it is the young people of the suburbs. But inside the capital itself, there is a part of the youth that is in a very difficult social situation, poorly integrated, socially, culturally and politically. And there is a relationship of distrust that has been created with the city over the years, which may be too complicated to reverse."

As regards the mobilisation of young people, there is a mismatch between the generally structured and institutionalised participation systems and the expectations of young people. In the words of O1:

“For several decades, public interventions on matters of citizenship and the participation of young people have multiplied. These interventions create what can be called a citizenship policy, meaning that young people are almost the only cohort to whom specific citizenship regulations and criteria apply, I would say. ”

The question of the political participation of young people cannot be tackled without reference to their social and territorial integration. Local participation, in all its forms, stands out as a first fundamental basis for practising citizenship. There is often a political reason for young people to participate, but the utilitarian approach is also present. The usual questions that young people ask themselves is clear in the words of O7:

“Am I going to find a job, can I leave my parents' house and earn an independent living? [...] If we want young people to participate politically, we have to give economic and social answers, especially about employment. The rest is empty rhetoric”.

Another issue refers to the need to increase more informal and flexible practices for employment so as to adapt to the needs of young people. For young people in particular, the urban environment must be reshaped in terms of its possible usages; thus, in the words of O4, the challenge is “to rethink a public space that must be open to the free appropriation of young people.” It is so crucial that interviewees can express direct criticism for main organisations in the field which remain too traditional. For example, in the words of O6, the Paris Youth Council (CPJ)⁷ has “the merit of existing, but it is modelled on traditional forms of political participation for adults”. Each year, a call for candidates is launched by the City Council so as to fill vacant seats (left vacant by members resigning, or reaching the end of their term of office). City institutions involve the CPJ in various issues, gathering the opinions of its members on community projects, asking them to formulate proposals on relevant issues for youth, as well as inviting them to participate in main events about youth. The CPJ is invited to elaborate on official opinions: Once these opinions have been formulated, the CPJ members are invited to present them to the elected representatives during meetings of the preparatory committees for the Paris Council sessions. In fact, the City Council has adopted several CPJ proposals formulated by CPJ members including cycling plans, tourism development, anti-pollution, youth autonomy, and so forth.

⁷ The CPJ is made up of 100 young people (50 young women and 50 young men) aged between 15 and 30, appointed for a non-renewable 2-year term and who live, study, work or have regular social activities in Paris (associative involvement, and so forth.).

However, while the functioning of these schemes allows youth issues to enter the political agenda, the main point is that true awareness is only fostered among young people who have already developed an interest in politics and who are perfectly well integrated into the socio-political life of the city. Some also claim that positive discrimination criteria should be implemented in favour of young migrants, young people with disabilities, and people expressing difference in general (cf. interview with O5). In France, we know that this kind of measure is not easy, but it would be a way of raising awareness beyond this segment of the youth which is already largely socially and politically integrated. A stronger focus on youth would invite proposals for a playful reinvention of a festive city, which allows for a real appropriation of space; in contrast, Paris remains a city that is an expression of bourgeois and elitist politics. Politicians find it difficult to rely on the creative autonomy of young people, so “many creative practices come from young people, but there are not enough resourceful places” (cf. interview with O7).

Therefore, the key question remains: How much space are we willing to give to young people? In the words of O5: "You have to go and find out what is being done, what is working, rather than trying to build things; as soon as something is labelled "Paris City Council", this no longer attracts young people". Similarly, in the words of O4:

“Youth should not be seen as a problem; we must take a fresh look at young people so that they can express *their* potential and not the potential of the city, institutions or their parents’ projects. It’s not easy, but you have to trust them and give them responsibilities”

Political participation and citizenship practices must take into account first and foremost integration into the local life, starting with the neighbourhood level. At the same time, it is important to adapt forms of communication and awareness: The usual campaigns (posters, flyers, and so on), which work rather well with adults, are unsuitable for young people, many of whom use the Internet, social networks and digital technology. Even when the social networks are used for diffusion of information (cf. a main Facebook page, available at <https://fr-fr.facebook.com/ParisJeunes>), the main goal remains to use a narrative and visual devices that can appeal specifically to young people, beyond a general public of adults. A comprehensive set of new and conventional channels must be taken into consideration. Thus, in the words of O2, “The school remains an important place for awareness raising, but it is not sufficiently exploited”. Local projects on the ground are also crucial. Thus, in the words of O3:

“A group of young people proposed a trip within Paris adapted to young people, by choosing the places, the streets, the activities, the restaurants, and so on; it worked very well, it is the

beginning of gaining ownership of the city, a reflection on the urban and also on how the inhabitants can be actors of their district and not simply spectators”.

Focus is also put on new ways of guaranteeing prevention (for example, in relation to the use of drugs, alcohol, or even cigarettes): It is essential to have intermediaries around young people since expertise by specialists or institutions is often systematically rejected. In the words of O6,

“we have the example of the ‘Places of Innovative Reception’ in several districts of Paris: the most important are attended by 500 to 600 young people. The principle is to involve young people in a project that they have designed themselves. In particular, they organise ‘cafés without chairs’, meetings to exchange and debate housing, employment, relationships, and an infinite number of subjects. In LAIs, there are ‘guides’ whose role is essential to creating projects that are viable and interesting, but above all, they mustn’t be identified as institutional [...] today, for young people, the term ‘institutional’ is systematically derogatory, and not far from being an insult”.

Rather than imposing a single youth policy on a city as large, varied and even fragmented as Paris, there is the need to manage a plurality of projects that must be adapted to the requests of groups of young people, since expectations may change drastically from one neighbourhood or environment to another. It is also important to avoid potential misunderstandings. In the words of O4:

“The city of Paris, for example, had a poster drawn by a group of young people that, after being passed through the filter of the graphic charter for municipal services, had little to do with the original. Some felt a little betrayed, at least they wondered why they had worked on the project. It's not good to encourage them to play the game of institutional partnership”.

This is an essential point: It is not only a question of consulting young people; they must be convinced that their word is taken into account and that they feel useful. This means that the public authorities or the institutions must always provide feedback to young audiences saying, for example, in the words of O3

“Here, for such and such a reason, your opinion could (or couldn’t) be taken into account [...] if we don't do that, we break the bond of trust with them, then nothing is possible”

Flexibility is another point emerging from our interviewing. In the words of O2: “In several districts far from the centre of Paris, social centres remain open for young people until 2 a.m., and there is always an educator on site; this is a good example of an interesting attempt to adapt to the experiences- as well as the time schedules - of the young people. Paris lags behind in this respect. For example, there are no places open free of charge at night”. In the same vein, O4 states that: “London, Barcelona and Berlin have been tremendously successful with young people, festive cities that are synonymous with freedom and avant-gardism. We must draw inspiration from these experiences; fostering belongingness to the public space through celebration”.

The application of policies in this direction, however, has problems in terms of a potential mismatch between the interests of the very young vis-à-vis ‘young adults’, or between young people of different social backgrounds. Accordingly, some interviewees have criticised the overspecialisation of places and events at a time when it would have been better to open up attendance for more flexible use. In fact, many places and events are often underused (cf. O8 interview). Many facilities aimed at young people suffer from a lack of visibility and may be unknown, even by young people themselves. In the words of O1, “More work should be done on the circulation of good information. Information as such does exist and we tend to be happy about it, but in fact it does not reach its target. In Paris, many actions for young people are organised by associations, however there is no coordination between them, and some are even in competition with each other”.

Organisational Interviews

The majority of interviews with actors working in the field of youth were conducted with associations operating under the framework of law 1901 on non-profit associations. The legal framework is composed of two main laws, the *July 1, 1901 decree*, and the *August 16, 1901 decree*. Article 1 of the law of July 1, 1901 defines an association as: “The convention by which two or more people permanently pool their knowledge or their activity for a purpose other than sharing profits. Its validity is governed by the general principles of law applicable to contracts and obligations.”⁸ Law 1901 applies to all non-profit associations in France with the exception of associations headquartered in the three departments of Bas-Rhin, Haut-Rhin Rhine and Moselle (where local law applies). Associations working in the field of youth often take the form of “associations of popular education”, which mainly seek to improve society through means of education situated outside traditional teaching structures and institutional education systems. Their focus often lies on individual and community development by supplementing formal education. For this purpose, such associations often target youth through means of popular culture, arts, sports, fun activities and hands-on activities related to politics, in a community-oriented approach. As regards social and political participation, the overall purpose of all (but one) interviewed associations is raising awareness about rights, opportunities and responsibilities.

⁸ « Loi du 1er Juillet 1901 et la liberté d'association — Associations.gouv.fr », <https://www.associations.gouv.fr/la-loi-du-1er-juillet-1901-et-la-liberte-d-association.html> (accessed 01.12.2019).

Furthermore, the law of 1901 lays out organisational aspects of the associations, dealing with the role of the general assembly, decision-making bodies such as the board of directors), as well as the central committee. The general assembly is the main body for safeguarding internal democracy. Most associations are further organised around committees that are dedicated to specific activities. The president, or general secretary, is frequently referred to as a safeguard for internal democracy and for ensuring diversity within the association. In the words of OI10, speaking in their role of general secretary: “My missions consist of guaranteeing democratic life in the movement, as well as guaranteeing that each person can find their place within the movement.”

Youth-led organisations often underscore that either their board or their general meeting is composed of young people, often under 30. Alternatively, young people are regularly involved in committees in the case of organisations that are not led by young people themselves. As regards student organisations (such as OI3), all formal positions (Treasurer, President, committee members, and so on), as well as the general meeting are exclusively composed of students. All associations involve youth in the form of volunteers and/ or internships. Interviewees have also reported a number of projects that target youth education by asking for better leaders such as “train the trainers” or “teach the teachers”. Size of organisations varies: While some of them have many executive members (with up to 20 in the case of OI3), others have only one or just a few.

Our interviews show that all organisations consult with young people that are involved in a certain capacity. This happens either through the aforementioned role young people play in the different committees, through regular consultations, or through informal meetings and non-hierarchical organisation cultures, allowing for taking into account the preferences and claims of young people. Of course this requires young people’s interest in integrating within the organisation beyond mere personal interest (cf. interviews with OI2). Organisations that are either national federations or national networks provide young people with the opportunity to lead local committees, as well as municipal and regional councils. Crucially, under the general framework of *youth participation in society*, many organisations agree that a positive trend can be observed. The number of “junior associations” is constantly rising on a national level (it just reached the threshold of 1,000 in 2018), Paris being the hallmark in terms of associational density. Yet, youth turnout at elections remains low, scoring less than 20% for the age cohorts 18-29 on the occasion of the 2017 parliamentary elections, and some growing systematic abstention.⁹

⁹ According to official data by insee.fr. <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/3140794> (accessed December 1, 2019).

Interviewees have also put emphasis on the negative role of media discourse. In the words of OI2, the role of media is especially negative when focusing on a rather “stereotypical labelling of young people as either rioters or youngsters too busy spending their time on social media”. However, unconventional political participation is considered to be increasing, thereby reflecting a media discourse that focuses, in the words of OI6, on “insecurity of youth, youth unemployment and an overall consideration for young people committed to ideological causes”. In addition, interviews show an increasing interest in LGBTQ rights, following the legalisation of same-sex marriage in 2013.

Some strong emphasis is put on cooperation with other groups or organisations. The minister of youth, the mayor of Paris, as well as various district majors are considered to play a key role in helping youth organisations cooperate, as they may provide crucial financial aid and visibility (for example, for the organisation of high-profile events such as “Public Health Days”) as well as administrative and logistic support (for example, on the occasion of events and meetings). Besides, an extensive network with other civil society actors allows for engaging in further activities. For example, the *Forum Français de la Jeunesse* (FFJ), the *Comité National des Associations de Jeunesse et d'Education Populaire* (CNAJEP), and the *Conseil des Orientations des Politiques Jeunesse* are embedded in a very large network with civil society. Thus, among the associations of popular education, the *Ligue de l'Enseignement* plays an important role as facilitator and strategic partner. Private companies can also provide significant partnerships through donations or other logistic help beyond funding. Several banks and insurance companies have special programmes to allow young people to set up and administrate associations, since French associational law stipulates a number of formal requirements (such as being insured against damages by others).

Reaching Youth

Many interviewees understand youth as a period of time that lasts for many years. For example, 25 years is often taken as the age of socio-political awareness, when in fact democratic participation is set at 18 for casting a vote in elections, as well as for standing as a candidate at the National Assembly (legal age for standing as a candidate at the Senate is 21). In addition, state sponsorship for youth is often based on large thresholds, with many youth actions being developed for individuals until they reach 30. This long duration of youth means that organisations must engage in a variety of communication strategies to reach their targets. Accordingly, some interviews stress

the importance of modern forms of communication. Communication draws on new social media, but also on traditional forms such as conferences, festivals, white papers, and annual reports, allowing for interaction with various institutional partners. As regards specific communication with young people, many associations rely almost exclusively on social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter and Instagram, since they are convinced that communication channels need to be in line with usual communication usage. In fact, some strong criticism of question 3.b (“Does your organisation / group try out new and alternative ways of reaching out to youth, involving them in the organisation and their activities?”) emerged during the interviewing process; in the words of OI10, their main purpose vis-à-vis young people consists of “helping them to raise awareness and act on their living environments, rather than passively reaching out to them”. Youth organisations also use slack channels as a preferred channel for internal communication.

The general assembly is a traditional means of communication that, even if offline, seems to remain attractive to young people. Of course, general assemblies, as other offline events, benefit from online outreach activities, notably via social media. Another offline activity that targets young people refers to information events at schools, often in collaboration with public authorities, such as district mayors and inter-institutional actors. A highly effective tool for fostering public awareness of pupils is the use of photos and videos. Some organisations engage in information events in schools, making efficient use of photos for warning young people of various risks such as prostitution and sexually transmitted illnesses (cf. interview with OI4). Crucially, the size of youth organisations impacts on the availability of institutional partners: thus, the biggest student body in the whole Parisian region (cf. interview with OI3), has a strong record of collaboration with the city council, while at the same time benefitting from privileged access to such collaborations (the downside being a growing dependence on such collaborations).

Young people seem to be more sensitive to information campaigns and products that are conceived by other young people. Therefore, many organisations help young people to develop their own projects, directly or through administrative and technical support to “junior associations” (cf. interview with OI5). For example, “Citoyen aujourd’hui”, has engaged in debates about citizenship and democracy in accessible language on the basis of work initiated by the junior association “Les explorateurs de l’engagement”. Another example of activities by junior associations is the presentation of a “Declaration of the Rights of the Planet” at the European Parliament; this is a text composed by ten to twelve-year-old members of the junior association “Le lobby de Poissy”.

Solidarity actions constitute another major role of activities that seem to attract young people. Conferences, hands-on workshops, as well as screened movies or sports events, are, in the opinion of a number of our interviewees, an appropriate means to interact with and to stimulate the participation of young people, as a means of increasing their awareness of crucial issues. The majority of youth organisations that do not have young people as their unique beneficiaries, underline that even if the activities and communication strategies differ, they do not differentiate between the different needs of their beneficiaries. In addition, specific privacy requirements for minors make it hard, sometimes, to efficiently communicate through social media, often relying on posting photos and videos. The same seems to hold true for parental consent.

Conditions for Youth Participation

When talking about conditions for youth participation in their city, the majority of interviewees attests to good collaboration with local authorities, even if they stress upon inter-generational cleavages and differences in understanding of needs for the younger citizens. However, they all emphasise the impact of the electoral campaigning on authorities' interest in youth associations and clubs, which translates to bigger budgets assigned to youth organisations, events focused on young people during the campaign period. While some organisations benefit from financial support from the Ile de France region or the municipality of Paris on a yearly basis, the majority of funding is project-based, often accessing not only national funds, but also European ones.

Besides the financial aspects, the interviewees consider that their relationship with the public / political authorities in their city is one of good cooperation, with the authorities taking into account the needs and preferences of young people: "In Paris we have good support from local authorities, and we have noticed a proactive attitude towards young people" (OI2). Even if, during public debate, young people are sometimes present on subjects they want to highlight, such as the current climate issues, many interviewees believe that "public debates are often attended and occupied by the same people/authorities that will often decide on behalf of the people concerned" (OI1). In regard to the way both youth organisations and authorities communicate, many participants in our survey have specific preferences regarding how to act or communicate, stressing the need for institutional change in what concerns communication strategies, "especially adapting to new means and channels of communication, that are more in line with their primary beneficiaries" (OI3).

Also, members of the associations that we contacted are concerned about the effects of institutional communication that, even if regularly initiated and desired by both parties involved, is not followed

by consequent actions or tangible results. The areas of action where the municipality contributes in a consistent manner - as pointed out by our interviewees - is preferential transportation tariffs for young people and free or cheaper access to culture (theatre, cinema, galleries) for teenagers and students. This could still be expanded on “especially for those from disadvantaged communities, for more inclusion and social diversity” (OI6). The city of Paris has also been positively described with regard to trying to provide affordable housing for underprivileged communities and students.

Some more radical opinions denounce the disparity between discourse and action, stating that regular exchanges between politicians and young people are mainly used to redirect from actual issues: “Young people are fed up of the demagogy surrounding public institutions dealing with youth” (OI5); or, “They tell us that the government is listening. But is it really? We say it doesn’t work, there is no change” (OI7); or, “I also note that society assigns responsibilities to young people, such as strengthening national cohesion, and committing to societal issues that concern all of the people who make up this society. These responsibilities must be shared” (OI10).

Issues/Problems

Most interviewees converge in their assessment that the problems youth faces in France are the same as those faced by the rest of the population. Social problems, tightly linked to the way contemporary society functions, such as lack of job security, health care, insecurity, are rather representative of society as a whole rather than of one of its segments. What is more impactful on youth are the “promises” of this very society, such as prosperity through effort, self-determination through labour, and so on, that are often contradicted by the scarcity of available opportunities. The life of luxury one knows from TV and the great products one’s favourite influencer is promoting recede further into the distance during the growing up process. High youth unemployment rates, “1/5 of youth is unemployed 1/5 of youth on the poverty line” (OI7) are major issues youth is currently facing in France. Never-ending waves of flexibility of the labour market, have led to the situation in which many young people will be required to do internship after internship before gaining a job with a fixed-term employment contract.

While this provides for conditions characterised by the absence of economic stability and financial prospects, it also makes it very hard to develop a long-term perspective on life, given that so many societal and economic instances require financial stability (such as getting a credit card, not to mention planning a family). While companies seem not to “trust young people with responsibility, giving them tasks rather than missions, young people seem to be ill-informed about what working

in a company means, what the codes of the company are, and what corporate culture looks like” (OI9). Economic worries, a growing lack of job security and instability are, hence, a core characteristic of youth in France in accordance with many of the interviewees.

Consequently, almost all interviewees bring forth the strong and growing preoccupation of young people with their future that is often looming in a rather worrying way over them. Of course, socio-economic differences play a key role in this regard. Youth from disadvantaged social backgrounds, sometimes from entire regions (notably the Paris suburbs), young people abandoned by their families or simply young people coming from the province to Paris (without any relatives that could provide housing or financial stability often required by landlords, and so forth) are particularly affected. Especially for students, living in the second most expensive city worldwide¹⁰ is often at the detriment of their studies. For the growing segment of Paris’ population with a migratory background (almost 40% of the population are either migrants or have one migrant parent)¹¹ the challenges are even the more tangible.

Similar problems result in similar ways of looking at society: growing discontent and dissatisfaction, less positive outlooks on life independent of age, but rather influenced by social inequalities (cf. sub-chapter ‘Inequalities’). Consequently, the interviewees believe that most young people perceive themselves as being part of the same generation, resulting from similar situations, similar problems and grievances and similar approaches to and perceptions of politics. A certain delay in perception has been attributed to youth with migratory backgrounds, even though, “they use the same social networks, they do not have the same objectives in life nor do they seem to live the same realities” (OI6).

Most of the interviewees assess a difficult context for youth integration in society, with youth rejecting more and more decisions taken unilaterally by political institutions: “governments understood it the hard way that they cannot govern alone” (OI7). However, there is a certain level of stigmatisation of youth after the “Yellow Vests” movement (OI7), and more so for migrants and youth with migratory backgrounds (OI1). In these conditions, “youth need, more than ever, to build and secure, by themselves, through collective efforts, their place in society (OI10).

¹⁰ In accordance with The Economist Intelligence Unit’s “Worldwide Cost of Living 2019” report. http://www.eiu.com/topic.aspx?topic=worldwide-cost-of-living&zid=worldwidecostofliving&utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=organic_social&utm_name=worldwidecostofliving2019&utm_term=wcol2019&utm_content=banner_learn&linkId=100000005469594 (accessed December 1, 2019).

¹¹ Cf. Institut d’aménagement et d’urbanisme de la région Parisienne (2011): Note rapide No. 531, January 2011. https://www.institutparisregion.fr/fileadmin/NewEtudes/Etude_770/NR_531_web.pdf (accessed December 1, 2019).

While the Universal National Service (SNU), one of President Macron's main campaign issues dedicated to youth, aims to "recreate the base of a republican crucible and transmit the taste for commitment, [...] to involve French youth in the life of the Nation, [...] and to promote the concept of commitment and foster a feeling of national unity around common values", it is criticised by some interviewees for further estranging youth from society and politics. Mandatory engagement rather than incentives for voluntary involvement and a paternalistic approach generate "rather the feeling that young people owe something to the State than providing the opportunities they need, despite outspoken criticism" (OI7).

Socio-economic worries, lack of job security and the resultant lack of long-term perspective, lead to a certain disillusion with society, or at least a situation in which the dominant narratives of society lose traction for broader parts of youth. In this regard, SNU provides just one example on how politics seem to follow an agenda that is not corresponding to the needs of broad segments of youth, or at least to their communicational preferences.

Consequently, the interest in politics French young people are manifesting tends to impact only on a few categories of highly mobilised people, in accordance with our interviewees, who think the majority of youth is "barely out of ignorance; they don't care much about what's happening" (OI4). There is also a general agreement that young people are voting less than other age categories (OI3), noticing a decline in participation in the democratic process, but also in the quality of the political information held by young people: "No politicisation in the sense of the '68 Movement" (OI2).

On the other hand, those who care about politics are also often involved in associational work, as one of our interviewees emphasised: "The involvement of a young person in an association supposes an interest in politics that does not come out of a void of information. It requires, then, an important implication on the level of the young citizen" (OI1).

The French "political youth" is split by the testimonies of our interviewees into two categories: those interested in negotiating with politicians,

"interested in getting to know them, meeting and communicating with them, so as to find out what the institutional politics is all about in our times" (OI5), or positioned on the other side of the barricade, with radicalised youth taking part in youth movements and other types of protests, more and more visible and "reluctant to receive and accept messages coming from political institutions" (OI7).

However, all interviewees converge in their assessment that the lack of interest in institutionalised politics does not indicate an absence of interest in politics. By and large, young people seem to be more preoccupied with the “big problems” (OI7), the “big challenges” (OI9), the “major causes” (OI2), concomitant with a decline in interest for party politics. In this regard, environmental causes, climate, sustainable development, migration and gender, are far more important than political issues that could be identified on traditional left-right scales.

Lifestyle movements, un-conventional participation, youth movements, involvement in civil society tend to (partially) replace engagement with traditional political actors. At the same time, social problems caused by lack of job security and lack of opportunities, stimulate a more anti-capitalist array of youth discourses. The overall feeling is that young people are neither present nor represented by political parties; their voice is not heard. The interest in party debates, campaigning and elections is replaced by growing participation in youth movements, one of the strongest participations in strike and protest movements, or ultimately, withdrawal.

Inequalities

Many interviewees show some strong criticism vis-à-vis the way the economic and political environment has increased economic risks for young people, preventing at the same time their participation in the elaboration of policies that affect their lives. Social inequality is often reflected in the geography of the city, notably the Paris suburbs, in which opportunities are far less attainable than in other Paris districts. Ultimately, the social milieu of origins impacts on personal development and expectations towards life. In the words of OI6, there are “children from an early age benefitting from strong educational support, extra-curricular teaching, or better private schooling, while in other milieus, parents have too many financial worries”. In fact, some parents can facilitate access to internships in various companies and institutions, while other families do not have this type of opportunity. Differences are also evident in terms of parents’ involvement in education, participation in social life and long-term expectations. Thus, young people raised within unemployed families, and precarious milieus in general, often have little knowledge of what it means to work in companies and lack the required soft skills to properly integrate into the labour market (cf. interview with OI9). Such differences in terms of socio-economic background also have a negative impact on young people when opportunities for scaling the socio-economic ladder come into play.

Organisations dealing with youth prioritise “the fight against inequalities and against discrimination” (cf. interview with OI1), aimed at “shedding light on prejudices, and eliminating stereotypes concerning youth” (cf. interview with OI2) as well as “fighting precariousness, given that 15% of French youth is below the poverty line” (cf. interview with OI3). Working in precarious conditions appears to affect all youth categories, including students struggling to enter the labour market. In the words of OI4, “life is very difficult; they study to get jobs, but there are no secure jobs, so they continue to study while working part-time and being exploited”. Precariousness and difficult access to the labour market is even stronger for young people from poor neighbourhoods, minority groups of different types, and youth facing poverty in their up-bringing. It is not surprising, therefore, that some organisations specialise their activities by targeting the most precarious cohorts of young people, while other organisations maintain a less specific focus that allows for dealing with broader issues of political integration.

General Remarks and Discussion

In recent years there has been considerable interest in youth issues by French political leaders and civil society groups, with a dramatic increase in meetings, summits, forums and other events aimed at promoting innovative solutions to problems affecting youth. Youth issues have also been put at the centre of an increasingly contentious field —characterised by a large number of blockades in high schools, students’ strikes, youth movements and at times, direct violent action— whereby voting turnouts among young people are declining. This variety of interventions in the field, however, is not synonymous with a large action *repertoire* that is available for young people and those actors who intervene on their behalf, but is rather the reflection of deeper social cleavages among young people themselves. On the one hand, youth organisations organise political debates about various youth issues, as well as information campaigns about citizenship and democracy, often side by side with the public authorities themselves. On the other hand, disengagement from institutionalised politics is stronger in the suburbs than in the main cities such as Paris, where young people seem to be rather disenfranchised from access to society and politics. This is even more evident for young people with a migratory background, for whom outreaching beyond the often narrow borders of their milieu’s culture can be difficult.

Not surprisingly then, the strong inequalities in almost all aspects of education, crystallising in very different degrees or reputations of schools and universities, seem to play a negative role for the socio-economic access of young people. In turn, this unequal access results in strong differences in terms of the broader politics of youth. Political parties, even when running on a “time for change”

platform, do not have sufficient interest in nor the necessary tools to engage young people in institutionalised politics. They do not address the “big challenges” as perceived by youth, in particular unemployment, decreasing intergenerational solidarity and the environment; nor do they offer solutions perceived as adequate or sufficient. Political programmes are not written in accessible language, nor do they target young people in particular. Efficient consultation mechanisms may be in place, but are rarely successfully used, while even youth organisations of political parties seem to have lost track of their main constituencies.

Looking at the politics of youth in more prescriptive terms, our research seems to indicate that one way to bring politics back into young people’s lives, while making traditional political actors and policy elites more responsive to the needs and preoccupations of young people, could be to lower the age of political participation, starting with the legal age for voting at elections. Among the so-much-needed structural reforms being claimed by many interviewees, could be the possibility of voting and running for election at aged 16, so as to rely on the youngest as the main resource for fighting with disengagement from traditional politics, and French society at large in the worst cases. In the words of one of the main slogans of ongoing youth mobilisation, the crucial thing is to “change the system, not the climate”. Hence, moving on from this prescriptive level so as to elaborate new effective policies, our final recommendations are the following:

- There cannot be full political integration of young people without increasing their social access on equal bases, so it is first of all necessary to tackle the main social problems which young people encounter (such as housing, unemployment and education);
- City councils (in Paris and beyond) have to innovate through forms of consultation and participation of young people who are institutionalised, yet sustainable regarding their general propensity for informality. In turn, this means multiplying the more informal and *ad hoc* forms of participation;
- A large number of schemes for young people already exist, yet they are not sufficiently visible: It is crucial to increase the visibility of these schemes, for example by creating grassroots organisations and specific institutions on the territory (for example educational institutions and neighbourhood associations) whose main purpose is to foster interaction between young audiences and institutions;
- There is a need to create attractive places specifically for young people, both during the day and at night, so that they can meet there whenever they wish, nurturing a collective sense of belongingness, as well as engaging in common expressive activities;

- Since young people communicate through social networks in their own way, it is crucial that public authorities master their same codes and use them so as to raise their collective awareness and political participation;
- We should no longer think in terms of 'youth policy', as if we were dealing with a homogenous public. Young people are a very heterogeneous group, socially, culturally and even territorially. It is essential to set up a large range of 'youth policies', which is a way of saying that youth diversity must be taken into account. This also favours a bottom-up approach, based directly on the expectations and practices of young people. Some institutions probably trust young people: this prejudice must be fought;
- It is crucial to give a voice to the most precarious groups of youth, for example those who are dropping out of school and who are poorly integrated socially. This is a huge challenge that need to be tackled in a long-term basis;
- Festive and emotionally charged interventions are undoubtedly helpful in view of the particular sensitivity of young people. Thus, stakeholders need to 'update' their way of engaging with politics to gain the attention of maximum numbers of young people.

3. Germany

Report by: Lía Durán Mogollón

Introduction and Urban Context

Cologne is one of Germany's largest cities and frequently described as 'open', multi-cultural and fun for young people. This reputation, as well as the numerous academic, professional and leisure opportunities available in the city, make it particularly attractive for young people from Germany and abroad. Cologne was recently granted the status of 'children and youth friendly city' which means that the city fulfills several commitments promoting youth participation and inclusion.

The following numbers illustrate the cities attractiveness: Cologne is the fourth largest city in Germany (after Berlin, Munich and Hamburg) and with a population of 1,084,795 inhabitants, it is the most populated city in the province of Nord- Rhine Westphalia¹². Out of this, 41% of the inhabitants are under 35 years old and 25% are between 18 and 34 years old. In 2016, there were 65,005 new arrivals to the city and most of the newcomers were between 18 to 32 years old. Moreover, 38% of the population has a migrant background and almost 20% of the people living in Cologne hold foreign passports. The most frequent nationalities among those with foreign passports are Turkey and Italy, followed by Iraq.

Cologne is part of the "Cologne-Bonn metropolitan area" which includes the larger urban zones of Cologne and Bonn, and the city of Leverkusen. The metropolitan area has over 3.3 million inhabitants. As a result of urban sprawl in the 20th century, the three cities (Leverkusen, Bonn and Cologne) are well connected with each other, and many people commute regularly between them for work or leisure; according to official statistics, approximately 261,000 people commute from other cities to Cologne for work, and 115,000 of those living in Cologne commute to other places for work. Moreover, Cologne itself is divided into 9 districts; Innenstadt (inner city) Lindenthal, Rodenkirchen, Ehrenfeld, Nippes, Mülheim, Kalk, Chorweiler and Porz. The municipal offices for youth, and the youth branches of the political parties usually have representatives in each of the districts providing a dense institutional opportunity structure.

Several national and international companies have their headquarters in Cologne: Ford Europe, the city's biggest employer, has its headquarters in the metropolitan area of Cologne and employs

¹² According to the city's statistical office: https://www.stadt-koeln.de/mediaasset/content/pdf15/statistik-standardinformationen/cologne_facts_figures_2018.pdf

almost 18,000 workers, and Toyota is also located in this region, employing approximately 1,500 workers. Aside from automobile, pharmaceutical and chemical industries nearby (e.g. Bayer AG in Leverkusen), the city's economy is strongly based on financial services and media. According to the statistics published by the municipality and the local branch of the Federal Employment Agency, the unemployment rate in 2017 was 8.1% and the youth¹³ unemployment rate was 5.8%. That year, the unemployment rate at the national level was 5.7%.¹⁴ The job market grew by 3.2% between 2016 and 2017, which particularly benefitted male workers and workers over 50. This increase in employment was above the national average (2.4%). According to the city's Action Plan for Childhood and Youth¹⁵, about 1 in 5 children in Cologne are either affected or at risk of child poverty. Cologne has 99,770 students and nine universities, including public and private institutions. Besides the University of Cologne, the city has specialised universities like the university for Music and Dance, the German Sport University and two Universities for Applied Sciences and Media. Moreover, it is also home to several research facilities such as the Max Planck Centre for the Study of Society, the Max Planck Centre for Biology and Ageing and the German Aerospace Centre, among others.

In sum, the large number of universities, research facilities, big companies (such as Ford, Toyota, REWE, along with media companies) offer opportunities for vocational training, combined with possibilities for leisure, and are among the "pull-factors" that make Cologne an attractive place for young Germans and people from abroad to live.

Current Political Situation

After being a social democratic party stronghold for decades, the Christian Democrats and coalition partners are now in power in Cologne after a high-profile corruption scandal that shook the city in the 1990s. The current Major, Henriette Reker, was elected as an independent candidate supported by the Christian Democrats, the Green Party and the liberal FDP. The current city council took office in 2015 and consists of 90 seats which are distributed as follows: Left: 6; SPD (the Social Democrats): 26; the Greens: 18; the Pirates: 2; Deine Freunde: 2; the FDP (the Free Democratic Party): 5; the FWK: 1; the CDU (the Christian Democrats): 25; AfD (Alternative for Germany, right-wing anti-immigration party): 3; pro Cologne: 2. The presence of the AfD and pro Cologne in the city's council has generated some concern about the radicalisation of some

¹³ According to the city's data, Youth unemployment refers exclusively to people under 25.

¹⁴ <http://www.bpb.de/nachschlagen/zahlen-und-fakten/soziale-situation-in-deutschland/61718/arbeitslose-und-arbeitslosenquote>

¹⁵ <https://www.stadt-koeln.de/mediaasset/content/pdf51/kinder-und-jugendfreundliches-koeln-aktionsplan.pdf>

segments of the population in a city that likes to emphasise its open-mindedness.

Due to its size and location, Cologne hosts numerous associations of all sorts: Sport and leisure, trade unions, political associations and environmental groups are all present in the city. At the time of data collection, many activists interviewed were involved in the Hambach Forest debate (a forest about 45 minutes from Cologne)¹⁶ and the Fridays for Future local group had already organised several successful demonstrations.

Sample

The sample this report is based on includes 19 interviews with organisational representatives out of which nine correspond with self-organised youth collectives and the other ten with Youth-oriented organisations (with are not necessarily led nor integrated by young people) but which have a concrete mandate related to youth. These organisations include: political parties (2) trade unions (1) migrant organisations (2) European youth collective (1) artists' collective (1), solidary economy group (1), youth-led environment and solidarity group (1) student union (1) media organisation (1) youth centres (2), youth-led fair-trade enterprise (1), young explorers organisation (1), autonomous civic centre (1), religious organisations (2), and youth-sports organisation (1). Besides the organisational representatives, the sample includes 11 interviews with stakeholders; people who, because of their experience working with and for youth in the city, have expertise in the subject of youth participation. This was the result of a purposive sampling which sought to encompass maximum variability in terms of sector, level of structuration, repertoires of action, orientation, and so on.

Interviews with Stakeholders

The stakeholders (five men and six women) interviewed represent different sectors: public service (including: youth-related policy making, social services for youth, political education, counselling for youth), youth-related research, education and integration, youth lobby and media (private sector) They described Cologne as “attractive, interesting, liberal and open”, and emphasised that the city has much to offer young people. When asked about the role of youth in public debates and in the city’s policy making, most of the interviewees mentioned that Cologne had recently been declared “child and youth friendly city”, a status granted by UNICEF and a cooperating

¹⁶ A protest movement against the energy company, RWE. The company owns part of the forest and had plans to fell the trees in order to start coal explorations. Since 2012, activists have been demanding the company change this, arguing that, given the pressing climate goals, opening a new coal pit would not make any sense, and that the destruction of the forest could have severe environmental consequences. The company has argued that they own the land but that they intend to reforest elsewhere in order to compensate for the environmental loss. There has been a squat in the forest since 2012, and between June and October 2018 the debate intensified because of a court order to evict the squat. For more, see: <https://hambachforest.org/squat/treehouses/>

German association. This status is granted to cities that, among others, adopt a resolution and agree to cooperate with the programme with the purpose of increasing the participation of young people in the city's public debates.¹⁷ More specifically, the city's Action Plan states the following priorities: to improve access to education, to promote participation and integration of all children and young people, and to fight child poverty and promote media-literacy among young people¹⁸. In 2018, the city had an operative budget of 47,707,103€¹⁹, euros destined to fund "children and youth services"²⁰

Youth Participation: Opportunities and Constraints

Besides the status of child-friendly city, several stakeholders as well as representatives from two organisations (a self-help migrants organisation and a religious organisation) mentioned the youth participation law²¹ which states that children and young adults should be taken into account when planning youth programmes, and that their active participation is not only desired, but mandatory. Therefore, the theme of participation is expected to be a transversal issue in the city's political life. The stakeholders mentioned two important initiatives that resulted from these commitments: the inauguration of the city's "children and youth office" and a local youth survey conducted in 2018. The children and youth office opened this year and it is expected to centralise the efforts of all instances involved in working with and for youth, and to support initiatives promoting youth participation. Furthermore, this office is expected to mediate between the youth initiatives and the city. According to most of the stakeholders, the office is very new and thus still at a very preliminary stage. The youth survey was conducted to gather information about the concerns, priorities and goals of young people in Cologne. The survey was conducted online and about 5,000²² people from ages 14 to 20 answered it. The results show that about 80% of the respondents claim to be satisfied with the city and have a positive outlook on their lives. The main problems they identified were the lack of affordable housing and the obstacles encountered when trying to enter the job market. In regards to their participation, the survey indicates young people recognise that there are enough instances of participation, but they would like to be taken more seriously in

¹⁷ For more information about the requirements and the Child Friendly cities, see: <http://www.kinderfreundliche-kommunen.de/english/startseite/association-and-program/>

¹⁸ For the full plan see: <https://www.stadt-koeln.de/mediaasset/content/pdf51/kinder-und-jugendfreundliches-koeln-aktionsplan.pdf>

¹⁹ <http://haushaltsplan.koeln/#/haushaltsplan-2018/plan-2018/konsumtiv/aufwand/produktbereiche/kinder-jugend-und-familienhilfe.html>.

²⁰ This budget covers: counselling services (for crime prevention, drug addiction, unemployment, family conflicts), crime prevention programmes, funding for the local 'political youth network', funding for youth centres and external providers of integration/ support activities for young people (sports, media, participation)

²¹ Kinder und Jugendhilfegesetz. This is a regulation from 2012.

²² <http://www.jugendbefragung.koeln/>

actual decision-making processes.

Differing Political Chances

Generally speaking, stakeholders identify youth as a distinctive group with specific needs and problems which derive from processes such as: their first romantic experiences, their search for identity, their search for independence and access to the labour market. Furthermore, some of the stakeholders have identified generation-specific concerns: Most of them agree that environmentalism is a greater concern for the young than it is for the older generations, and most of the stakeholders also recognise that young people tend to be more tolerant of sexual diversity. Nonetheless, most of the stakeholders also stress that young people are a highly differentiated group and that the challenges that come with youth are faced differently by young people from different milieus:

"There is no such thing as youth. Just like there is no such thing as women, in general. Young people have different backgrounds and milieus and this will most likely determine their main needs." (GS20)

When asked about the situation of youth, stakeholders frequently talked about issues such as: migration, education, inequality and the stigmatisation of socially disadvantaged districts in Cologne. Most of the stakeholders understand inequality as the uneven distribution of resources and chances, and in this sense, they identify two primary forms of inequality; socio-economic inequality and inequality in accessing education and academic chances. Inequality based on ethnic or national origin was also frequently mentioned, usually as a form of inequality that compounds with other forms and creates an inter-sectional milieu which is, according to most stakeholders, 'difficult to reach through state initiatives'.

While almost all stakeholders used words such as "open" "friendly" or "liberal" when describing Cologne, one of them (GS25) argues that Cologne is more complex than it seems:

"You can say Cologne is open, liberal maybe (...) but at the same time, Cologne hosts the 'graue Wölfe'²³, the European headquarters to Erdogan's AKP party... so it's very particular."

Moreover, she also claimed that while Cologne is known for its multiculturalism, experiences of discrimination are not rare. The stakeholder here refers to different forms of discrimination and warns of the risks of 'putting all migrants and all foreigners in the same basket' pointing at differentiated milieus as well, and the fact that some young people of Turkish descent not only experience discrimination from 'mainstream society' but also within migrant communities because

²³ An association considered radical and nationalistic. It was founded by conservative nationalistic citizens of Turkish descent.

they do not conform to certain expectations. Interestingly, though, references to these situations of discrimination tend to focus on scattered events, not right-wing populist movements such as Pro-Köln (a local extreme right party). What was mentioned with some concern was the growing number of people voting for the AfD, a move usually attributed to 'disenchantment' with traditional parties, but the stakeholders expressed their concern without being too openly critical of the party itself.

Most of the stakeholders noted that economic and academic inequality affect young people's chances to participate in social and political life. GS18, GS19 and GS4 considered that young people from working-class families lack the financial means to join sports' associations, music clubs and similar leisure activities, as well as having the means to pay for after school tutors or language courses. These limitations reduce their networking possibilities, their leisure options and also their academic and professional chances later on. The German school system was questioned by some of the stakeholders who claim that it tends to favour children and adolescents from more educated families. Some of the stakeholders consider that access to education makes a great difference when it comes to political participation privileging young people from educated middle-class families. However, when it comes to the causes behind this, opinions seem to be split. GS6 said this had to do with understanding the complex language used by some of the political groups; GS24 made a similar comment:

“I guess one problem is the bureaucracy, that is a German thing, it is complex and it is not easy for young people with low education to really understand the processes...and I guess the language doesn't help either... it is complex and there are no efforts to make it simpler... it would help if the language were easier”

Thus, political processes and institutions, in her view, demotivate young people from less educated backgrounds. Conversely, another stakeholder thinks that differing levels of interest in political participation has to do with interests:

“(...) those who attended Gymnasium are usually more familiar with and more interested in theoretical things, whereas those who attended other school forms are more likely to be interested in practical things.” (GS17)

A third view is given by GS27 who considers that the lack of access to education plays a role, but he thinks that the bigger problem is that “those whose parents have been part of the existing structures, have an advantage over the others” and that there is no real willingness to make profound changes to organisations and associations to make them more inclusive.

Besides referring to the uneven access to education and political participation, social inequality is exemplified by the lack of access to the labour market and the lack of affordable housing. These problems are identified by some of the stakeholders as factors that delay the process of becoming

adults and asserting their independence:

“(there are) A lot of young people whose process of maturation is blocked or delayed because they can’t find jobs or affordable housing, so they are still at their parents’ because they just can’t come any further.” (GS20)

Still, most of the stakeholders agree that children from more educated backgrounds benefit more from some of the city’s participation initiatives created within the U18 framework²⁴ Moreover, GS24 highlighted that the openness of structures varies across different city districts: While some of them have an organised youth forum, or assemblies which can make real contributions to local debates, other districts lack such real youth structures and if they have them, they are not really in contact with local administration. Last but not least, related to unequal participation, some of the stakeholders mentioned that the activist instances were mostly male dominated, and that there were usually fewer young women who are politically active; this is particularly the case when it comes to more structured organisations.

Setting Foot Economically

In regards to the role of the local economy and businesses in the city, the stakeholders working for the city spoke in unison: In their opinion, Cologne has a number of companies that are willing to sponsor different events for youth, from concerts, festivals to sports events and even the construction of playgrounds: “There is a lot of willingness, you need to know where and how to ask... it helps if you know someone” (GS24). However, regarding their openness toward helping young people integrate into the labour market, the answers were somewhat less optimistic: While there are many companies offering apprenticeships and internships for young people, and several complain about a labour shortage, they also complain that the potential candidates available do not fulfil minimum standards:

The companies are looking for labour; there is a scarcity of labour force, but then what the companies say in a lot of cases is that they are offering traineeships and for this vocational training, you don’t need to be incredibly qualified. But what they care about most is reliability. They say they are looking for someone who is reliable. So, for instance, we have a lack of labour force because the companies offering traineeships can’t find suitable candidates; they say that the candidates don’t fulfil the minimum standards, like for example those offering traineeships for stylist, right? They can’t find candidates who can have a proper conversation with a customer. (GS20)

²⁴ The U18 is an initiative created with a goal to promoting political discussion and interest among young people. As part of their activities, they organise voting days for people under 18 (usually nine days before any given election) and in preparation for this, they organise discussion rounds, panels and different activities to bring the political topic closer to young people.

With this statement, GS20 underscores uneven academic chances, but also the lack of expected social skills, both of which can delay some people's entry into the labour market. Furthermore, one of the stakeholders (GS19) argues that while the local economy is open and willing to sponsor events for young people, and that there are indeed several companies where young adults could apply for traineeships, there is still a great deal of discrimination, particularly against young people from marginalised districts of foreign descent: "The same application has more chances if it is sent by a Christian and not by Ali". GS26, another stakeholder, also shares this opinion and insists that it is widely understood that:

Every employer would deny this but everyone knows that's how it is... when you get applications and there are some foreign names, particularly Turkish, then the employers say mmm no... unless there is a shortage of qualified workers, or if they come from certain districts.

As a reaction to these difficulties, the city has created counselling points where youngsters can go before writing applications. They are designed to help them find suitable options and prepare them for the application process. Stakeholders acknowledge that young people who come to these counselling points are part of a vulnerable constituency whose parents offer little or no support in the search for opportunities. Therefore, the counselling goes beyond simple CV coaching and also helps them develop skills like punctuality, personal presentation, following rules, and so on. Most stakeholders agree that the city has numerous initiatives designed to help young people enter the labour market, however, some of the stakeholders (such as GS8) argue that this still does not make up for the shortcomings derived from the lack of parental support.

Spatial inequalities

Another important form of inequality has to do with the city's infrastructure and spatial segregation; most stakeholders agree that some districts (so-called social hotspots) are not very well connected with the city centre and have very few leisure and cultural activities:

"And then there're places that are at a disadvantage because they aren't well connected... for example, Ronsdorf... there is one bus line and it takes 45 minutes... so it's easier to travel to Bonn. And there is no train, no night bus... and this affects young people more than others because they are less likely to own cars" (GS24).

"The infrastructure in some of these schools... is not very good... then again, it is easier to make cuts there, where there is a constituency that can't vote" (GS24).

The lack of affordable/ free leisure activities in some districts and the scarcity of open spaces where young people can meet spontaneously, lead young people (who want to spend time with friends and away from authority figures, such as parents, teachers, social workers) to simply sit around in

public parks and squares. This is not always welcomed by the communities. According to GS4 and GS8, foreign (or “foreign looking”) young men sitting in public spaces at night are often perceived as intimidating by communities and by the local media. A stakeholder highlights how local media outlets frequently use stock pictures of foreign young men sitting in a park to illustrate their articles about urban crime. On this subject, another stakeholder (GS8) argues that while social media has created a great deal of new spaces of exchange and interaction for youngsters, the local media tends to reinforce existing stereotypes about youngsters and to stimulate outrage and fear among citizens.

On the contrary, some of the stakeholders argued that the opportunities for young, migrant, and/or less affluent youth are in need of improvement:

“Young people in Cologne need open spaces to meet without being told they are disturbing” (GS4).

“They need spaces to meet, leisure and networking possibilities where money isn’t a problem” (GS19).

Once again, this problem affects youngsters differently because well-off, middle-class youth usually have access to more spaces to meet their peers, either through clubs, associations or simply because they have more space at home and can invite their friends over.

Furthermore, most stakeholders admit that the city has a number of “social hotspots”, that is districts that cluster around working-class families, migrants and, vulnerable segments of the population. One of the stakeholders from the education sector argued that these districts have additional problems and dynamics. Besides the structural problems mentioned above, these districts and the people living there are also heavily stigmatized. At least half of the stakeholders interviewed admitted that stigmatisation might become an obstacle for young people trying to play an active role in economic, social and political life.

Ethnic Inequalities

Migration and integration of migrants was a very relevant theme brought up by all stakeholders. In some cases, they referred mostly to refugees and newly-arrived migrants; in others, however, they also made reference to Germans of migrant descent (“guest workers”). Most of the stakeholders highlighted the city’s diversity and multi-culturalism and stressed that this is a defining trait of social and cultural life in Cologne. Nonetheless, most stakeholders also admit that there is still much to be done in terms of fully integrating young migrants and granting them access to social, political and economic life. Since 2015, many initiatives have formed in order to, for example, offer refugees a chance to acquire basic German skills and to facilitate their integration into society. Moreover, this has also generated more discussion about migration and

integration not only of the newly arrived refugees, but of those who have already been in Germany for years or even generations.

At least two of the stakeholders stressed that young people of foreign descent have fewer chances of getting into *Gymnasium* (secondary education track qualifying for higher education) and then into university. Furthermore, they claim that the lack of language skills and a sense of belonging and acceptance might stop them from political participation. About this, GS7 weighs in:

“I think it’s a two-way thing: a society that tells you you’re not from here, and then the person who describes themselves as migrant. I know a lot of Germans who say “I am a migrant...” and then I asked them you were born here right? And you grew up here and went to school here? But they present themselves as foreigners, as migrants”

The effects of such inequalities on migrants are also visible among those who study at university. While several of the interviewees claimed that university students are over-represented in public debates and political groups (at least compared with other youth groups), one of the stakeholders (GS7) mentioned the differences among university students; many of those who have migrant backgrounds and who come from less academic backgrounds, tend to have more difficulties and when they abandon their studies, it is usually related to financial problems. Moreover, he mentioned that there are differences (in terms of involvement and permanence) depending on whether they are the first in their families to go to university, whether they come from less advantaged backgrounds, and so on.

Institutional Disadvantage

One of the challenges identified by some of the stakeholders (GS24 and GS20) is the time it takes for initiatives to be discussed, amended and passed. Moreover, GS24 also mentions that the highly-specialised structure of the city’s departments creates challenges:

“The people who are working with youth are specialised in youth... and the people who are working on infrastructure, or transport ...they have nothing to do with youth... so sometimes it is difficult to bring the youth perspective to these other topics which aren’t at least at first sight, classical “youth problems”

Lastly, GS26, who has extensive experience working with youth policies, argued that when it comes to participation of the young, the city faces a significant challenge: being able to reach not only the young people who are already organised and participating, but those who are not connected to any association or interest group and get them to participate as well: “We have a lot of opportunities for young people to participate, but you need to assume that most of them won’t find the way by

themselves...” (GS25). Institutional participation favouring organised interests, then, is likely to increase inequalities further.

GS26 considers that the academic groups, particularly young men from highly educated backgrounds, are over-represented in youth associations, and considers this to be a reflection of what happens in German politics at large. He argued: “Why should we expect the kids to be better than us? That’s what they see”. Two of the stakeholders (youth representative and one from the public sector) shared this view and also considered that this trend could alienate many people and pose a serious threat to democracy. According to them, this problem is not simply reduced to income inequality and education, but it includes spatial segregation in the city and a growing distance between the city’s milieus.

This opinion, about the lack of diversity of youth who are active in the city’s debates, was shared by most stakeholders. Some of the stakeholders consider that while the initiative to create a youth office and conduct a youth survey are good, they still do not solve the problem of reaching those who are not already mobilised and integrated into associations, clubs, parties, and so on. Precisely one of the criticisms they made in the survey was that most of the participants were young people who either attended or were currently enrolled at a *Gymnasium* (about 60%), thus the sample is not really representative of the city’s youth but rather of the young people already active.

Organisational Interviews

The organisational interviews in this sample included two major sets: self-organised youth groups active in different realms (youth-led) and ‘youth-oriented’, in other words, representative organisations with a clear mandate to work for and with youth (not necessarily youth-led, although leaders can be “young”). At this point, it is important to mention that the notions of ‘youth’ that these organisations have are flexible and diverse: For some of them, this refers to people between 14 and 27, for others, up to 30. In both cases, the sample tried to include representatives of different sectors and from organisations with different sizes, mandates and structures.

Youth-oriented Organisations

Youth-oriented organisations are those organisations with a clear mandate related to working with and for young people: Some of them concentrate on advocacy and some of them are more focused on providing services and leisure activities to young people. This sample includes a sports’ organisation, a media organisation, a migrant service dependency, two religious organisations, a trade union, a migrant self-organisation, a young explorer organisation, a service-media organisation for girls and young women, and a youth centre. All of these organisations have a clear

mandate of working with and for youth: Some of them are dedicated solely to this, others (usually larger organisations) have special 'youth departments'. The interviewees were all paid staff and had positions specifically connected to working with youth. Depending on the size and the level of structuration, the organisations were represented by a director or a department coordinator. All of them are experienced in working with youth, either in Cologne or in other cities.

Experiences working with youth

The interviewees have a very positive outlook on their experiences working with youth: Most of them describe their experience as rewarding or fulfilling and admit it is particularly gratifying to see young people learn new things and become more confident, more organised and get more structure in their lives. The main challenges mentioned by these representatives relate to maintaining their credibility and gaining support for their projects from both, young people and the municipality or sponsors.

Keeping young people engaged and motivated with the projects offered is particularly challenging, since it is mostly voluntary and leisure activities which are open to all young people, with no prerequisites. Thus, there is a twofold effort on behalf of the organisations: One is advertising their services and getting the young people to attend their events and participate in their programmes, and two is maintaining a stable base of participants. In order to accomplish this, most of the interviewees admit that they try to combine leisure and educational aspects, which is in itself challenging: "You can't just come to them with discipline (...) it has to be fun (...) we do have hierarchies, but they are not so visible" (GO2).

This view was also shared by interviewees from two organisations who mentioned that trust and a horizontal structure were the base of their work, and that those two vital elements were critical in helping them gain the trust of adolescents and young adults. The idea that these centres and their offers needed to be somehow different from those that the users have at school or at home was shared especially by younger workers at these centres. Moreover, one of the interviewees adds that the diversity of young people also makes it difficult to know what exactly to offer them.

Decision-making processes

With regards to decision-making processes, there seems to be, on the one hand, a strong interest in having open structures and allowing for bottom-up initiatives to emerge (which abides by the mandate given by the city's new regulation for children and youth regulation) but also an awareness of the limitations: in terms of the organisational scope, of the financial and organisational means.

There is a sense that young people's needs and hopes should certainly help shape the offer but also the acknowledgement that there needs to be a guidance element (on behalf of the organisations' leaders/ coordinators), and that organisations and youth work are not serving the purpose of catering to every wish and whim young people might express. Moreover, several organisational representatives admit that the priorities set by the municipality also play a significant role given that several of them receive some form of public funding. In that sense, the city's newly acquired status of "children and youth friendly city" has played a role in bringing participation and inclusion to the top of the public agenda, thus making the authorities and organisations prioritise projects which have concrete proposals that relate to this.

The less institutionalised organisations have more horizontal structures and therefore more horizontal decision-making processes. Still, most of the organisations mention that their offer is strongly influenced by the feedback they receive from young people, and that the effort is to try to keep shaping the offer according to the needs and the expectations voiced by young people, while remaining within the boundaries set by their resources. The availability of skilled staff and the personal contacts of the organisations' workers also play a role in setting the agenda. A youth centre instructor also mentioned that they plan for unstructured time when participants can simply go to the centre and choose any activity they want to do.

In regards to the external challenges, one of the interviewees mentioned that sometimes it was difficult to establish the importance of their work, because they could not really quantify their accomplishments and thus justify the need for more resources. The interviewee argued that, because their work is entirely based on young people's will to attend the centre, use their services and discuss about their lives, and because it is difficult to establish causal relations between their lives and their involvement in the centre (particularly given that this is usually not very constant), it then becomes hard to attribute accomplishments. Another significant challenge identified by some of the organisational actors is that they cannot really accompany the youngsters indefinitely, so the idea of their programmes is that youngsters become stronger and more self-confident so that they can integrate and participate (socially, economically, politically) on their own. Sometimes it gets hard for young people to break this bond and abandon the comfort zone that these organisations provide. Two of the representatives stressed that it can be particularly challenging for foreign young adults (23-30) to find spaces where they can socialise without this institutional mediation. One of the stakeholders synthesised this by stating: "Institutions can't mediate all of your interactions, so there are some experiences that you will have to do by yourself. And not all needs can be predicted" (GS7).

Cooperation with other Organisations

Most of the interviewees reported that they are in contact with colleagues from other dependencies who are also working with young people. They occasionally cooperate with other organisations and municipal institutions, but in most cases, cooperation is project-based or even event-based. Interviewees attribute this to the differences in priorities (some organisations have a strong academic-support orientation, others are strongly oriented towards strengthening personal and social skills, and so on), but it can also be attributed to the differences in funding. In the case of service-oriented organisations, much of the cooperation and exchange of information with other organisations depends on personal contacts.

Repertoires of Action

The repertoires of action include conventional and non-conventional strategies, which vary depending on whether the organisation is service- or advocacy-oriented. Most offer some kind of service to young people, most frequently personalised/ group-based learning support, language and IT courses, (personal and vocational) counselling, sport activities, leisure and artistic activities. Some of the organisations stated that the purpose of these activities is not only to provide academic/ technical skills, but also a means to an end, for instance, to offer their constituents networking opportunities, to develop social skills, independence, and civic values. Other repertoires of action include the classic lecture/ discussion, collective-creation of artistic and sports' projects, educational excursions and visits. One aspect mentioned by all organisations providing services is that there needed to be a combination of learning and leisure; the educational aspect is vital for the organisations' goals; it is their main motivation, but the leisure aspect is important to keep the participants engaged. For example, three organisations offer excursions during the summer vacations. The idea is to give their clients (usually adolescents and young adults who, for different reasons, cannot go on vacation with their families) a chance to go on a vacation with other young people. In some cases, they can help decide on the destination, and there is a programme that includes enough free time for them to do some autonomous sight-seeing. Participants are expected to submit their application and to help decide what kind of accommodation they should book, and so on. In that sense, the excursions serve leisure needs but also have educational purposes.

Moreover, some of the organisations resort to artistic experiences to give young people not only access to leisure and culture, but also a chance to acquire new skills, learn some self-discipline, self-esteem, and create a network. According to a representative from a youth centre, these are also ways of exposing the youngsters to positive adult/ authority figures. Learning how to deal with the media,

not only as (critical) consumers, but also as producers has become important for several of these organisations and at least four of them offer workshops where critical issues about the media are discussed. They also engage in activities where the youngsters get the chance to create their own content (mostly YouTube channels, Instagram series, short films, and blogs). The interviewees highlight that including media workshops or discussions is a way of responding to the growing use of social media, and it intends to help young people reflect on how they use social media, its limitations and potential problems. Furthermore, most interviewees highlight that these activities are also intended to provide support in terms of personal and social development, skills and future planning, or conflict/ resolution. Ultimately, the goal of participation and enhancing participation is always implied in the work.

Inequalities

The delay in gaining access to the labour market and the shortage of qualified labour mentioned above was also discussed by the interviewees, with a somewhat different perspective: Some of the interviewees who work with young migrants and refugees highlight the paramount bureaucratic hurdles keeping many qualified young migrants from entering the job market. Other organisational representatives mentioned how the differentiated access to education makes it harder for some to enter the job market:

“Look, you have companies complaining about the lack of qualified labour, but then not everyone gets a traineeship. It’s difficult. And even if you do, it doesn’t mean that you will get a job with them afterwards” (GO2)

Through their experience working with young people, most of the organisational representatives mentioned that there are significant inequalities affecting young people in Cologne. An interviewee from a private foundation offering media training to young people explained that Cologne is vast in terms of what it has to offer in leisure, culture, and support activities for young people, but that this is “simply not enough to compensate the massive social inequalities in the city.” Likewise, the challenge is being able to reach broader and more diverse groups of young people given that most of those who access the interviewee’s centre come from educated middle-class families. From GO8’s point of view, socio-economic inequality is the most important form of inequality, but not the only one. She argued that one of the factors limiting the success of all initiatives destined to tackle inequality is the internalised aspects of inequality, for example, that young women assume that they are not cut out for certain roles, or youth from non-academic backgrounds assume that certain jobs are simply not for them, and this also applies to politics which is regarded as something very distant by certain groups.

The abundance of opportunities for participation, but lack of access to them was a problem mentioned by some of the stakeholders, and this view was shared by some of the organisational representatives who recognise the city's numerous openings for participation, but the uneven access to them, particularly regarding young people of foreign descent, coming from working-class families. One of the interviewees mentioned that while there are spaces and possibilities for young people to engage and become active in, these spaces are not reached by all youngsters:

“Sure we have a *Jugendring*²⁵ we have a youth parliament and we have instances and possibilities where young people sit and discuss (...) but I only see a very specific type of young person sitting in these places; young people who have received support from their parents, young people who are educated and who come from educated backgrounds... who received information about these things from their parents, and so on” (GO23)

Representatives from migrant organisations (both youth-led and youth oriented) agree that one of the factors that plays a role in this case is that well-established political actors (like political parties) and some of the city's offices for youth tend to cluster around the same central middle-class areas:

“Why open this children and youth office in Neumarkt? It is expensive and it is far from the people who need this the most. If you want to do this right, you need to go to the 'social hotspots'” (GO21)

Gender inequality, or inequality based on sexual identity were not specifically mentioned. One representative (GO23), though argued that young girls are affected by inequality and some degree of stigmatisation, and this affects their confidence and their ability to join the job market or the political sphere. Still, she noted that this is not really widely discussed in Cologne, and that a number of the young women she works with do not agree with this and consider that gender inequality is not really an issue. Furthermore, GO23 mentioned that this is also something related to the milieu.

As with the stakeholders, most organisational representatives also recognised the existence of several “social hotspots” in Cologne, districts predominantly inhabited by working-class and migrant families, with reduced leisure and transport possibilities. Some of the initiatives created by the organisations interviewed try to respond to these geographic inequalities by bringing free leisure activities to these areas. The most common initiatives include sports' activities, artistic and cultural events and meetings/counselling for parents. Here, some of the organisational representatives (GO9, GO18) stress that part of their goal is to provide counselling and educational activities that are easy to access and that do not involve many bureaucratic hurdles. Representative GO9 works for an organisation created to work with and for young migrants; the idea is that people can access their

²⁵ An umbrella organisation existing on local, regional, and national levels and in all regions in Germany, integrated by numerous self-organised youth groups. They act as a mediators between the authorities and the youth groups.

courses and counselling at any time, and reach language courses, for example, which they have not yet received clearance for.

Regarding the place of youth in municipal policy making, the organisational interviewees tended to recognise that there is much effort being made to promote participation, and mentioned that the administration shows ‘good intentions’ and a willingness to make the participation of young people a central topic. However, most of them also argued that the city’s agenda has a broad definition of participation, and that it is sometimes difficult for some organisations to justify the importance of working at the individual level as a mean of promoting participation in the medium and long term. Some of the organisations also questioned the ways the funds are distributed and whether they really reach those who are most vulnerable. One representative mentioned that a challenge they faced was matching the city’s priorities in terms of youth work in order of eligibility for funding programmes:

“It is also important to mention that while there is a lot going on in terms of youth and political groups and voluntary groups, some of the young people who come to us are those who lack access to these other groups in the first place” (GO18)

Likewise, a second aspect is that political education seems to be very important for the municipality, but in some cases, constituencies lack the interest or the knowledge to really make use of the offer:

“Another thing is that many of them can’t vote... so for example, there was the idea, (some other group) wanted to have a discussion about the European election but then many of the young people who come are not eligible to vote, so then they ask “why are we even doing this if we can’t vote?” And they are right! So, I mean political education is very important and plays a big role when it comes to youth initiatives, but I always say that’s not exactly what we do, not exactly what our target audience needs” (GO18).

In regards to the specific problems affecting youth, several interviewees mentioned that this is something “peer-group” specific that varies according to the social milieus, but nonetheless they find some timeless issues such as the search for identity and independence.

Lastly, interviewees from these organisations agree that Cologne has an active civil society with numerous possibilities for activism. In terms of access to these opportunities, opinions were divided: Some argued that young people from economically and academically disadvantaged backgrounds have fewer chances of participation, while others thought it was a problem of information and willingness. When asked about public opinion in Cologne, the idea of Cologne as an open and liberal city was repeatedly brought up. At the same time, most of the interviewees admit that there are stigmatised neighbourhoods and groups, and when it comes to the way public opinion reacts to youth activism, opinions were more or less divided. The Fridays for Future protests were mentioned as examples of both the ability of young people to organise and set an agenda, but also of the way some politicians fail to take young people seriously, and have authoritarian reactions.

Innovative Actions

Among the new and experimental ways of democratisation and inclusion mentioned, are the use of social media to enable a more horizontal communication and more direct feedback, and the use of flyers and information in Dari and Arabic, in order to broaden the participant base and also try to reach refugees and migrants not yet fluent in German. Moreover, the development of critical skills and media literacy were regarded as important strategies in helping to empower young people. Besides this, some organisations use leisure and artistic activities to reach out to vulnerable young people, and often instructors are also young adults which facilitates communication with the clientele. Photo Marathons and Film Festivals including films in Arabic, Kurdish, and Farsi were some concrete examples of initiatives destined to help young people integrate and develop their own creative, organisational and rhetoric skills. As a specifically political initiative, many of the organisations participate in the U18 elections, mock elections in which young people under 18 get to vote for communal, national and European candidates. While some of the city's stakeholders mentioned the youth parliaments and youth fora as instances of political formation, most of the organisational representatives argued that these are initiatives which only operate in some of the city's districts, and have no unified strategies or structures.

Generally speaking, most organisations which focus on offering services to young people have a strong social work vocation and a broad understanding of participation which embarks not only on political participation, but also on participation in economic, social, and cultural life. In this sense, the way they articulate their repertoires of action intends to strengthen young people at the individual level in order to make them capable of participating in political, economic, and social life. This idea is constant among several (GO1, GO 18, GO23, GO5) of the organisational interviewees who claim that the first step is to help marginalised young people develop academic, personal, and social skills that enable them to access the possibilities that the city has to offer. In this sense, they reflect the idea that the marginalised young people have a higher cost for participation and that they need to first take care of their own urgent needs before entering political discussions. Most of the interviewees recognise the existence of inequalities but are not very self-critical, nor are they specifically critical of the work done by other organisations and institutions. Much clearer criticism of the city's youth policy and the work done by other organisations came from migrant organisations.

Self-organised Youth Groups

Self-organised youth groups in our sample are those groups or associations which have been founded and coordinated by young people (up to 35 years old). In these cases, young people design

the agenda and coordinate the organisations' profile and targets. The self-organised youth groups in this sample include: two political parties (youth wings: 14-30), a migrant organisation, a European network, a fair-trade enterprise (cooperation between school pupils and university students), a student union, an artistic-social organisation, an LGBTQ charter of an autonomous civic centre, and an environmental-solidary economy group. The selected groups vary considerably in size, orientation, and level of structuration.

Repertoires of Action

Their repertoires of action are diverse and depend mostly on the size of the organisation and the level of formalisation. Youth branches of political parties and trade unions rely very much on welcome meetings, assemblies, and podium discussions and events and they devote a great deal of energy to events involving political education. Still, the leisure element is also important and they also organise parties and casual evenings. The decision making is democratic, but within a given space of manoeuvre which is usually set by the (mother) organisations' profile. The smaller and less-structured organisations tend to favour discussions/ assemblies and decisions by consensus when it comes to planning for the future and problem-solving. The migrants' organisation combines service and advocacy activities; they offer networking and political education for young people, they have a newspaper written entirely by young adults, and they also coordinate their attendance to demonstrations and political events. Most of these self-organised youth groups resort to different forms of campaigning. The fair-trade enterprise is a cooperative partnership between pupils and young adults who design, print and sell organic, fair-trade t-shirts, the income from which is donated to environmental organisations.

Some of the organisations interviewed (like the artists' collective, and to a lesser extent the migrants' organisation) have more of a 'social work' profile, and thus offer services and activities to their constituents. These organisations also implement feedback mechanisms in order to include their clients' opinions during decision-making about activities. The more established organisations also favour open discussion and majority votes for their decision-making, but they admit that initiatives and repertoires of actions are in accordance with the overall organisational profile and mission. Still, they mentioned that they enjoy a great deal of autonomy and independence from the "mother organisations" when planning events and campaigns.

Inequalities

Most of the representatives of these groups once again agreed that Cologne is a vibrant dynamic city, and thus very attractive and interesting for young people. Several of the interviewees themselves moved to Cologne because of the opportunities for work and leisure. They all recognise the possibilities that the city offers for political and civic action, and argue that at least compared to other cities, Cologne is very tolerant and open-minded. However, the inequalities mentioned by the representatives of the other organisations are reiterated in this sample of interviews. There was frequent mention of socio-economic inequality, and at least two of the interviewees mentioned discrimination and marginalisation of migrants and Germans with migrant backgrounds as significant forms of inequality. Those in political parties mentioned that while their parties are open to attracting new and diverse members, there tends to be a strong majority of members who are university students, with middle-class backgrounds. This was also the case for the European network, the solidary economy group, and the student union. The representative of the solidary economy organisation explained:

“I am aware that we are a very homogeneous group. We are mostly students (or university graduates) middle-class or upper-middle class, white... but we have no idea how to change this. And we do talk about this” (GO27)

One of the party representatives argued that sometimes this has to do with scheduling problems:

“A student can afford to go to meetings at five and then stay longer for a few drinks... even on weekdays. A (young) worker cannot attend meetings before six and will be less willing to stay longer if he/ she has to work on the next day. This reduces their chances of bonding with the group” (GO2)

Other interviewees believe this is connected to linguistic and educational barriers. In regards to the role played by education in political participation, GO10 agreed with stakeholders who claim that there is a plethora of activism in Cologne, but GO10 also stressed that many of the groups are not exactly easy to reach for young working-class people of migrant descent:

“The political parties don’t come here (Mühlheim). Not even the SPD, which is the workers party... not even the left really opens here or works with the people here”

(About Fridays for Future) “Well, I think for many of our members, it’s also difficult to just skip classes because if they are going to gymnasium and they come from socially and financially disadvantaged families, they can’t really afford to miss a lot of classes, they can’t afford learning support classes, they don’t have the chance to get help from their parents if they fall behind... and for them, it’s harder to miss schools on Fridays... it’s a higher cost. It’s very different for kids from academic families, whose parents are maybe also involved in some form of environmental activism, or who are also very environmentally aware; then they can skip schools... and in some cases, the parents even go with them. In some cases, the parents come from the environmental movements”

Interviewees thus recognise the role of social inequality and exemplified different forms: firstly, the high housing prices in Cologne that drive many young people out of the city, or force many young students and trainees to take on more jobs or live in significantly reduced spaces. Secondly, social inequality and the stigmatisation of some city districts is recognised by many of them, and two interviewees recognised a strong differentiation between the status given to university students and that given to young workers and trainees. Two examples were cited to exemplify this; the fact that university students can apply for affordable accommodation at student dormitories, and the fact that they can purchase a subsidised ticket for public transportation which is valid within the entire federal state.

The youth-group representatives mentioned the same marginalised districts in the city as the stakeholders, and they also stated that travelling to and from these districts is harder compared to more affluent districts. Furthermore, they pointed to the lack of affordable leisure activities available "...for our constituency going to the movies is a luxury...it's expensive, they can't afford it" (GO10). Moreover, the vast majority also mentioned the lack of full integration, not only of newly-arrived migrants, but also of some of the working-class Germans of migrant descent. For some of the interviewees, the arrival of refugees intensified existing prejudices towards migrants: "They tell, and I've heard this from my teacher, the typical jokes about Turks and against Arabs... and then the teachers just say: 'Ahh, that's a joke. It's not racism.'" (GO10)

In regards to the use of social media, opinions seem to be divided: Most of the youth-led groups mentioned that they use Facebook to announce events, Whatsapp for internal coordination and Instagram to update their members. Youth-oriented organisations are split on this: A few of them said that they use social media, mostly Facebook and Instagram to announce events, but also to introduce themselves and their philosophy. These organisations also claimed that social media has the advantage of allowing for a very casual and uncomplicated contact with young people: Whether it is about their activities, or about personal counselling, this seems to be a good option to facilitate contact. Four of the organisations mentioned that they also talk about the beneficial use of social media with their clients, teaching them not only the technical and aesthetic aspects (how to create a YouTube channel, how to create content for YouTube, Instagram, and so on), but also the more personal aspects: how to present themselves on social media, what they want to expose and what they want to keep private, how to have more efficient privacy settings on their social media accounts, and suchlike. Most of the self-organised youth groups understand participation as being able to access the political and social spaces, that is, being able to enter the conversation as equals. In this

sense, some of the groups see themselves as mediating between the individuals and the political arena.

General Remarks and Discussion

Most of the interviewees – from stakeholders to young activists – agree that young people in Cologne have many opportunities in terms of leisure and becoming culturally and politically active. Still, most of the interviewees seem to agree that access to these possibilities is rather unequal. Different forms of inequality are said to shape and reduce access. Among the most frequent forms of inequalities mentioned by stakeholders and organisations is social inequality, more specifically inequality with regard to access to and the possession of cultural and social capital. Groups most frequently identified as vulnerable are migrants and refugees, followed by young people from working-class families. When it comes to gender inequalities, the answers were somewhat paradoxical: While several stakeholders and political activists recognise that young women are underrepresented in political spheres, gender equality was not extensively discussed by most of the interviewees, aside from a few exceptions, and was not specifically mentioned as a priority.

In regards to access to the political arena, most stakeholders and organisational representatives agree that there are specific groups of young people who are under-represented in political discussions and who are very hard to reach through the municipality's programmes. This is one of the greatest challenges identified by the majority of the interviewees: making sure that young people who participate in public debates are not always the same people who are already active and mobilised. Regarding access to the labour market, there are some discrepancies in the way interviewees explain the persistent obstacles: While some of the municipality's stakeholders claimed that a significant problem is that many young people lack the minimum standards to get a traineeship position, two of the organisational representatives highlighted that because of educational inequalities and discrimination, it is close to impossible for these young people to gain access to a traineeship, and even if they do, it is rare for them to be offered a medium or long-term contract afterwards.

The decision to apply for the status as child and youth friendly city, and the granting of this status has created an incentive to make youth participation a transversal topic in the city's policy making. This means that participation is high on the agenda of stakeholders and organisations alike, even though they tend to have different and rather broad conceptions of participation and political engagement. For numerous stakeholders and organisational representatives, participation is not limited to traditional political activity, but includes taking part in the city's social, cultural, and economic life. For several of the interviewees, the structural conditions for participation are given,

but there are personal, educational, and social conditions which are creating obstacles to participation.

However, while several interviewees recognise numerous instances and mechanisms for youth participation, they also question the access that young people have to these instances. Most of the stakeholders and organisational representatives agree that the chance to access spaces of deliberation are highly differentiated, and sometimes the spaces of participation do not seem to take the inter-sectionalities of youth into account. One of the disadvantaged and highly stigmatised inter-sectional groups was working-class migrant youth. In spite of the openness and “coolness” that, according to many interviewees, characterises Cologne, several interviewees also agreed that there are districts which are heavily stigmatised and which have far fewer opportunities in terms of public transport, leisure, and open spaces. In this vein, many stakeholders agree that ‘postcodes’ do matter in Cologne: Living in a specific district will significantly influence a person’s access to education, leisure and political life. Stigmatisation is not only palpable regarding access to opportunities, but also in everyday conversations and (to some extent), it is reinforced by local media.

A great deal of criticism from stakeholders and organisational representatives was directed towards the education system as a generator of further division and inequality; some even claimed that the education system makes it more difficult for working class people to integrate into the political arena and to access university education. Several interviewees claimed it was difficult for young people from non-academic backgrounds to overcome these obstacles. Likewise, most of the interviews suggested that the inequalities created by the education system are amplified by the inequalities generated by parental status, milieu, income, and parental involvement. Several of the interviewees highlighted how young people from less-educated or highly conflictive households, where support is limited, will face severe disadvantages when it comes to participating in politics, the economy, and social life.

Participatory opportunities are institutionalised in several municipal and CSO programmes. The differences in interpretation, irrespective of initiatives that directly deal with political participation, lie in the fact that there is little attention devoted to processes which focus on local and communal politics. The initiatives tend to focus on political education, specifically helping youngsters become acquainted with partisan politics, European politics, local electoral processes, European elections. While there is a generalised consensus that many youth milieus do not “reach” the spaces where these concrete forms of political education is taking place, the offer provided to a number of these tends to incline towards social work and development of a civic culture, skills, and so on.

The consensus about the inequalities derived from parental involvement, socio-economic issues, and access to education is matched by the initiative of several of the service providers to “strengthen the individual” in terms of (academic, technical, and social) skills, but also to address general orientation, self-esteem, boundaries, and the like. For several of the interviewees, this is the most important action in promoting participation given that they appreciate what the city offers regarding possibilities for participation in principle, but that many individuals lack the skills/social/cultural capital/know-how to access them.

The interviewees recognise young people as a highly-differentiated segment of society in which many different milieus are recognisable and, thus, with different types of problems. Nonetheless, there seems to be a consensus in terms of youth as a period of search: for a personal identity, for labour market access, in social life, among others. The visions for the future or the possibilities for improvement are diverse: While some of the organisational representatives highlight that the municipality’s efforts need to “move closer to where the young people are”, some of the district’s stakeholders stress that the city devotes a great deal of effort and attention to improving the situation for young people, but that these changes all take time. Likewise, stakeholders in the public sector consider it important for parents of disadvantaged youth to “bring their children to kindergarten and state facilities as early as possible” and to make as much use as possible of the city’s and civil society organisations for young people.

The programmes and the concerns voiced by the interviewees suggest that two groups are more visible in public debates: children (until 18) and university students. Besides these two, some attention is given to those aged 16 to 21 who are entering the labour force. But young workers appear to be less visible since much of the institutional discourse seems to concentrate on facilitating their entry onto the job market and on preventive work (prevention of crime and addiction).

In general, the distance sensed between the city and the beneficiaries, and between the policy makers and the beneficiaries is the reason given by some of the activists to justify their sense of scepticism. This distance is more than a generational matter, so it is less about the old drafting laws for the young, and more a matter of class – a distance in economic, social, and cultural capital. Moreover, this has to do with the generalised conception of politics as limited to electoral processes and parliaments, and perhaps a difficulty in establishing the connection between politics and everyday issues.

The interviews suggest that youth and particularly youth participation play a significant role in the city’s agenda. The main topics discussed in regards to youth participation had to do with education, access to the labour market, political opinion, and access to and presence in political discussion.

Still, the topics which have been on the general political agenda have also permeated this discussion about youth; for example, populism, environmentalism, and migration. The arrival of thousands of refugees to the city in 2015 has also influenced the youth sector: Refugee youth have gained visibility within the city's agenda and within the agenda of the organisations working with youth. Still what some of the activists themselves highlight is that they are still objects of discussion rather than included in any of the debates. Generally speaking, the interviews express a contradictory view of the situation: Most of them recognise threats posed by growing inequalities and segregation from local democracy, but they also recognise the value of the municipality's and civic initiatives in trying to create strategies to help mitigate the effects of inequality.

Even though most of the stakeholders and organisational representatives recognise that there is a distance between the sphere of politics and several young milieus, there seems to be little self-criticism given that the distances are mostly attributed to the 'structural causes' like the education system, the growing spatial segregation, inequality (in general) and the inequalities ingrained in the social system. Therefore, there is little self-criticism and an implied impotence that comes from the personification of 'education system' or 'structural racism'. There is also a great deal of responsibility given to parents and parental background; thus inequality is explained through parents who have no time, no education, and so on. The initiatives described by organisations and stakeholders are (mostly) mitigating the effects of given structural problems, but not really targeting what is perceived as the source of inequalities, most importantly the education system, and the lack of diversity in politics. Almost all interviewees recognise that inequalities have an impact on political participation but in many cases, the answer seems to be social work; individualised support to help a person adapt and acquire the social and personal skills needed in order to access political participation. Lastly, it is noteworthy that most of the interviewees preferred a non-confrontational approach (little criticism of others), with the exception of those interviewees of migrant descent, who broadly speaking, voiced more open and direct criticism towards concrete actors.

4. Greece

Report by: Maria Paschou

Introduction and Urban Context

Demographics, cultural and socio-political traits

Athens is the capital and largest city of Greece and one of the oldest cities in the world. It is located in central Greece, in Attica administrative region, which has 58 municipalities with a population estimated at 3.75 million in 2014. The Athens Urban Area has 40 municipalities, 35 of which are referred to as Greater Athens municipalities in North Athens, West Athens, Central Athens, and South Athens.

This study focuses on the City of Athens (central Athens) which has an estimated population of over 665,000 that makes it the largest Greek municipality. As to its demographics, more than half of its population are females (52.5%) and almost 40% is less than 35 years old. As regards nationality, almost 23% of the city's population are foreign citizens with most of them coming from countries outside the EU and less than 20% from EU countries. Concerning the educational level of the citizens of Athens, 25% have completed tertiary education, while there are no significant gender differences concerning educational achievement²⁶.

Athens is the administrative and economic centre of Greece. The whole Attica region is the wealthiest region in Greece. The gross domestic product per capita in the city of Athens is 32.031€, while in the Greater Athens Area it drops to 21.743 euros per capita (2016). Its economy is based on services, in particular of the public sector, welfare and administration, tourism²⁷, trade/commercial services and real estate. Unemployment rate in Attica region is about 20% of its population, with 15% of the unemployed population being younger than 30 years old, 65% being females and approx. 12% being foreign citizens, based on Eurostat data. In addition, approx. 31.1%

²⁶ Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority (elstat)

²⁷ Euromonitor International ranks Athens as the world's 47th most-visited city by tourists in 2015. Athens' percentage was the fastest-growing for any top European city despite political and economic turmoil of this period.

of Attica's population live at risk of poverty or social exclusion, 15% face monetary poverty and 20% lives under severe material deprivation.

Athens' urban area has the largest student population in Greece, hosting nine universities with approximately 200.000 students, thus covering a very broad spectrum of academic fields. This, together with the fact that the city hosts the mayor national research centres – the Hellenic Research Foundation, the National Centre for Scientific Research "Demokritos" and the National Centre for Social Research – suggest that the city provides fertile ground for academic accomplishment.

In Addition, due to its long history and cultural heritage, Athens exhibits numerous culture-related and archaeological sites, museums and art galleries. The most prominent private foundations of Greece - such as Stavros Niarchos Foundation, Onassis Foundation and Bodossaki Foundation- are all located in the city of Athens and through their programmes, funding opportunities and infrastructures they enrich the cultural production of the city, encourage artistic expression and open up collaborative spaces.

As regards the political life of the city, the Municipal Council is composed of 49 Municipal Councillors elected every 4 years. Of these, 29 belong to the majority political party headed by the Mayor (Law 3852/2010) and the remaining 20 belong to the eight minority combinations. Since 2010 G. Kaminis was the Mayor, who ran as an independent; he had been nominated by the Democratic Left party but also backed by other left-wing and social-democratic parties once in November 2010 and re-elected to a second term in May 2014. Most recently, K. Bakoyannis, who was a New Democracy (liberal-conservative) party-backed candidate has been elected as the new Mayor of Athens in May 2019 (and took office on September 2019). While there is not a single division within the municipality on youth, there are some municipal agencies –and in particular the City of Athens Youth and Sport Organisation, the City of Athens Vocational Training Centre and the Technopolis municipal enterprise - and vice Mayoralties – such as the Vice-Mayoralty for the Child, the Vice-Mayoralty for Social Solidarity, Welfare and Equality and most importantly the Vice-Mayoralty for Civil Society and Innovation- which involve projects or undertake initiatives which directly or indirectly address and empower youth.

Concerning civil engagement, Athens, which is considered to be the cradle of democracy, has a long tradition of civic participation. This is manifest by the number of (unofficially) registered²⁸

²⁸ eg. at the internet hub <http://www.enallaktikos.gr/>

organisations, such as NGOs, voluntary associations and various collectivities at the city of Athens. In addition, there are spaces within the city, which are renowned for their alternative, autonomous/radical character, such as Exarcheia district or as cases of gentrification such as Metaxourgeio, which are opening spaces for youth progressive subcultures to flourish. Moreover, during the last decade, the indebtedness of the country, austerity policies and several incidences of state repression and anomy fuelled social turbulence and bottom-up mobilisations, as evidenced by the Syntagma Square occupation in the summer of 2011 and mass protest against Troika Memoranda which followed. The economic crisis and its resulting social crisis together with the refugee crisis triggered solidarity action, with several initiatives by formal and informal groups emerging out of the necessity to cover basic needs, protect dwindling rights and advocate for the protection of marginalised and vulnerable groups.

Sample

Our sample includes 19 representatives of organisations (OG) which either focus on youth issues or represent youth interests and 10 with stakeholders (SG) who shape the local opportunity structure. Our sampling strategy followed the rules of diversity and saturation. Thus, it aimed to include actors who define issues pertaining to youth interests and youth socio-political participation from different perspectives or following different routes. For this purpose, we first identified those who are the most relevant actors and classified them based on their organisational type and their particular field of action, categories which were gradually refined throughout the selection process. Sampling was thus carried out in successive stages, based on updated lists of actors which were informed by the preliminary empirical findings and the criterion of saturation in perspectives, policy approaches or viewpoints.

As regards the interviews with organisations, we defined two broad categories, organisations or groups which are youth-led, i.e. which are composed by young people and thus are self-evidently related to youth engagement in collective social and/ or political action and youth-oriented organisations, which are organisations which set strategic priorities towards empowering youth. Aiming at a balance between these two types of organisations, our sample included 4 organisations which are purely youth led and 4 which are purely youth oriented, while 12 organisations fall within the two categories, being both youth-led and youth-oriented. With respect to their action type, our selected organisations cover the following categories: youth alternative centre (1); migrant youth organisation (1); vulnerable youth organisation (1); youth volunteer association (2); disabled youth

cooperative (1); sports club (1); youth political party (1); student organisation²⁹; LGTBQ (1); feminist organization (1); grassroots group against youth unemployment and precarity (1); trade union (1); environmental organization (1); local citizens solidarity network (1); cross-cultural/international internship and volunteering organisation (1); youth innovation and entrepreneurship (1); young professionals community (1); personal and professional development organisation (1); NGO incubator (1).

Concerning stakeholder categories, we distinguished between different types of stakeholders, each of them defining a particular set of opportunities, with respect to the institutional level (e.g. public/private sector) or/ and the thematic field (culture, education, civic participation, labour market and spiritual life). Each type was represented by one or two stakeholders, who were considered to be the most influential in their fields. Our stakeholder sample finally included private foundations (2); municipality agencies (2); federation of youth organisations (1); R&D public agency (1); religious institution (1); media organisation (1); youth policy and strategic planning agency (1); and educational policy agency (1).

The interviews have been conducted between April and July 2019. Eighteen have been carried out face to face and twelve via skype.

Interviews with Stakeholders

Frame of opportunity

Our study identifies the different agencies and institutions of the public and private sector in the city of Athens which open windows of opportunities to the young generation to socialize, communicate their ideas and politically express themselves. Based on our interviews, a considerable degree of cooperation is noticed between the different stakeholders, such as between private foundations, NGOs and the municipality. Due to the central state arrangement of Greece, limited autonomy is ceded to the subnational (regional and local) level in policy making. In addition, the impact of the

²⁹ The perspective of student organization has been gauged by collecting information from the interviews conducted under WP6 EURYKA (biographical interviews with members of student organisations), which took place few months earlier. The reason for this was that fieldwork for this WP (organizational interviews) has been carried out in a period in which participation from the members of student organisations has been impossible due to successive breaks of their normality (i.e. preparation for the three elections that all took part in this period – i.e. student union election, municipal/prefectural/ EU parliament election, national government election- two breaks of the academic study for Easter and summer break- as well as summer exams)

economic crisis has been significant in decreasing funding opportunities while increasing antagonism between the different policy fields.

During the last decade the city of Athens had to deal with several pressing issues, such as the impoverishment of middle class families, increased rates of unemployed and homeless people, huge migrant/ refugee flows, societal unrest and rising neofascism, that relate to the emergence of new vulnerabilities which took precedence over youth in setting policy priorities. This is reflected in the lack of strategic policy planning concerning the adult youth population as a broad and distinct category with particular needs, grievances and challenges. Most opportunities for young people are thus derived by projects or initiatives which address subcategories such as migrant youth or young women or through structures and services which address young people as part of the broader population. When referring to young people most stakeholders adopt narrow age definitions, i.e. spanning from teenage to about the age of 30.

The main and most recurrent themes in the interviews relate to inequalities, the social integration of youth and their empowerment towards independence. Reference to the economic crisis has been also very frequent. First, in terms of its impact on families (shrinkage of family income, job loss) and youth prospects (to enter the market and pursue a career), second, in terms of its psychological impact on youth (anxiety, distrust, social isolation) and third, in terms of mobilising youth political participation as recorded in rising youth protest. Moreover, youth familiarity with new technologies is usually mentioned to be their main advantage.

“Societal integration is achieved through technological familiarity "Young people are actually better integrated in society than older generations are because they are "digital natives" and not "digital immigrants" as most of us". (SG4)

The contribution of several stakeholders in shaping the opportunity structure for youth in Athens is examined. As regards municipal authorities, youth does not appear to be a distinct category of policy-making, unlike children, seniors, immigrants, homeless and addicts, who are targeted by municipal policies. Most policies that pertain to youth deal with culture and entertainment. There is a municipal agency on vocational training and another one on sports and culture. The latest organises and supervises structures such as athletic centres and libraries, programmes such as seminars of creative learning and guided tours and events, such as seasonal city festivals which mainly (though not exclusively) address young citizens. In addition, there are considerable efforts made by the vice mayoralty of civil society and innovation, which undertook initiatives such as the development of a platform to record and bring into dialogue urban civil society and informal grassroots groups, or the

creation of a node of youth entrepreneurship which encourages innovation through capacity building seminars and consultancy services. Furthermore, the City of Athens is participating in the European Information Network - Europe Direct, which is one of the European Union's key tools for informing European citizens about the EU, in particular as regards the rights of its citizens and the enhancement of citizen participation in EU policies at local and regional level.

Moreover, there are some national-scale policy initiatives which are introduced by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs and its supervised agencies, such as the General Secretariat of New Generation, which despite not being at the local level, contribute in shaping the city's opportunity structure. This is accomplished through the organisation of educational and vocational training services, or through other programmes such as a pilot program of secondary schools opening on Sundays to accommodate various cultural activities that addresses mainly local youth. In addition, a recently established legal framework (2018) regulates inter-governmental cooperation on youth issues.

With respect to the spiritual life of young people, the Orthodox church provides pastoral services tailored to the needs of young people which it identifies, such as mentoring on family life and coping with pressing problems such as unemployment. These are organised at the parish level. There is however a noticeable lack of institutions working in the field of interreligious dialogue, given that Athens is a multicultural city with different religious traditions.

Private foundations draw on external or their own grants to support individual youth or to fund projects of civil society actors in their effort to encourage fresh ideas to flourish. In the first case this is largely achieved through scholarship as well as through the provision of cultural and educational services. In the second case, private foundations cooperate with civil society actors who are addressed via open calls in their identified priority fields. Civic participation is sometimes recognised as a key priority of youth empowerment, as it is for example reflected in the adoption of relevant criteria in setting scholarship eligibility.

“We evaluate if they offer to society, if they understand the problems of our country and the importance of their vote. We evaluate such aspects in applicants' CVs in order to motivate young people to acquire such skills to be eligible for the scholarship.” (SG2)

Moreover, in our interviews we asked stakeholders about youth and inequality. Based on the interviews, inequality is conceived in terms of the inability to ensure equal opportunities and as the source of discrimination. The inequalities which are most frequently mentioned draw on age, ethnic

origin, economic differences and sexual orientation. Inequalities based on gender, social class, disability and other vulnerabilities, such as drug addiction, are also mentioned, but less frequently. As explained by an educational expert who advises on youth policies, inequality generating factors are tied to socio-geographical features, with school dropouts prevailing in Greek islands where the economy is heavily based on tourism and violence and drug addictions being prominent in urban areas and Athens in particular. The geographical dimension of inequality is also brought to the fore by a national policy-making institute which justifies, on the basis on geographical inequality, why more resources are allotted to the suburbs of west Attica compared to the municipality of Athens.

The different dimensions of inequality which disempower young Athenians were usually discussed by stakeholders in justification of their strategic goals and initiatives. Private foundations referred to projects which define marginalised youth, such as ethnic minorities (e.g. Roma, or Pomaks), migrants/ refugees, homeless and disabled youth, as their beneficiaries. A second strategy mentioned for the fight of inequalities and stigmatization is to educate the general population through anti-discriminatory campaigning, attained for example with the introduction of educational programmes in compulsory education or the organisation of awareness raising public events. For such purposes cooperation between different stakeholder types is met, such as between a funding private institute, an NGO and the municipality. A third strategy is the support of civil society and grassroots groups advocating in support of social rights – e.g cooperation of funding institutes with feminist or LGBTQ organisations. A fourth strategy is symbolic action, as materialised for example in the accommodation of cultural events in public spaces of neglected neighbourhoods, against socio-spatial inequalities.

Given that it takes long for young citizens to leave their family home and gain their independence in Greece, the inequalities based on what they inherit from their families are felt stronger. Thus, family inequality based on economic status and social capital is reproduced for the younger generation while educational inequality is sharpened due to the fact that the family is unable to pay for supplementary to public school education which is considered to be almost indispensable in order to achieve university entrance. Another diagnosis for inequalities is the weak welfare state of the country which intensifies inequalities produced by socioeconomic vulnerability. In addition, damage of the social fabric caused by economic hardship and social alienation, as a by-product of the crisis, exaggerates intolerance, particularly in the highly diversified urban context of Athens. All these are also said to be related with the low levels of civic education and social responsibility.

“One problem is that Greeks do not respect and protect the public space, which relates to the fact that young people are not taught the importance of sharing and participating in the commons” (SG2).

With respect to youth unemployment which is discussed as a major problem of the new generation, stakeholders find that young Athenians are privileged compared to youth in Greek provinces and smaller cities, due to the centralised state configuration of the country. Most public services as well as private investments are located in Athens, thus increasing employment opportunities for locals. The interviewed representatives of the private institutions critically referred to the state’s responsibility for youth unemployment, by underlining the weakness of the Greek educational system to connect with market needs or the devaluation of technical post-secondary education due to deeply rooted negative stereotypes for technical professions. Thus, the majority of young Greeks experiences difficulties in finding a job despite holding a university degree, something that is likely to contribute to the “brain drain” phenomenon, especially during the crisis period³⁰.

There have been however some efforts to provide incentives to highly skilled youth, such as in the case of a recently established national agency which provides young scientists the opportunity to receive funding in order to continue their independent post-doctorate research, thus opening a window of opportunity for them to pursue a research career. At the local level, there have been efforts to involve young professionals in the urban economic life, such as a municipality initiative for the revival of commercial activity in the centre of the city, which includes renting small properties for commercial use to young entrepreneurs in favorable terms.

As regards civic participation of young Athenians, most stakeholders agree that its levels are lower compared to the European average. An opportunity for them to raise political claims is through participation in the parliament of youth at the national and European level, as well as the structured dialogue forum. At the city level, the institution of youth council within the municipality of Athens remains inactive, which is a weakness of the city’s opportunity structure and which is said to be linked to the low levels of youth demand, ie youth disinterest in institutional politics. Despite however abstaining from conventional forms of political participation, young people are increasingly engaged in non-institutionalised forms of political participation since the outbreak of the economic crisis. The municipality is making efforts to support civil society, both the third sector

³⁰ Labrianidis, L. (2011). Investing in leaving: The Greek case of international migration of professionals in the globalization era. Ekdoseis Kritiki, Athens.

and grassroots initiatives, by any means possible and despite its poor financing capacity, such as by proving public buildings to civil society groups or by assisting them with printing.

“A problem with participating in municipal bodies is that this participation necessitates spending a lot of time during the day to go and visit public structures and officials, which needs to be done during working hours, meaning that one will not be able to work, whereas there is no payment for this engagement.” (SG1)

The low levels of volunteerism – although on the rise in the crisis period- are reflected in the inability of the legal framework to recognize the status of voluntary work as such as well as in the underdeveloped civic education. Increase is recorded at the levels of local and grassroots civic activity as well as the adoption of solidarity practices and alternative ways of organising economic life.

“Young people have gone through a big period of depression because they felt there is no escape from the crisis, but I see that there has been a great deal of change during the last years, both in terms of optimism and in the terms of active intervention.” (SG3)

“The legal framework for volunteering is not regulated, therefore even organizations which base their activity on volunteer work and which receive applications from volunteers themselves, are at risk of being fined by the Labor Inspectorate for illegal work” (SG2)

Regarding the visibility of youth in the media, it is said to be overall low, with most stakeholders recognising that young people are not voiced through the national mainstream media. Exceptions to this are 2-3 urban commercial magazines which address local youth, covering mainly cultural and lifestyle issues but giving also voice to underground, avant-garde or radical groups which are active in the city through artistic and socio-political interventions. Furthermore, collective youth voice themselves through their own media outlets, which have a specific but limited readership/audience. The social media is widely considered to be the main tool they use to publicly communicate their interests and concerns as well as to influence the general public.

Overall evaluation of educational and career prospects by stakeholders is positive in relational terms, e.g. when comparing with smaller towns and the Greek province or when comparing policies' responsiveness to youth needs of the past and present times. In addition, the local frame of opportunity is rich with respect to encouraging youth engagement in the arts, sports and culture, but poor in terms of inciting youth engagement in the socio-political life of the city. The institutional processes of participatory decision making are thus largely considered to be problematic, as primarily evidenced by the inactivity of the local youth council in the municipality of Athens. Civil society actors are most critical of the weaknesses of national and local policy makers in prioritizing the empowerment and inclusiveness of the youngest generation in the socio-political life of the city and characterise the existing youth policies fragmented and uncoordinated with each other.

Organisational Interviews

Most of our informants describe young people to be active and sociable. Based on experiences of working with youth, some informants underline qualities such as their courage, creativity and passion. In addition, it has been noticed that young people involved in social and political processes are more available and flexible in terms of time and roles which they are willing to undertake. Another feature of youth political participation is that young people partake most frequently in contentious politics. What is more, they tend to be less conservative and more open-minded, in the words of a respondent

“Our generation adopts a more progressive standpoint on LGBTQ issues. We are more open in accepting multiple gender identities; this is due to our frequent exposure to such issues [...] And our parents are “cooler” compared to their parents when it comes to issues such as marriage, having children and family types.” (OG16)

As regards civic engagement, most of the times the university is the starting point of youth political socialisation and youth activism. Student groups and associations usually maintain relationships with other types of civil society groups, such as political parties (and their youth branches) or citizen groups. People who have passed through student unionism notice that “the experience of the political process of the assembly in student unionism shapes a culture of democratic practice” (OG9) which is then identified and recognised as a virtue in their future participation in political processes.

Political participation

Political participation of young Greeks is shaped by contextual, social, spatial and temporal, factors. The context of the economic crisis which triggered anti-austerity protests and the movement of the Squares in 2011 motivated grassroots mobilisations of resistance, while the huge migrant flows of 2015-16 incited youth response in civil society calls for solidarity and support. As described by a respondent

“The crisis has played a significant role in turning youth interest towards undertaking action in supporting homeless people and the needy.” (OG18)

An invigorated interest in institutional politics is reflected in the increased number of youth participation as candidates in the most recent municipal and regional authority elections (May 2019), which is an indication of the political vivacity of young people. Most visibly, however, the new generation is interested in following the current social movements, as evidenced by their participation in the protest of the “Fridays For Future” and “Me too” campaigns.

“The fields that attract their attention to mobilise are animals and the environment, vulnerable groups, human rights and diversity” (OG18)

"Since the referendum of 2015 one can observe a generalised distrust in institutional politics; young people have turned their interest in specific agendas and partake in thematic political fora, such as those related to refugees or gender issues". (OG16)

Youth political engagement and the city of Athens

Our interviews also examined what are the main perceptions of the city of Athens and the possibilities it offers for the inclusion of young adults. The urban environment of Athens is rich in incentives that motivate youth mobilization and political engagement, something that is mentioned by many respondents. Some respondents refer to the initiatives undertaken during Kaminis' mayoralty in supporting civil society, like the establishment of a respective vice mayoralty or the introduction of a platform to make online complaints. Others are unsatisfied and critical of the opportunity structure of the city and the state, stressing the lack of a sound political framework for the support of youth. The former represent organisations which have benefited from or cooperated with any of its agencies, which are urban non-profit organisations most of the times and youth associations less often. The latter represent either organisations which disagree with local policy makers and refuse cooperation, due to conflicting interest such as those regarding the use of public space, or due to differences in ideological orientation. These groups are most frequently grassroots/ local citizen groups or, to a lesser extent, labour unions.

Regarding their representation in the public domain, young people are said to be underrepresented in the national mainstream mass media, which is mainly attributed to their disinterest in conventional media rather than their exclusion by the media. It should be nevertheless noticed that due to the centralised state arrangement, young Athenians receive higher levels of media attention at the national level compared to youth population of other places of the country. At the local level, young people are voiced through urban outlets, print magazines, radio and TV broadcasts which are produced by young people and have a wide public reach in the city. These deal mainly with cultural issues and the local political agenda.

The view that young people are increasingly visible in the internet, through social media is also widely supported. Besides, young people have their own forms of expression and recommended:

“[...] the adoption of a progressive outlook to understand their [young people's] language, e.g. by recognising graffiti as a form of artistic expression, instead of condemning it as an attack of public space" (OG13)

The problems of youth

When it comes to youth problems, organisation representatives agree with stakeholders that young Athenians strive to gain their autonomy. This is due to the weakness of youth welfare policy and the lack of a national strategy to empower youth, as criticised by a youth advocacy NGO of our sample. Other reasons are the scarcity of employment opportunities due to market instability, the lack of school-to-work transition policies and the weak connection of the market with the university. In addition, some respondents referred to the high cost of renting in most central areas of the city due to increasing Airbnb tourist accommodations, which has been a reason leading to youth protest.

"In order to be eligible for social protection in Greece one must either be juvenile or be an adult who was employed and lost his job or meet some other criteria of vulnerability. We don't have autonomous youth policies covering all citizens reaching the age of 18 plus one day. Thus, young people from a childhood-protective system move into a mute world with no succession" (OG13)

Added to the weakness of youth policies in ensuring an independent transition to adulthood, there is no protectionism against age inequalities in the job market. This involves not only youth disadvantage, given lack of working experience, but also inequality in earnings due to an austerity-driven policy towards market flexibilisation which establishes a subminimum wage for those aged under 25 - a law introduced in 2012 and abolished in 2019. This economic crisis-driven measure has been mentioned by both union representatives and grassroots organisations as an anti-equality measure, i.e. a measure inducing intergenerational unfairness.

Other problems are mentioned introversion, alienation and indifference, which are usually related to crisis-induced social anxiety linked to the weakening of welfare state and family protectionism. This problem is mentioned by youth advocacy organisations, which consider the absence of an integrated strategy to empower youth and incite their socio-economic integration as a reason for their resignation. Social apathy, by its turn, they argue, explains the inability to transform youth indignation into creative power and makes populism seductive; that's why neo-conservative and fascist political parties sharply increased their popularity amongst youth during the last decade.

"Golden Dawn is so popular to youth due to the socialization process offered by the organization through recruitment and a discourse which dictates that we are important [...] thus building a collective identity. That's why I recommend young people to get up, go out and escape from boredom" (OG13)

Apart from the problems which relate to contextual factors, there are some generational traits mentioned, such as youth's inability to focus on an issue, or to remain loyal to their own decisions.

This consideration is brought to the fore by the representative of a youth sports club, who connects youth distraction with the frantic pace of urban life.

“The youngest generation does not strive to achieve for anything. They are distracted by being involved in too many activities which hampers their commitment to their goals, or when they do commit, they do it irresponsibly or give up soon [...] and afterwards they blame the system for not giving them opportunities” (OG10)

Repertoires of Action

The main objective of youth groups and organisations with political aims is to encourage active participation in conventional and unconventional political processes, public deliberation and collective decision making. Youth led organisations, such as youth branches of political parties, student unions, social movement organisations, trade unions and grassroots/local citizen groups refer to the general assembly (OG8, OG9, OG11, OG14, OG16, OG17, OG19) as one of their main activities. Exceptions are organisations with hierarchical decision making structures. Youth oriented groups and in particular NGOs – which operate under the status of non-governmental or urban, non-profit organisation- most frequently refer to political communication strategies, such as campaign organisation and awareness raising practices (OG4, OG6, OG7), advocacy through lobbying or litigation (OG4, OG6; OG7, OG13) and participation in protest events, such as strikes, demonstrations and boycotting (OG6; OG8; OG16, OG17, OG19). Some of the aforementioned organisations develop their activity around a thematically specific agenda, such as environmentalism, migration, feminism, labour issues or have a broader scope. Unions combine advocacy, mutual support and community bonding activities between their group members, all of whom possess a shared identity (OG4, OG14, OG17).

“We do not just aim to clean a beach which we will find dirty again the day after. Instead we aim at designing campaigns to change citizens’ behaviour.” (OG6)

Some youth groups and organisations are involved in solidarity action to assist vulnerable groups - such as migrants, poor families, young offenders or addicts through the provision of services for the satisfaction of their basic needs for food, shelter, clothing and basic education (OG9, OG11,) or through integrated projects that involve both advocacy and service provision aiming at their societal (re)integration (OG4, OG13). Some of them additionally adopt activities that target community empowerment, e.g. through the organisation of cultural services and events such as film screening, public talks, theatrical groups, art exhibitions and music festivals, collective practices including collective cooking and social economy initiatives, like barter bazaars and time banks (OG9, OG11, OG12, OG13). Examples of groups which adopt such actions are social centres, grassroots citizen groups and local solidarity networks.

Another set of organisational activity involves training for the job market and/or assisting in gaining working experience (OG2, OG5), networking and support of young professionals (OG12), support of newly established NGOs and youth collective actors who want to define their legal status and need guidance in their operation (OG1), mentoring and encouraging youth entrepreneurship (OG5, OG12, OG15, OG7), as well as training and job opportunities creation for the disabled (OG3). These activities are employed by social cooperatives, incubators (i.e. organisations which support the establishment of NGOs, start-ups and social economy enterprises), student associations which aim to encourage youth entrepreneurship and associations or networks of young professionals.

In addition, there is a cluster of activities regarding the motivation and organisation of volunteering (OG5, OG18) and participation in programs of intercultural/ international exchanges through internship or academic study (OG5; OG7); activities which are undertaken by youth volunteering and traineeship organisations. Finally, youth sports clubs develop athletic activities (OG10) that boost collective spirit and teamwork.

Youth organisations and decision making models

Different types of decision-making are recorded. Organisations with a legal status, such as student unions, associations, youth branches of political parties and NGOs usually have more hierarchical decision making structures with a stable frame of responsibility and power distribution between individual members/ group participants. These include most usually, a president, a vice-president, a board of directors and sectoral managers. Decision making models may be more complex (eg in terms of sectoral and hierarchical segregation) or simple (eg limiting their hierarchal structure by setting supervisory roles to their founders) depending on the philosophy of the organisation. Organisations which are linked to social movements or place democratic values or the principle of member equality at the forefront of their mission are making efforts to cast off hierarchy. Thus, a social movement related organisation of our sample adopts a participatory model of governance by ceding decision making power to the general assembly, while retaining some hierarchy at the managerial level (e.g. by setting coordinators or team leaders). A social cooperative is making decisions based on consensus, since its operation is based on co-ownership.

Groups with no legal status, grassroots groups and other informal networks and collectivities have a greater propensity towards participatory decision making and non-hierarchical forms of governance. Sometimes roles and responsibilities are distributed in rotation or based on availability,

while most of the times the groups have an elected administrative team, which consists of a treasurer and a secretary and/ or administrators by subgroup. Everybody has equal say with everybody else and all members can influence decision making through participation in regular gatherings/ assembly, where strategic planning and priorities are discussed and decisions are made after voting. Groups which use participatory models are also concerned about transparency issues, which are safeguarded by processes such as keeping minutes of political procedures. However, there are also several differences recorded, such as the adoption of a consensual or majoritarian approach in democratic decision making or the degree of targeted openness to the public.

Youth-led organisations are by default more likely to involve young participants in decision making compared to organisations which define young people as their beneficiaries (youth-related). Noticeably however, and due to the fact that these organisations all have a common aim towards youth empowerment, democratic and participatory trends are elsewhere recorded, even if this does not take place at the decision making level; they nevertheless leave room for bottom up initiatives to emerge.

Innovations and digital forms of participation

Moreover, there are some efforts towards the adoption of more inclusive tools of participation. Digital tools are mentioned by the vast majority of organisations in response to the innovative elements of their organisational operation. The adoption of digital forms of participation is said to increase communication reach and impact while reducing cost. Youth led organisations with limited resources opt for platforms which allow distant participation and collective decision making. While youth led organisations use new technologies of distant participation mainly as a means of internal communication and cost-effective management, youth oriented organisations do this for purposes of external communication most of the time.

Almost all organisation representatives report to use social media, which may not even be considered as innovative any more, but part of their everyday organisational routines. Facebook in particular is used by almost all of the organisations under study. They refer to the advantages of its applications -such as closed groups and messaging- in terms of fostering the inclusiveness of members and their direct responsiveness to stimuli produced by the group leaders/administrators. Instagram comes second and Twitter comes third in popularity amongst the sampled Greek organisations. Clouding is widespread for repository and sharing, whereas chatrooms, remote

connectivity tools (e.g. video conferences or multiple-users access to a remote PC) and collaborative suites are used for interactive management and deliberation. The adoption of all these tools generally fosters interaction between group members and allows the participation of more people in political processes and decision making, since they eliminate spatial distance or restrictions imposed by temporal unavailability. These tools are reportedly significant particularly for some informal, self-organised youth associations. Digital voluntarism and digital activism are mentioned to represent technology mediated forms of engagement by NGOs. In addition, other ICT-supported solutions, e.g. in polling and petitioning, are powerful tools in the interaction between citizens and stakeholders (or the government), in campaigning as well as in community informatics and decision making. Artificial intelligence (via Chatbot) is also used but less frequently, mainly to increase immediacy in communicating with the public through an interactive and personalised approach. The most sophisticated technologies are mentioned by the youngest and highly educated participants, such as those who are members in youth networks of young professionals or in university graduates' associations which encourage entrepreneurship and technological breakthrough.

At the same time when technological innovation is said to make things easier and more effective for organisations to reach their goals, a purposeful turn away from digital technologies is said to be pursued by some organisations. Their main argument is that forms of electronic participation and communication involves inequality, since not everyone, and in particular vulnerable or marginalised groups, can have access. Another argument is that nothing compares to genuine human interaction and that the digital stream discourages people from socialising in real contexts. While some respondents do not even feel comfortable with the term “innovation”, a respondent replied by referring to their “going back to the roots” (OG10) approach in community building, eg through the establishment of spatial and temporal frames and regularities. Similarly, another respondent critically discusses the importance of physical presence and active engagement in collective processes, as experienced for instance in self-training gatherings. There is a reference to a sort of technology-free, diachronic values of traditional information and communication approaches, which can be imputed to the “beauty of the smell of the paper” (OG16) that enriches the experience of reading the newspaper. This later statement justifies the decision to publish a newspaper in print and also relates to the argument that the internet commodifies information, urging its consumption in fast and fragmented ways which deprive the depth of knowledge and its quality to shape political opinion critically and constructively. This is sometimes related to the identification of low attention span and low levels of youth commitment as an idiosyncratic problem of youth, as mentioned above. In general, the attitude of abstaining from technological adoption in political participation has a left-

wing or radical loading, as reflected both in its justification as well as in the ideological leaning of the group.

As another type of innovative form of political engagement, some organisations refer to the politics of everyday life. Environmental and social responsibility reflected in the everyday practices and routines are said to be core elements of political behaviour, thus a social movement organisation invests in activities which educate the public and motivate positive behaviours. The individual involvement in local initiatives of co-production and intercultural exchange is discussed by a representative of a grassroots solidarity network as an alternative form of political intervention and in terms of its potential for social change.

“We do not remain restricted in the idea of serving food, we want to celebrate difference, that's why we regularly organise ethnic festivities, like the Persian food night with traditional music or the board game night.” (OG11)

Inequalities

With respect to inequalities the same type of inequalities emerged in the interviews with organisations' representatives as in the interviews with stakeholders, namely inequalities based on their young age, ethnic origin, economic status of the family and sexual orientation. These inequalities mainly impact on the employment opportunities of young people. Vulnerable groups, such as disabled people and migrants, are said to exhibit very low levels of visibility in the public sphere, with few exceptions due to the action of collective actors, usually in the context of their advocacy.

With respect to the stereotypical views of youth, their depiction as a lost generation due to their parents' mistakes that led to the economic crisis has been made several times during the interviews. In addition, due to the youth policy regime of the country, in which the family - instead of the state - is considered to be responsible for supporting youth, Greek society at large suffers from paternalistic and overprotective attitudes towards youth, which is sometimes experienced as oppression by young people. Instead of being empowered, youth are either victimised or blamed.

"There is the stereotype of the lost generation: although previous generations experienced greater difficulties, they also had opportunities. This generation despite having attained high educational level and despite having been raised in a culture of high technologies and accelerated information flow, they are nevertheless a generation of lost opportunities, since it is most difficult for them to find their own way and develop their talents". (OG13)

General Remarks and Discussion

Athens, being the capital of the country, exhibits a rich landscape of opportunities for youth participation in the socio-cultural and political life, due to the centralised state arrangement of the country and the resulting concentration in actors, structures and media as well as due to the intensification of civil society action – and particularly the appearance of grassroots initiatives, solidarity groups and social-movement related organisations– during the last decade, following the economic crisis and austerity. While municipal and private stakeholders have made several efforts to empower youth, the local opportunity structure still lacks a stable and integrated strategy to support youth and to promote their socio-economic inclusion.

The main themes discussed in our interviews deal with the problems of youth employment, the transition from school to work and economic independence, as well as the unequal opportunities for youth based on ethnic origin, family income and sexual orientation. The economic crisis has sharpened age inequalities, thus making it harder for young people to find a job with earnings that will ensure their financial independence and correspond to their qualifications. In addition, the crisis restricted the ability of the state and local authorities to prioritise the agendas of young people and weakened the already withering welfare state. The prolonged crisis period and its influence on family income and the socio-economic life of the city shaped the political socialisation of the youngest generation and led to social alienation, outrage and distrust, which provided fertile ground for the development of two opposing trends, either a fall into the trap of populism, or mobilisation in collective action.

In spite of the above, several political initiatives have been undertaken particularly during the last years, to provide services and create structures for the empowerment of youth – e.g. by bringing them closer to the arts and culture, or by strengthening civil society. These efforts have nevertheless been fragmented instead of being part of a stable, integrated policy framework. This is reflected in the absence of a vice-mayoralty for youth with a fixed and stable budget.

Moreover, the recognition of the necessity to fight youth unemployment led to initiatives funded by municipal or private actors which aim to connect the new generation with the needs of the Greek economy and the local market. While considerable efforts have been made to empower civil society and the third sector by making its action more visible at the local level, the deficiencies of the legal framework (e.g. with respect to the recognition of the status of voluntary work) is a barrier in organisational activity that involves youth. Even though the economic crisis paved the way for

numerous local citizen initiatives of young people to flourish (e.g. solidarity networks, direct democracy initiatives, social economy ventures), conflicting interests and ideological orientation between grassroots groups and institutional actors are setting barriers in their cooperation. With respect to institutional forms of political participation, whereas the number of young candidates in the latest local and regional elections increased, there is a lack of other opportunities for political deliberation at the municipal level, as reflected in the decline of the institution of local youth councils.

Based on our interviews with youth-related organisations, young people nowadays do not hesitate to undertake initiatives and organize themselves into various types of groups and collectives to defend their rights and promote their interests. The most frequently met forms of youth political participation in Athens include membership in unions and associations, volunteering in NGOs and grassroots mobilisation in local citizen groups and social centres. Apart from these active forms of engagement, young people participate in the organisational life of the city in passive forms, as beneficiaries of the services provided by youth-oriented organisations (e.g. job training, social networking, participation in cultural activities).

Most youth led organisations favour political deliberation which is realised through the establishment of various types of regular members' gatherings which may be closed or open to the public. The general assembly has decision- making powers depending on how important democratic and equalitarian values are considered to be by the organisation and secondly on the degree of its formalisation, with the left-wing and the informal organisations having a tendency towards non-hierarchical, horizontal structures. The main political activities of youth oriented organisations, and NGOs in particular, involve actions of political communication, advocacy and protest. The action repertoires of youth organisations are very broad and are related to their mission, geographical scope and resources. Solidarity initiatives are mentioned very frequently as are community bonding activities related to arts and culture by the representatives of youth led organisations.

Youth organisations innovate by making extensive use of available technological and digital tools – such as social media, clouding, remote connectivity and artificial intelligence- which allow them distant participation in political processes and which make management and communication – both between group-members and with the broader public- cost-effective. A second type of innovation goes to the opposite direction, reappropriating technology-free practices of information and communication with the public, which increase the degree of attentiveness and personal

engagement. A third type of innovation refers to the philosophy of bringing politics to everyday life, e.g. through informed consumption choices, tolerant behaviours and social responsibility.

To conclude, even though young Athenians are active and visible in the local public sphere, their interests and concerns are not adequately represented due to the lack of institutional process of public deliberation – as exemplary evidenced by the inactivity of the municipal youth council. To restore the establishment and operation of youth councils is a financially feasible policy recommendation. The connection of the new generation with the local institutional complex will contribute towards making youth policies more responsive to their needs. In addition, a strategic plan is needed for a most effective coordination of the different youth-related institutions, structures and agencies. The design of policies across sectors should finally work synergistically, so as to ensure a better connection between university faculties, societal needs and the local economy.

5. Italy

Report by: Stefania Voli

Introduction and Urban Context³¹

Bologna is the capital of the Emilia-Romagna region. It is located in the North-East of Italy, and has a population of 389,326 inhabitants (January 2018). The average age is 46.4 years. The metropolitan city of Bologna has approximately 1 million inhabitants (December 2017).

From an economic point of view, the metropolitan city of Bologna is one of the richest areas in Italy (the third richest in 2017). The city's largest employers work in manufacturing, trade and construction industries. It also contains a vast number of cooperative organisations. In 2018, the metropolitan city of Bologna held the lead in terms of the total employment rate among the large Italian provinces (72.4 per cent). The record is also confirmed with regard to the female employment rate (from 66.7 per cent to 67.3 per cent). Along with an increase in the employment rate, the unemployment rate in the metropolitan city of Bologna is also increasing (from 5.1 to 5.6 per cent). However, the city's unemployment rate is lower overall than the national one (10.6 per cent). Over the last decade, Bologna has witnessed a significant expansion in tourism. This phenomenon is having incisive repercussions on the socio-economic structure of the city. In recent years, for example, because of the high number of students and the growing tourism industry, citizens (including students) have increasingly faced a severe housing shortage, more so than in the past.

Bologna boasts the oldest university in the Western world. Founded in 1088, the University of Bologna is still one of the most important academic institutions in Italy and Europe. In the academic year 2017–18, no fewer than 82,900 students were enrolled at the University of Bologna. With its large student population, Bologna is a major cultural city with a long-standing heritage. It is a centre of entrepreneurship, culture, research and development. At the national level, Bologna is listed among the biggest Italian cities in terms of provision of consumption and attendance at cultural events. Culture accounts for six per cent of the City Council's entire budget. About 64 per cent of the population holds a diploma or degree, with some territorial differences. The city of Bologna has nearly twice the number of graduates as opposed to the rest of the metropolitan area (37 per cent versus 20 per cent), whereas the presence of graduates is prevalent outside the city (40 per cent

³¹ Sources: <http://demo.istat.it/bilmens2017gen/index02.html>; <http://inumeridibolognametropolitana.it/www.comune.bologna.it/iperbole/piancont/noterapide/popolazione/2017/La%20popolazione%20di%20Bologna%20a%20l%2031%20dicembre%202017.pdf>; https://www.cittametropolitana.bo.it/statistica/Engine/RAServeFile.php/f/Medec/sintesi_qvita_2018_CMBologna.pdf.

versus 35 per cent).

For a long time, the city of Bologna (and the Emilia-Romagna region at large) has been associated with the concept of “good governance,” thanks to the government of the Italian Communist Party, and the social democratic parties that arose from its ashes. Today, the majoritarian party and its voters’ culture have deeply changed. In Bologna, political participation is not a marginal fact, but traditionally constitutes one of the essential and characteristic elements of administrative and civil life. Since the post-war period, local administrations have tried to promote young people, offering public support for youth-led initiatives or initiatives aimed at young people.³² In comparison with other Italian cities, it has an important tradition of active engagement in political, social and civic life, and is open to social and political cultures and movements. At present, there are about 900 civic, cultural and voluntary associations, formally registered and operating in the whole metropolitan area, as well as several informal, political and cultural groups, collectives and associations. Nevertheless, the relationship between the local administration and youth participation has also been characterised – in certain periods like the present one – by tension. Young people living in the metropolitan city are particularly active, and use multiple forms of expression to gain visibility in the public sphere. For this reason, their relationship with local institutions varies, depending on the type of participation put in place. Many of the groups that young people adhere to accuse local institutions of an incapacity to provide the support needed for their survival, consolidation and autonomy.

Sample

We have conducted ten qualitative interviews with local stakeholders (five female and five male), who are experts on youth participation in the city of Bologna, and 20 qualitative interviews with the representatives of a sample of organisations and groups involved in youth socio-political participation, that seek to reflect specific characteristics of the rich tradition of the city’s active engagement in political, social and civic life (social centres; voluntary associations; student groups; feminist and LGBTQI groups; trade unions and political parties; and so on).

Stakeholders included:

- two stakeholders who are part of the municipal authority (SI1 and SI2).

³² In 2019-2021 the city’s annual planned spending on youth is about 1,800,000 (www.bilancio.comune.bologna.it/wp-content/uploads/Bilancio2019/DUP).

- two stakeholders from the private (third) sector: one (SI3) is responsible for the youth drug prevention programme in one of the biggest cooperatives of the city; the other (SI4) is the president of one of the oldest cooperatives of the city, which manages – in agreement with the municipality – several youth centres in the metropolitan area of Bologna.
- one stakeholder who runs the youth sector of one of the oldest (Catholic) religious institutions (SI6).
- two stakeholders who are researchers at the University of Bologna, experts on youth participation (SI7 and SI8).
- one stakeholder from the cultural-artistic sector (SI5).
- one stakeholder who is a journalist (SI9).
- one stakeholder who is an historical member of the radical left-wing political movement in Bologna (SI10).

Among the organisations and groups involved in youth socio-political participation, we have met with the representatives of:

- two alternative centres: Their projects are not specifically youth-oriented, but they are managed by intergenerational groups with an ample youth component. They offer spaces of deliberation for young people, and they organise demonstrations, workshops, political and cultural initiatives (OI4 and OI17).
- two youth branches of voluntary associations: One is involved in the social promotion of support for those who are marginalised or at risk of social exclusion (OI6), while the other promotes inclusive spaces for music and dance, theatre and cinema, international solidarity and anti-racism initiatives, recreational youth clubs, campaigns for civil rights, and so on. (OI5).
- two student groups: One is aimed at introducing concrete proposals into the academic bodies, in order to help the university meet students' needs (OI8), while the other is aimed at promoting the rights of university students and a public, secular and democratic university (OI7).
- one migrant association: a non-profit cultural organisation working in the territory of Bologna (OI20).
- one feminist organisation: a grassroots movement and self-organised political platform (OI11).
- two LGBTQI organisations: One is a support group for young (16 to 30 years) lesbians, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and hetero people (OI3), while the other aims to support trans people's

rights and well-being, and to promote trans respect, emancipation and socio-cultural inclusion (OI13).

- two formal citizens' associations: *A national association aimed* at buttressing civil society in its fight against mafia organisations, and promoting legality and justice (OI2), while the other is committed to disseminating and promoting the themes of European federalism, often operating through the organisation of cultural events, round tables, university conferences and sit-ins (OI9).
- one association from the environmental sector: It raises awareness through information campaigns, and has also worked against environmental illegalities, promoting solidarity and peace as fundamental values of our society (OI14).
- one trade union: one of the largest and most important Italian trade unions (OI12).
- two informal citizens' associations: One intends to bridge markets and self-production laboratories (OI18), the other is made up of families whose aim it is to base their consumption on concepts of solidarity and on respect for the environment, for working conditions and for people who suffer the consequences of an unequal distribution of resources (OI15).
- three political parties: One is a centre-left political party with its own youth branch (OI19), the second is a leftist movement-party with a large youth component among its constituency (OI10), and the third is a civic electoral list that also has a large youth component among its constituency (OI1).
- one Ultras Football club (OI16).

Interviews with Stakeholders

Frame of Opportunities

In general, all our respondents admitted to having identified, in certain sectors of the youth population (for example, second generation migrants, Not in Education, Employment or Training - NEETs, young people from the suburbs), greater inequalities and difficulties in speaking out as “real” citizens. Geographical origin, socio-economic context and education emerge as the main factors affecting youth participation. The stakeholders we met during our fieldwork provided us with a broad spectrum of interpretations of how young people participate in Bologna.

The two stakeholders from the municipal authority describe the relationship with young people as a priority for the local administration, but also as a challenge: “Bologna has a real interest in involving young people: The municipality is fully aware of and concerned about the importance of youth participation” (SI2). The attention of the municipal authority towards youth has been constant

since the late 1970s. City councillors have declared an interest in developing municipal policies that are able to assign young people an active role, not just to consider them as passive recipients: “I don’t want to consider them as simply an ‘objective’” (SI2). Municipal policies are developed mainly through two strategies. The first reflects an *active approach*, and aims to actively involve young people in the life of the city, making them feel like protagonists:

“Our actions aim to make young people protagonists of the city life, and to develop their awareness of being citizens, of having a leading role, trying to make them feel fully part of the civic community.” (SI1)

The second strategy adopts a *preventive approach* with respect to the problems identified as priorities for the youth population: interventions in education (from childhood to adolescence), support for families, monitoring and interception in times of difficulty. In particular, the stakeholders from the municipal authority declare themselves to be particularly sensitive to drug addiction and social isolation issues, the latter also being linked to unemployment and the NEET phenomenon.

The two stakeholders from the municipal authority have suggested, during the interview process, that the framework of opportunities in Bologna is made up of several actions and projects (some of which have been developed in collaboration with educational institutions); these aim to promote legality and respect for the commons, to fight organised crime and to enhance active citizenship. Furthermore, in order to face youth unemployment and the NEET phenomenon, a specific project has been developed, with the goal of monitoring the life conditions and needs of 50 NEETs (18–25 years old), thus trying to develop job opportunities and to “regain their citizens’ identity” (SI1). When questioned about their main innovative projects and policies, the two stakeholders from the municipal authority highlighted the municipality’s concrete interest in the enhancement of youth’s digital citizenship, that is, an investment of public resources in the promotion of digital education and specific skills, as a means of strengthening young citizens’ participation.³³ Digital citizenship is, at the same time, a recurring issue in other sectors, such as the private one, and in particular in cooperatives working on youth participation and youth issues.

In order to solve the lack of adequate space for the activities organised by the various associations, which emerges as a common issue within the experiences of youth participation in Bologna, the municipality has opened a call for public places (specifically designed for youth-led associations), and promoted a participatory budgeting project. Described as one of the most innovative and

³³ <http://www.comune.bologna.it/pianoinnovazioneurbana/laboratoriounder/il-progetto/>.

successful projects by the interviewed stakeholders from the municipal authority, the participatory budgeting project is an initiative that aims to foster the participation of citizens in the governance of the city, with particular attention being paid to younger sectors of citizenship. In 2018, 1 million euros of the city budget were allocated to projects proposed and co-designed by citizens, experts and technicians. The projects were voted for by Italian and foreign citizens over 16 years of age and residing in the city of Bologna, or non-residing citizens but those working, studying or doing voluntary work in Bologna.³⁴

The stakeholder from the cultural sector confirmed a positive evaluation of the available opportunities for young people in Bologna. Several collaborations have been activated with the university's Dams department (Visual arts, music and theatre), the Academy of Fine Arts, high schools in the Metropolitan area of Bologna and with young artists, in general. All the initiatives of the Museum of Modern Art in Bologna (Mambo) aim to open this space to the city, with a special focus on young audiences and artists.

“We succeeded in opening the museum and the coffee bar on Thursday night, with a performance or exposition. This is my idea of a Museum as a cultural centre open to citizens. It is addressed, first of all, to young people's needs. [...] My first initiative, as the newly appointed director, involved 56 artists who were born between 1980 and 1996. This experience has created an artistic youth community.” (SI5)

Speaking about opportunities, the stakeholder from the cultural sector highlights the following:

“Compared to other cities, in Bologna young people have a voice, they have a lot of places. Bologna is really buzzing at the moment, despite the difficulties that the city is going through. [...] Since the 1970s, Bologna has heavily invested in culture. Here, the Mambo has privileged relationships with the main artistic institutes [Dams and the Academy of Fine Arts], there is a structural dialogue between cultural institutions, and the city's dimension facilitates this type of dialogue. We benefit from the past, thanks to former experimentations and people actively attending spaces and events. Bologna has set in motion a real cultural inclusiveness policy.” (SI5)

A similarly positive opinion about the framework of general opportunities for young people emerges in the words of the stakeholder from the journalist scene we met during our fieldwork: “The city of Bologna has built, and offers, many areas of aggregation for young people; here, there are more opportunities because this is a university city” (SI9).

Yet, among some of the the stakeholders, disagreement arose with regard to the institutions' ability to understand young people's needs and grievances. Unlike the two stakeholders from the municipal authority, the stakeholders from the cultural-artistic sector and the stakeholder from the journalist scene, the remaining stakeholders we interviewed share a common opinion that highlights the limits

³⁴ <http://partecipa.comune.bologna.it/bilancio-partecipativo/info/informations-other-languages#en>

of the local institutional policies for the promotion and sustainment of youth participation, even if they tend to recognise how much Bologna differs in scale of opportunities on offer for young people from the majority of the other cities in the country. Some stakeholders direct their criticism at the local institutional policies, due to the fact that they are designed for a very low age cohort, or only for young people's inclusion in the economic and educational system (the university system, in particular). In their view, a real and structured cultural offer designed for young people seems to be lacking, especially for those who do not attend university. In the leisure sector, despite the presence of many low-cost services (for instance, public libraries), the possibilities are limited and do not include low-cost or zero-cost activities. This is the opinion, for example, of one of the stakeholders who works in the third sector: "Institutions make a massive investment in the development of young people's citizenship, with a particular focus on adolescents, while limited resources are reserved for young adults" (SI4). He also points to the local institutions' paternalistic attitude towards young people who are not considered capable of acting as direct interlocutors: "In the past, the general aim was to promote and help young people set up associations. Today, they are perceived as passive consumers of the youth centres' cultural offer" (SI4). On the other hand, an overall critical look at the framework of opportunities offered by the institutions was raised by a stakeholder we met at the University of Bologna, who is an expert on youth participation. In his opinion, general services offered to young people, concerning possibilities for young citizens to affect the local public space, are scarce:

"One of the biggest problems is young people's ability to influence the policies of the city. There are few institutional spaces, and non-institutional ones are far from institutional. Young people and institutions never meet, there is no direct relationship between these two subjects; when they meet, they do so in a conflictual way, or via delegation to reference figures that liaise with the institutions. [...] Youth institutional participation is stationary because the image that is reflected back to young people is that of a distant policy, incapable of producing room for participation. [...] Institutions promote a model of youth participation that is instrumental to their own idea of participation. This is a limited attempt, and it brings out the discrepancies and differences between what young people really ask for and desire, and what institutions offer them." (SI7)

From the viewpoint of the more critical stakeholders, local institutions should improve their acknowledgement of and investment in young people's participation.

Organisational Interviews

The first general premise from which we must start is the perception, shared by all the interviewees, that political participation (not just youth participation) is experiencing a moment of sharp decline, in comparison with previous years. A consequence of this drop in participation, in the view of our respondents, is the existence of a dense network of collaborations and activities aimed at the creation of territorial ties (whether they involve institutions, formal or informal associations, political parties

or social centres). The establishment of local relations with other actors, whose objectives are more or less close to their own aims and targets, reflects the groups' awareness of their non-self-sufficiency, and the necessity of such relationships as a condition for their very existence and/or as a guarantee of greater effectiveness. For this reason, in all organisations it is possible to discern a low (or non-existent) degree of ideology, and a general availability – albeit at different levels, using different modalities and with varying degrees of effectiveness – to experiment with variegated experiences and practices.

Non-Youth Led Groups

In this sense, the case of the civic electoral list (OI1) is interesting. Created in 2015, in the last elections it had two councillors elected to the municipal council (one 28 years old, the other, 44). It aims to seek new forms of government and to promote participation in political and social life, with the declared aim of overcoming social inequalities in the city of Bologna. Instead of embracing the traditional idea of political representation, the group decided to connect with some of the main political instances already present in the city, which were being carried out by informal groups, associations and civil society, making some of these their main interlocutors in areas, such as antifascism, the rights of workers, migrants, women, LGBTQI people and minorities, mobility, environment, social spaces, and so on. The fact that these same instances in Bologna are animated mainly by young people has allowed the civic electoral list (OI1), despite its intergenerational trait, to intercept a large number of activists under the age of 40, making them the protagonists of its political activities. One of its representatives stated the following:

“We reach young people more than other political forces do, which for me explains the fact that I have been elected, because it is a newer way of conceiving politics. The members [of our group] are active in the territory, in other organisations, so they are already involved in other battles and causes. We are more able to access young people's contexts because we are already connected with their battles; we don't ask to simply represent them. There is a greater involvement of young people in several issues, and they take the floor. But I can't think of any actions in which we thought of a specific involvement by young people (just as young people).” (OI1)

We encountered a similar viewpoint when investigating a different political experience. We are referring to a social centre that was first established when it occupied an empty property in 2003. It is managed by a long-lasting, intergenerational collective group of people, which was partly involved in the student movements of the past years. Having previously offered a location for many student collectives, currently the social centre's activities are primarily connected with the neighbourhood. These include: activities in collaboration with the municipal dormitory, a self-managed gym, an organic market, an online newspaper office, and the development of projects on

the historical memory of Italian colonialism in Lybia (in view of the fact that the collective's neighbourhood has the same name as the Lybian region of Cyrenaica). Current activities are therefore not necessarily addressed to young people alone. Nonetheless, the decision to make the social centre available to other projects and groups (led by social workers, young independent filmmakers, and so on), rather than to turn it into an identitarian place, has allowed it to become a popular social space among students and young people in general.

In the cases of more complex and articulated organisations (OI5 and OI6), it is interesting to note how young people – while having a section within the organisation dedicated entirely to them – are also very present in the general management and decision-making bodies. These organisations, which mostly provide a broad range of services for citizens, can activate internships, training experiences and civil service, which in many cases become an opportunity for training and professionalisation. Therefore, young people can enjoy the sectors dedicated to them, but can also invest in their own possible future profession, starting with their status as members of the organisation.

Similar to the aforementioned organisations is the experience of another group (OI2); in addition to the fact that it focuses many of its activities on the promotion of an awareness of legality among young people in schools and at university, it is, in fact, led by people under the age of 35, as a deliberate choice of the organisation. This is what the representative of this organisation stated during her interview with us:

“The role of young people is at its core. Until 2016, we were all volunteers. Then the decision was made to hire people, to invest in young people who had to start a career path. This meant that the most structured part of the association was now made up of young people. Currently, there are four of us working on contract, and we are project referents. Then we have many young people who participate in occasional events and banquets, others who are active members of the coordinating body, and about 50 people who are part of school collectives. This helps us to be a protagonist and grow with awareness.” (OI2)

Among the more informal groups, the feminist one (OI11) also draws its younger activists from a (university and high school) student environment; the young activists constitute a large and fundamental component within a strongly differentiated structure, especially with regard to generational belonging. In a similar way, one informal citizens' association (OI18) – besides being entirely composed of activists under the age of 35 – instantly established its headquarters in a social centre, with its main area of action in the university area. It has recognised, in that location, not only a central point for understanding and criticising the ongoing processes of urban change, but also a fundamental space to develop – through the discourse of low-priced organic food – the question of

accessibility to a better quality of life in the city for marginalised parts of the population, such as migrants and students.

Finally, some groups declare having greater difficulty in capturing and integrating young people's needs, even when they belong to a strong and long-lasting political tradition, despite their being – in different contexts – recognised reference points for the local history of political participation: the trade union (OI12), transgender experience (OI13) and environmental (OI14) contexts. Nevertheless, even in these cases, the ability to connect with other experiences is fundamental in order to ensure that the youth component can recognise these structures as points of reference, each in their own sphere of intervention.

Youth-led Groups

For youth-led groups, the situation is structurally different, as they specifically address their peers, identifying their target of young people, to whom they dedicate their activities. In the case of one LGBTQI organisation (OI3), all activities are aimed at welcoming newcomers and socialising with them. Other groups are born out of the precise purpose of intervening within the university, thus directing all their activities at students and the university area. Nevertheless, there are profound differences among these groups: If one student association (OI8) claims to be an organisation based on Catholic and non-political values, aiming to improve the conditions of students through its presence in all official academic bodies, another student group (OI7) applies its own critical thinking to the university, also with the intention of understanding the transformations taking place in the city. In this sense, the other articulations of which this latter group is composed (e.g., a transfeminist collective, a group that focuses on the environment and one that tackles the problem of increased rent, following the ongoing touristisation process in the city) are therefore fundamental for an understanding of the different levels of action that this group practices, and the variety of experiences it contains.

“[Our organisation] was born from a group of friends who wanted to take care of the university and its problems, 20 years ago, and is inspired by Catholic values, has no political goals but intends to solve students' problems starting from our principles of Catholic inspiration.” (OI8)

“We work mainly in universities, with the aim of improving the right to study, to bring a more critical thinking into university classes. We would like to transform the university and break into the city, understand the transformations in the university area and in the city as well, and its evident process of touristisation. It is not just a question of representation in the university itself, but also of liveability in this city.” (OI7)

University students are also the target of other organisations, even if these are not specifically of student nature. Indeed, being a university city, Bologna's overlap between “young” and “student”

categories is almost automatic (though it sometimes signals problems). In fact, it is within the university context that youth groups (such as OI9 and OI10) concentrate their attention, organising initiatives (e.g., meetings, leafleting, aperitifs) to expand themselves.

Repertoire of Actions

The repertoire of actions and strategies employed by the organisations is broad and diverse. However, it is possible to identify a number of common practices among groups, as well as certain aspects of originality that are useful to highlight. The civic electoral list (OI1), one student group (OI7), the feminist organisation (OI11) and the two social centres (OI4 and OI17), notwithstanding their differences, all share an idea of participation that is characterised by a strong political connotation.

For the first three groups, public assemblies are of primary importance as moments of decision-making, given that they allow direct speech from participants, creation of participatory processes and experimentations with direct democracy. The civic electoral list (OI1) claims to use the consensus method as an internal decision-making practice, in contrast to the voting system. Also, carrying out assemblies in different spaces of the city (due, in part, to the lack of fixed headquarters) has the objective of making the groups visible in different sectors of the urban context (OI1, OI11).

In the same way, these groups try to elaborate direct methods of speaking in public, for example through radio (OI1 and OI7) and an independent – initially paper-based, now online – newspaper (OI4). For the student group (OI7) and the feminist organisation (OI11), the development of innovative communication strategies that take into consideration the aesthetic factor also appears to be fundamental. In this perspective, even practices such as leafleting, flyposting or creating videos (to be disseminated through social networks) are considered important for establishing direct contact with people. Social media, rather than being a constituent element of political actions, only play a supporting role in this process.

Having a fixed location – viewed by many organisations as essential for the carrying out of their activities – also contributes to the possibility of organising events and, through these, creating a political community around the group. In this sense, the social centres' experiences constitute a fundamental example (OI4 and OI17). On the one hand, concerts, meetings, self-managed popular gyms, shelter projects for homeless people and migrants, and after-school activities make self-financing initiatives possible; on the other hand, they have enabled the construction of a community that shares political values and strategies. In this sense, the ability to cultivate daily relationships with the neighbourhood is seen as indispensable. Despite the fact that, nowadays, these practices

can no longer be considered innovative, they are still viewed as fundamental strategies for maintaining political autonomy, in spite of the fact that they are disappearing, given the social centre's multiple evictions over the last years.

The feminist group (OI11) appears – on the current national and political scene – as the most innovative movement, thanks to its massive (both national and global) diffusion and the new practices and strategies it has elaborated on over the past three years in order to fight against gender violence. As mentioned before, (local, national and transnational) public assemblies serve as decision-making moments, but also as a repertoire of actions, which includes: working tables on key topics; training activities in schools, universities and workplaces in order to discuss violence and the oppression of women; collaboration with community centres against gender violence; and the re-signification of March 8 (International Women's Day) celebrates the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. These actions, along with many others, have allowed feminists to occupy public space in new ways and forms.

The issue of (self)training is also very present in other groups (OI2, OI9, OI19). For example, one of the formal citizens' associations (OI2) – in addition to carrying out projects in schools, organising summer camps and initiatives to educate people about legality – gives its activists the opportunity to witness mafia trials (where the organisation participates as a civil claimant). This is considered an act of participatory democracy, learning and closeness to the victims of mafia violence. Another area of intervention of this association is that of the suburbs, where it tries to challenge school dropouts and promote legality. Identified as the most problematic and marginalised areas of the city, the suburbs become areas of intervention also for the youth branch of a centre-left political party (OI19) and a migrant association (OI20). In the first instance, the group holds periodic public assemblies involving the citizenship, with the aim of listening to people's needs and problems. On the other hand, the migrant association promotes the idea of integration through art and, in particular, theatre. It combines art with social engagement, through activities such as cross-cultural workshops and training programmes for teachers working in multicultural contexts, in order to encourage people's participation in the cultural and social debate. In particular, it has conceived theatre workshops that aim to build communities among asylum seekers, refugees, migrants and Italian citizens in different areas of the city, and first and foremost in the suburbs. At the same time, it has also opened carpentry and tailoring workshops, which allow migrants to embark on professionalisation paths:

“Our work has a political value in the city, and it questions the concept of integration through art. The goal is integration through theatre, which becomes a bridge between cultures. Theatre is an expressive language that allows people who do not speak Italian to

communicate; it is an extra-verbal language. Each theatre group is a micro-society that questions how different cultures and traditions can be combined. There is no perfect participation, so we ask ourselves: how to give space to recently arrived people to tell their story? It is a participatory process that is part of a larger project, which is spread throughout the city.” (OI20)

Equally innovative is the LGBTQI organisation’s (OI13) shelter for LGBTQI refugees and asylum seekers. The project is the first of its kind in Italy (the second in Europe) and has been developed within the SPRAR (Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees) system; it offers reception in a shelter provided by the municipality of Bologna, while also activating reception paths for families or individuals. The people currently hosted there are all under 35 years of age.

Among the most structured organisations (OI12 and OI5), the repertoire of actions goes in the direction of combining recreational and cultural events (for example, debates, concerts, festivals) with moments of political reflection and training. One voluntary association (OI5) has at its disposal a network of clubs specifically run by young people who, as such, receive better remuneration for their services. In these clubs, activities often have a youth target and privilege the economic affordability of culture, sport and music for young people. Student groups and youth-led organisations (OI8 and OI9) that focus their activities on university students do not seem to develop very innovative practices: conferences, seminars, thematic appetisers and excursions are among their most frequent activities. Finally, another voluntary association (OI6) declares to have been among the first organisations to present the participatory budget of the third sector, which is considered an innovative way to reach people. Furthermore, during the last municipal electoral campaign in 2016, it devised a communication project that received positive reactions from young people. It organised weekly live shows, for example, where young volunteers chatted with representatives of the institutions during an appetiser (“We’ll do it again, because people ask us for it”).

Organisational Structures

As already mentioned, in a number of cases, innovative practices occasionally correspond with the decision-making processes of organisations. This is the case for autonomous and self-managed organisations, but also for the civic electoral list. In these groups, assemblies are considered the main setting for decision-making moments, with the consensus method being the leading mechanism through which to take decisions. Assemblies generally take place on a weekly basis, and in the case of social centres – which have to manage a space in addition to facing political issues –

they can be both political and organisational. This mode requires a great deal of time and energy, but in these contexts it is considered to be of paramount importance for the implementation of a truly democratic decision-making process. In these contexts, discussions are (or endeavour to be) as horizontal as possible, and give everyone the opportunity to express their opinion. For the feminist organisation, the decision-making issue is an open question; being a young but booming group, feminists feel the need to regularly discuss – case by case – the decision-making method that best fits the group’s complexity of themes and composition. However, the members of these groups generally have roles, more or less rigid, hierarchical, often interchangeable and very dependent on the time availability of each member. Only one informal citizens’ organisation (OI18) claims that the management of the group is “circular,” meaning that “everyone does everything.”

One of the student groups (OI7) and a LGBTQI organisation (OI13) represent, for different reasons, cases halfway between informal realities and more structured realities. In fact, the student group is a national network of university collectives, endowed with local organs, which appoints a referent for each collective through voting. However, even in this case, assemblies are of fundamental importance. In this regard, it is interesting to report a specific practice the student group has adopted in order to encourage all members to speak during assemblies; in some cases, it uses post-its containing key words from where debate begins. It thus tries to avoid those situations where the priority of the debated themes and the order of interventions depend on the most experienced members, that is, those who are most accustomed to intervening in a public forum.

The LGBTQI organisation has a steering board (and therefore hierarchical roles), which is regularly re-elected. However, in order to involve a wider group of activists in the decision-making processes, it has decided to establish a second, broader board, which includes the formal board and other people who are active on a daily basis in the life of the group. The members of this broader board discuss and take decisions. All these realities are also equipped with mailing lists and Whatsapp groups, used for faster communication and for emergencies, but which do not replace assemblies as a decision-making moment.

By contrast, the other groups are structured in a more formal and traditional way (although there are differences between them), and are based on the principle of representation; there are precise hierarchical roles, which are decided through periodic voting. In all cases, the interviewees emphasise the horizontal and democratic character of their organisation. In the cases of national organisations, the local organs equip themselves with referents who have decision-making power. In some groups there are work commissions (OI6), local groups (OI2) or clubs (OI1) that work by coordinating their activities with local representatives. Among these, it is interesting to note that

only one of the political parties (OI10) claims to use technological tools as a means of taking decisions (i.e., platforms, Whatsapp, telegram, doodle). OI2 appears to have two levels of management: a formal one (where activities are all managed by the coordinating body, which meets twice a month), and a less rigid one for university or local groups, which works in accordance with the contact persons of each sector and project.

Youth Participation and the City

Youth groups and organisations mostly share a critical negative perception of the municipal policies, and of the possibilities these offer for the inclusion of young adults. This idea is clearly stated and exemplified in the words of the representative of one of the formal citizens' organisations we have met: "Institutions do not take into consideration the participation of young people." (OI9) If we try to analyse this affirmation and to understand the main problems that characterise the relationship between young people and the city, three main issues seem to emerge from the fieldwork: the polarisation of the public discourse (and accordingly, public policies) regarding the relationship between students (divided between transfer and local students) and the (adult) residents of Bologna; the lack of an adequate housing policy; the lack of physical public spaces and concrete incentives for participation. These last two issues are viewed as a consequence of the changes taking place in the city, with regard to its massive touristification. Having said that, it is also true that few positive opinions have been expressed on the possibilities of inclusion for young people in the city.

One of the first problems related to transfer students is the fact that they do not have the right to vote if not officially resident in Bologna. According to some interviewees, this exclusion makes the local institutions of little interest for this part of the population:

"One of the problems is that many young people who do politics in Bologna do not vote, and therefore feel less interested in local institutional politics. There are students who have spent five years of their lives here and have never voted for a mayor, and it's not fair. I do not see institutions' interest in this part of the population, perhaps because it does not vote. It is absurd that young people are not consulted about housing and university areas, and are not considered as citizens on a par with others. Transfer students, Erasmus students and second generation migrants are discriminated against the most." (OI1)

The feeling of being – as students – the object of a polarised and contested public discourse that creates conflict between young people who spend most of their time in the university area, and residents of the same area (but in general, of the entire historic centre), is clearly expressed by the representative of the student group (OI7):

"The municipality has so many shortcomings. In terms of housing, students are seen as a burden. The involvement of young people is more a commercial issue, because there are no real interventions where one does not polarise the clash between students and residents.

People stigmatise the university area, but real solutions have never been found. City councillors talk a lot about young people, but unless they offer spaces where to be able to politically affect city life, all their words remain rhetoric. Students bring wealth to Bologna; they spend a lot of money, but they are reduced to consumers, bearers of urban decay. There are no real political solutions for students to affect city life as such. We are seen as loafers. And the local media have built a discourse and a rhetoric that further polarises the debate.” (OI7)

The widespread feeling among the interviewees is that the declared interest of the municipal authority towards youth political participation (of which the interviewed councillors, as mentioned earlier, also clearly speak), articulated in a series of projects (on housing policies, spaces and culture) carried out by the Urban Innovation Plan through the participatory budget,³⁵ is instrumental, and that it has a strong foreclosure effect with respect to forms of participation considered “non-compliant” and confrontational. An activist of an informal citizens’ organisation suggested, during an interview, that the institutions’ strong idea of participation is to “build fences where the student youth composition can have an illusion of freedom” (OI18). Similarly, a member of the trade union organisation declared that “participation cannot be created in a laboratory” (OI12).

“Young people in Bologna are a very large numerical component that depends on the university. Students are demonised, there are no serious housing policies, many occupied spaces have been evicted. On the one hand, city politics have moved in this way; on the other hand, they have focused on participation, co-planning. But to what extent do these processes really lead to participation? What is participation? Neighbourhood workshops work with competitive mechanisms within the participatory budget frame, which recognises realities that are already structured; there is division on a competitive basis. Participation is often conflictual, it is born from needs analysis, it tries to bring about transformation in places, and this process often clashes with something else. I see a desire to recognise ‘good’ participation that does not create problems, but the problem is to know how to recognise conflictual participation. You cannot see participation only in the way that the institution wants. The media say that young people do not participate, and there is a daily battle against young people (because of graffiti tags, murals, vandals, and so on). On the one hand, there is an attack on forms of expression that are part of contemporaneity, as if the tags on the walls constitute the problems of Bologna. On the other hand, there is an interest in young people as consumers, even as cultural consumption. But participation is something else. Whoever exits from what is considered a ‘fair,’ ‘acceptable’ participation suffers demonisation. At the territorial level, there are no more places for activating participation; Bologna used to have a (leftist) party section in every neighbourhood, houses of the people, places that were alive in the territories. These places have lost their political load, but nothing new has been created.” (OI5)

“On the part of the institutions, there is a schizophrenic management of the question of participation. On the one hand, there is the atavistic problem of the separation between residents and off-site students; on the other hand, students are recognised as a source of wealth for the city, though intermittently, depending on what is convenient. The administration is making attempts, but these are instrumental. The participatory budget is an example of this instrumental approach; there are fake micro-attempts to involve citizens, crumbs compared to a management of urban planning policies that pass through other channels. The concept of participation that they bring into play is ambiguous, so from my

³⁵ <http://www.fondazioneinnovazioneurbana.it/en/urban-innovation-plan>

point of view, favouring participation is relative: towards what, to do what? Civil society is oriented to normalising young people, confining them within certain places and situations decided a priori, on the basis of particularistic claims. The economic subjects of the city contribute to giving an image of accelerated innovation, with the assignment of space and money, but these are well-defined and exclusive, political and economic dynamics. They boil down to being entrepreneurial situations where the benefit to the city is not clear.” (OI4)

“If that piece of the city wants rights, visibility, spaces, there is only the struggle, otherwise on the other side there is a void, or announcements.” (OI11)

Despite sharing a similar general opinion about institutions, an informal citizens’ organisation (OI20) expresses a positive opinion regarding the participatory budget. According to this organisation, it would help the third sector – thanks to the collaborative network of associations and groups present in the territory – to “be part of a process that aims to improve the city. Where the City does not arrive, the citizens do” (OI20).

Other groups and associations (OI19, OI6 and also OI9, in relation to university institutions that help develop students’ careers and entrepreneurial ideas) seem to be more persuaded by the institutions’ commitment to help young people play an active role in the city. Furthermore, some groups and organisations (OI6, OI10 and OI1) raise the issue of young workers (but also NEETs); in their opinion, the city’s great attention to students, risks obscuring young citizens, who are not (or not only) students, but who live in difficult and precarious conditions, and risk not finding interlocutors.

“An uncovered part of the youth population is that of young workers. For minorities, there is a wide association network, as well as for university students. But young workers have no interlocutors, or spaces to share ideas; it is a single, unrepresented group, which struggles to make its voice heard.” (OI10)

Speaking in favour of young workers, the representative of one of the formal groups we met describes the conflict between students and workers as follows:

“There is a lack of recognition of young people who work as shopkeepers and artisans, penalised by resolutions that force them to close early at night (although this concerns the entire sector, not just the youth-led one). Bologna is divided into two parts: the student city where everything is allowed, with negative implications; the youth world that wants to work autonomously, which is penalised because of the other Bologna.” (OI6)

Almost all of the interviewed organisations affirm that mainly migrants and young people from the suburbs suffer inequalities, even if most of these organisations promote social and cultural integration projects (also in agreement with the city council). Some groups in particular (OI13 and OI11) seem to offer a clear intersectional perspective on exclusion that could affect certain subjects:

“Income inequality, race and gender affect participation, and can be combined. In the metropolitan area, we could draw a line; guys from the suburbs have desires and ways of

expressing them that we could scarcely understand. Non-white students do not even arrive at universities, because of the cost of fees, accommodation, books. There is an obvious barrier and we know that education is one of the first means to speak out. There are pieces of the city that are hard to see.” (OI11)

Despite the interviewees’ critical stance on the possibilities for inclusion of young adults, the interviews highlight how the many activities carried out by these organisations – each in its own context, with its own different practices, and some in collaboration with each other – offer the most substantial resources and possibilities for young people to act, and be visible, in public space.

General Remarks and Discussion

The interviews highlight the urban and tourism development phase that the city of Bologna is experiencing, where the creation of new participation processes – some of which specifically address young people – is at the core of the city government. However, this process presents some important challenges. One of these regards the difficulty of institutions to relate with the many different city souls; alongside plans for change, in fact, a local identity that is strongly linked to the economic interests of the local population (for example shopkeepers) persists. Historically, this identity expresses a more traditional vision, which is generally hostile to change, and consistently unfriendly to the student population, despite the latter being one of the main sources of wealth for the city itself.

In this context, there are different and often incompatible models of participation, which are promoted by the various players involved. First of all, as it emerges from our fieldwork, it seems that spaces for the encounter and dialogue between institutions and the youth world are often limited, and mainly dedicated to particular segments of the youth population, identified as fragile (i.e., NEETs and second generation migrant students). Furthermore, in these cases, too, the declared intent of the institutions to encourage participation is centred on a formal idea of participation (e.g., helping young people to “consider themselves full citizens”), which is not always effective in helping them create tools for their self-organisation as active citizens.

In this way, as most of our respondents have suggested, institutions appear distant from the concrete and multiple needs of the young people of the city, in fact, less visible and active as a specific sector of the population than in the past (i.e. during past waves of student movements of the 70s; 90s; 2008-2009 during the “Onda” movement).

Therefore, many organisations describe the proposed model of participation as “artificial” and as “instrumental” to the construction of regimented memberships within non-negotiable, pre-established parameters, compatible with the municipal administrators’ idea of the city. Forms of

participation that do not meet the requirements indicated as “correct” easily contrast with the city institutions, and are often repressed, as happened – and is still happening – to the many social centres present in the city—symbols of a past, autonomous political and cultural vitality of young people, but also of innovative participatory processes.

From all the interviews we conducted, the “student issue” emerged as a fundamental node, a catalyst for all the discourse concerning youth participation. The stigmatisation of the university area, especially by local media and by certain politicians, hinders any clear understanding of the profound internal differences among university students and the different needs they express (that is, as transfer students, student workers, full-time students, student activists and non-activist students). Furthermore, this public discourse makes non-university young people invisible in the public space and politics, particularly workers and migrants coming from peripheral areas of the city, strengthening the exclusion that derives from the social inequalities already affecting these same subjects.

Moreover, the perception of many youth organisations is that, because of the new economic and touristisation processes, institutions are increasingly turning to young people as consumers, rather than as (potential) citizens. In addition, non-resident youth lacks certain fundamental rights, such as voting in local elections.

What the city’s institutions consider a showpiece of participation policies (for example, participatory budgeting) is harshly criticised, mostly by informal organisations, from which the most interesting and original participation experiments emerge. The main emerging criticality is the lack of (formal and informal) physical spaces to perform political, cultural and socialisation activities. A strong contrast, therefore, emerges between the kind of participation encouraged by institutional devices, and the one practiced in an autonomous way, which is increasingly adverse and repressed. Many respondents share the opinion that young people are allowed to express themselves and participate only in marginal issues, whereas the right to claim a voice and actively participate is almost nonexistent with regard to the main challenges, those that are profoundly changing the city from a political, urban and social point of view.

6. Poland

Report by Marcin Sinczuch

Introduction and Urban Context

Population

Warsaw is the capital of Poland and also the administrative centre of the surrounding region – Mazowieckie Voivodship. Its population is over 1,765,000, nearly 5% of the entire country. The average age of residents is 42.8 years, over one year higher than the average for Poland. Gender distribution shows that there are more women than men (54 to 46%). The share of youth (15-34) in the whole population is almost one fourth (22.5%), but within this number, the youngsters (aged 15-19) are in the minority (7.1%).

The foreign migrant's population in Poland is relatively low in comparison with EU western countries, however it is systematically growing. The official number of foreign residents outside the EU that received work permission in Mazowieckie Voivodship in 2018 was 115,000, however estimates shows that more than 150 thousand foreign citizens (EU and non-EU) live in Warsaw alone. Among non-EU migrants in Warsaw, the majority are Ukrainians (more than 50%), followed by Vietnamese; Belarusians and Russians are also significant groups. Some research has estimated migrant numbers in Warsaw at 8% of the total population³⁶.

Socio-economic Issues

From an economic point of view, Warsaw is one of the richest metropolises in Poland. The total income of the city budget in 2018 exceeded the sum of 15 billion PLN (3 billion EUR). The share of Warsaw's economy in the country's GDP exceeds 17% (75 bln EUR), and GDP per capita is almost twice higher than average for Poland. The average salary in Warsaw reaches 6,000 PLN (1,400 EUR) and the registered unemployment rate in 2018 was at the level of 1.5%, compared to 3.8% for the country and 4.9% for Mazovia Voivodship. Simultaneously, Warsaw is surrounded by one of the poorest areas in the country. Metropolitan influence is spatially limited, and narrow concentrated. Nearby villages and cities, especially those that are linked by an efficient public transport system, are very dependent on the capital.

There is a large income gap between Warsaw and the rest of the Mazovia region; 70% of counties have below five thousand PLN income to budget per capita. This is almost 60% of the Warsaw income.

³⁶ <http://www.migracje.uw.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/raport-power.pdf> [accessed 20.03.2019]

In consequence, the great migration to Warsaw has occurred over the last 25 years. The main migration reservoir for Warsaw is the surrounding regions and north-eastern part of Poland. Permanent migration balance for Warsaw is positive. The birth-rate increased by 1.25% compared to 2016³⁷.

Young people come to Warsaw for education purposes in the majority, and stay there for the continuation of a professional career. With higher costs of living (mainly housing costs) there are much higher salaries in Warsaw than in other cities. Over 79% of Warsaw's inhabitants consider Warsaw as a better (40%) or not worse (30%) place to live than other cities in Poland.

Socio-cultural Issues

Warsaw is the one of the most important cultural, science and educational centres in Poland. There are 15 public high schools (university level) in Warsaw, and 60 of non-public (private) status. In almost 75 university-level schools, there were 2,395,000 students, 18% of the total number of students in Poland. A lively academic hub, Warsaw is also an important centre of science, hosting governmental and NGO research and development branch institutions, as well as science education and communication organisations. As an important centre of university-level education, Warsaw hosts a considerable number of foreign students.

The capital of Poland has a high concentration of cultural institutions. There are 14 national museums and over 50 other types, 27 theatres, and over 200 libraries. A significant number of cultural activities is dedicated to young people in particular. Theatres, cinemas and other cultural centres number the largest per capital venues to spend leisure time and participate in cultural life in the whole of Poland. Due to the dynamic migration and population changes is known as one of the most open and culturally diverse cities in Poland. A significant number of social and cultural events and other forms of activity meet minority groups' needs and expectations.

Socio-political Issues

Due to its administrative position, Warsaw is the centre of political life in Poland. Its governmental institutions, parliament, political parties and media headquarters are an important factor influencing possibilities of social and political involvement. Consequently, the level of political activity compared to the rest of the country is relatively high. Almost 9% of all NGO registered in Poland are located in Warsaw (over 10,000 organisations). Almost 2,000 NGOs located in Warsaw work in the field of culture.

³⁷ <https://warszawa.stat.gov.pl/opracowania-biezace/opracowania-sygnalne/ludnosc/stan-i-ruch-naturalny-ludnosci-w-województwie-mazowieckim-w-2017-r-1,12.html> [accessed 20.03.2019]

Since 2007, Warsaw has been governed by liberal and left-liberal coalitions. Political leaders receive stable and strong support from the majority of its citizens. Opinion polls show that an average of 75% of citizens positively assess various aspects of life conditions in the city. Lately, the city's government has become more active in the fields of equal rights and tolerance promotion with respect to LGBT and migrant minorities.

The political attitudes among Warsaw's citizens are diversified. On the one hand, the low unemployment rate, growing economy and high living standard foster pro-liberal orientation, but the more traditional, right wing attachment is also noticeable. Support for liberal and left-oriented parties dominates among Warsaw's younger citizens. This goes along with strong support for European integration, democracy and a liberal set of values. However, it must be stated that the intent of political commitment of young people in Warsaw is undermined by individualism and prioritisation of professional career over social activity. As aforementioned in the first section, a significant part of the young population in Warsaw consists of migrants from other areas of Poland. Some of them feel less connected with the local community of the city, but others have an important impact on the social and political life of the city. In the report "Cities for the Youth"³⁸, Warsaw was presented as the best agglomeration for young people to live in. Polish cities were categorised due to several life conditions, areas like: the local economy, infrastructure, education, mobility, culture and entertainment, openness and health and social care. Warsaw holds the lead position mainly due to its economic and life-condition advantages, as well as for the high quality of education and health and social care services.

The total budget for youth spending in Warsaw is hard to summarise. The education expenses shared 25% of total budget spending in 2018; the rest of youth-oriented activities, covering the areas of culture and sport, around 6% of the total budget. The specific budget for youth-only oriented programmes and initiatives is hard to estimate.

Sample

Interviews were conducted among a total of 30 respondents, stakeholders (10) and prominent representatives of organisations (activists, members of managerial boards, and the like – 20). Respondents – stakeholders representing NGOs (2), local self-government, institutions and authorities (4), media (1), research (1) education (1), and religious organisations (1). The remaining interviewees (20) came from organisations which act in the fields of: political participation, like youth branches of political parties and political youth organisations (2), promotion of voluntary

³⁸ "Miasta dla Młodych", Europolis-Shuman Foundation, see: <http://europolis.schuman.pl/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/11/Europolis.-Miasta-dla-m%C5%82odych-1.pdf> [access 01.01.2020]

activity (1), ecology (2), antidiscrimination/equal human rights organisations (3), alternative movements, squat communities (3), grass-root cooperatives (1), sport clubs (1), gender oriented, women rights, LGBT organisations (2), migrant rights and inclusion organisations (1), student organisations (2) and umbrella youth organisations (1).

Interviews with Stakeholders

Inequalities

The first issue raised, according to the youth participation in Warsaw, was the comparatively better living conditions in Warsaw as opposed to the rest of the country. Average higher salaries, extremely low unemployment rates and a well-developed diversified labour market create a friendly environment for young adults. Education opportunities are also rich, and the quality of educational services is high. All of this is evidenced by the high rate of domestic migrations towards Warsaw. The majority opinion of respondents was that this causes a gap between locally born youth populations and migrants coming from the other regions of Poland. The domestic, Polish youth migrant population in Warsaw is often confronted with a lack of economic and financial support from their families and, as a result, are forced to focus their activity on job-oriented and economic issues.

Delving deeper into the social characteristic of the municipality, interviewed stakeholders refer to the economical inequalities, and find them still important for the young population of Warsaw. The gap between rich and poor districts is growing and the differences in inhabitants' average income has widened over recent years. The proportion of youth in the total population of Warsaw has been significantly decreasing since the late 90s, and the process is not even. There are more young people living in peripheral districts, where the cost of accommodation and housing is significantly lower. As a result, public schools in such locations are overcrowded, while in central districts, the number of pupils in classes might be very low.

Youth Participation in the Local Area

The stakeholders³⁹, in general, describe the local social and institutional milieu of Warsaw area as rather supportive for young people and youth participation, in particular. In the opinion of the stakeholders, Warsaw is a most developed area of Poland, offering young people the best chances of professional careers, cultural activities and public/political participation. On the other hand, some

³⁹ 10 people., representing NGOs (1), local self-government, institutions and authorities (4), media (1), research and education (1), trade unions (1) and religious organisations (1)

negative aspects of social life in Warsaw were mentioned. As most harmful, interviewees pointed out: the high cost of living – especially housing, stress and social pressure, caused by the high tension of educational and professional competition. The minority also mentioned social isolation and the decay of social bonds. Stakeholders seen Warsaw's youth population as rather diversified. Stakeholders holding positions in city institutions stated that, even the most excluded youth groups in the Warsaw area have numerous possibilities to receive adequate help in the form of actions, resources or professional consultancy. In the opinion of interviewees from local institutions, and representatives of NGOs, sometimes the proposition addressed at young people might be inadequate, and may not correspond with young people's will to participate. The insight of such a process lies in the lack of free time, that is mainly consumed by education and leisure time activities perceived as more attractive to youth.

The significant division in attitudes towards younger and older youth can be observed. Until the end of obligatory education (18 years), young people receive a wide range of supportive actions, programmes and other activities. Their problems and life conditions are seen as central and important, have become a crucial issue of political debate at the local level. When reaching the age of formal adulthood, the level of engagement and interest of political bodies, politicians and local institutions is significantly reduced. Similar effects might be observed in the case of issues, focusing on everyday life or cultural participation where they receive more support and interest through self-government. If they start to formulate postulates in the areas of economy, social welfare, equal rights and full participation, the attitude is changing to less supportive and more competitive.

Overall, the kind of paternalism observed in the general treatment of young people is summed up thus: "Most popular patterns in relation to youth is based on teacher-pupil model" (PLS01). Young people are perceived as passive, dependent, "need to be formed" and their status in debate is defined as rather submissive.

The majority of stakeholders present positive views on the level of participation of young citizens in Warsaw. Youth is more involved and more conscious of their rights. Examples of young activists that have successfully forced local authorities and other decisive bodies to take their voice and opinions into account are many: Interviewees also observe the increasing youth activity in protests or demonstrations mainly connected with ecology and climate change. However, young people's voices are often not treated seriously and do not have professional value for decision makers.

Public Policies and Programmes

From the perspective of interviewed stakeholders, activities devoted to the youth organised in Warsaw can be ordered into three specific areas. The first deals with particular, unique youth

problems. They are defined in the contexts of leisure time, education and some threats such as delinquency or drugs/alcohol abuse. The second area covers the actions needed to motivate young people to fully participate in decision-making process and socialisation towards democratic procedures.

The school is seen as an important channel for creating attitudes of citizenships or simply teaching young people skills necessary for activity in the public sphere. Schools provide a basic structure for participatory opportunities, such as student councils and committees, which can work as an introduction to voluntary and civil society participation. Education level and quality also affects future pointed possibilities for social and political participation.

Warsaw's local government developed a strategy dedicated to youth citizens, and covering the period 2016-2020. It is called "Young Warsaw Programme – the city with a positive climate for youth"⁴⁰. The basic assumptions of the strategy are to include young people in decision-making processes in local policies by developing and introducing a set of tools, actions and activities dedicated to youth in the age brackets 13-26 years. "Young Warsaw Programme" is kind of an umbrella programme. Its main goals and priorities were developed by the city authorities on the basis of open consultations with youth organisations and young people themselves (debates, opinion pools, and the like) are to activate young people and include them in democratic processes by putting real emphasis on actions and changes in their environment. The city is responsible for creating the network of coordinators (recruited basically from youth organisations) who take care of collecting and supporting initiatives proposed by youth organisations, NGOs and informal groups. The best – according to quality, inclusiveness and relation to the programme's goals – initiatives can get financial support from the city's budget. Another aim of the project is to build a network composed of city institutions and services, youth councils, NGOs, non-formal, bottom-up organised groups and initiatives, and other partners which can be a platform of coordination and information exchange on youth participation and activation. Stakeholders in general positively evaluated the existence of such a programme, in contrast to a complete lack of similar initiatives at country level. In the opinion of the majority of interviewees, both local and central authorities' attitudes during the recent years towards youth problems, especially considering young adults' issues, could be described as "repulsion". It has changed in recent years, but still exists in many cases:

"I think that almost all authorities think that if they do something for the growth of economy, labour market or social care in general, that would be enough to fulfil youth expectations and needs. The idea that young people, young adults, are specific was not so popular. The belief that 'inflow brings all boats up' dominates in their minds" (PLS07).

⁴⁰ Description of programme: <https://warszawa19115.pl/-/program-mloda-warszawa> [access 01.01.2020]

Better opinions on local youth policy prevail among stakeholders representing city institutions, but there was no evidence of a deep critical approach among the rest of the interviewees: “It is definitely better to have something, than nothing; however I’m quite sceptical about the impact of the programme on the majority of young people. This initiative should be better advertised” (PLS06).

Organisational Interviews

Inequalities and Participation

The perception of inequalities that might impact the situation of young people depends on an organisation’s profile. In general, if there is a special focus on a particular collective in organisation’s activity, the tendency to see such a group as potentially excluded and troubled increases. This is the case for LGBT, migrant and women’s rights oriented collectives. The majority of interviewees focus on tensions in the communication process between old and young generations. Youth is not treated as an equal partner:

“Many initiatives are often refused or not treated seriously only because they are proposed by young people, not older ones. Only if they are formulated or signed by serious, older, fully adult people or organisations do they receive any attention” (PLO7).

Besides, in the opinion of organisations, members’ initiatives and programmes dedicated to the involvement of young people in political participation are false or illusive in nature:

“Youth audience consultations often deal with non-serious issues, like cultural participation, leisure-time or sports’ infrastructure; in other cases, the results of youth opinion pools are not taken into consideration” (PLO18).

Opposite to the significant number of stakeholders, respondents coming mainly from alternative/minority rights organisations are very critical towards the model of youth involvement:

“There are not enough programmes for young people - they are mainly noticed before the parliamentary elections. City programmes focus on offering volunteering, which is a ‘sanctioned form of exploitation’ - you learn nothing, you experience yelling, shouting, and your work is for free” (PLO6).

Programmes for minorities (LGBT, migrants) often are reduced to declarations and statements – they stay dead because of lack of real mechanisms and actions:

“An example is the organisation of youth municipal councils. A small share, but this is because they are facade entities. There are barriers from the administration. Just like student councils at school, it's also not something that works” (PLO1).

“Young people are visible only when their activities are "spectacular", for example when they are demonstrating and blocking the city centre. It probably comes from the fact that the elders do not take young people's voices seriously - rather on the principle ‘we can listen to

the youth voices, but afterwards we still need experts to come and tell us what this is all about, what the truth is" (PLO8).

Among respondents coming from political organisations, the positive view prevails; others grounded in LGBT, ecological and alternative issues, present a more critical approach. Ecological organisations prepare young people for use – in the conscious way – of civil disobedience and other forms of protest: “Active actions regarding nature protection require courage; for me, it was new to use civil disobedience - within the law - as a form of protest” (PLO4).

Experiences of Working With Youth

Young people form the main target group for the majority of organisations. In other cases, youth is the most numerous group of members or employed personnel in the organisation. The volunteers in organisations are mostly ages 15-19; they are recruited among high school or university level students. It is noteworthy that Polish interviewees, underline the readiness and willingness of youngsters to work as volunteers especially in the field of LGBT rights, sex education and ecology. Only one of those interviewed has no young people among the members of managerial staff. Interviewees from the organisations speak of two age-based target subgroups: pre-18 year olds, and young adults (18-30). Political organisations describe their target group as active youth, activists; others address what they offer to particular groups of young people, like LGBT youth, youngsters, university students, country region youth or generally to “all young people”. Compared to the older generations, young people are perceived as more active, emotionally and ideologically (in the sense of being conscious) involved in activities among researched organisations.

Repertoires and Strategies of Working With Youth

Respondents define youth mainly by their educational status. Young people are those who are in the system of education, mainly in secondary or higher level education. In the view of some respondents, this definition is enlarged on to include all those in a “state of dependency”, which means, not having stable, long-term job, nor having family, nor independent households.

The majority of the organisations does not have special bodies or structures dedicated to working with young people. It is not so important in the case of organisations which work only for young, and their personnel is recruited from among young people. There are few age rules regarding membership. The lowest declared age for activists/volunteers is 13 years old and for full membership - 16+(PL05). One of the organisations in practice does not cooperate with people younger than 23 (because of required higher education completion). The other two (PLO1, PLO20) have an upper age limit – 35 years old. The field of activity, and the ideological profile, or even the

look or “climate” of the place of action of organisations might act as a specific age filter. It attracts young people:

“...due to the appearance and conditions of the place (graffiti, and so on); the activities are mainly geared towards the young. It can be said that our collective is open to all groups, but it is usually young people who appear because they are not deterred by the space in which the organisation operates. The organisation also makes space available to various informal groups (such as poets, theatre, jugglers) and youth groups usually appear” (PLO7).

“A large group of participants in anti-discrimination workshops are young adults, although it happened spontaneously and was not the intention of the organisation” (PLO13).

Some of the organisations developed precisely-defined career paths dedicated especially to young people: “Everyone, regardless of age, has the same valid voice. Before joining the collective, new members undergo a so-called trial period, that is, for a month they participate in meetings and organised events, but they have no decision-making vote” (PLO8).

The main strategy among organisations is to avoid working in the scope of activities reduced to youth issues or specific problems only:

“In our actions, we focus on people who respect each other, are open and tolerant, but also activating the whole local community of our district is important to us, although it is difficult to attract local buddies to come for [football] matches; at every match there are stewards who watch what is happening, observe, admonish, explain. The idea of the club is that everyone can join us regardless of age. People from very different backgrounds, with different incomes. Many are more interested in the atmosphere and social relations than football alone” (PLO18).

The dominant approach is to include young people and use their enthusiasm for the actions focused on more general issues like ecology, tolerance, building economic or political competencies or consciousness in society as a whole: “Everyone can get involved, but young people have the most enthusiasm. We work with young people and for the benefit of young people, but the main reason behind this is that we want the world they live in to be more friendly to people and animals” (PLO6). When working with young people, organisations try to follow several rules, described as innovative. The general aim is to create a social environment based on equal position and rights, openness and inclusiveness:

“Our group strives to be inclusive and supportive, in essence, on joining the organisation, everyone has full membership rights and trust from the rest of the collective. This gives momentum to new members and prevents older people from the collective from having more power based on the principle of 'elders' privileges” (PLO7).

Young members and volunteers are encouraged to take responsibility and participate in decision-making processes. Tools used in the work of organisations also refers to the critical pedagogy,

psychodrama and other forms allowing conscious expression of emotions and attitudes. There is also evidence of wide use of mentoring approaches:

“The support of mentors who are refugees themselves. It is our foundation that has introduced a solution to Poland that allows the use of resources in the form of well-integrated refugees” (PLO14).

“Members with longer experience take younger people under their wing, and share experiences and provide support or training for them” (PLO12).

The role of electronic media in work with young people is crucial. Each of the organisations uses a wide range of social media in internal and external communication: “We use dedicated messenger within the organisation - *Signal*; All software used by the organisation is open source or programmed by our members” (PLO9). E-learning was mentioned as a tool used for the education and training of members and volunteers: “We use social media; we have also introduced an electronic documentation management system. We also operate e-learning courses” (PLO1).

However, the presence of electronic forms of communication is treated in a balanced way and coexist with face-to-face communication. The electronic tools are used in managing, recruitment and organisation:

“Young volunteers are more likely to use e-mail than seniors. However, we find out that face-to-face meetings are still the most valuable ones. In recruiting, we use tools created in the City Hall. We also use the so-called ‘goodness box’⁴¹ tool” (PLO2).

Resources, Funding and Cooperation With Other Organisations

All of the researched organisations are non-governmental ones. Most of them rely on external sources of financing, like donations from local (the city’s) government and grants. The presence of financial support derived from private donors (business, companies, and so on), or foreign sponsors is also an important source of income. Some of the organisations (alternative collectives) declared that they cover all cost from their own resources, like an event’s tickets, fees for different products, food, and the like, in addition to members fees and donations .

Youth organisations in Warsaw “never walk alone” (PLO01). Their representatives recognise many benefits from participation in networks, like access to different forms of cooperation, information exchange and even financial support. Cooperation between organisations in many cases is based on informal, personal contacts:

⁴¹ A recruitment tool allowing the agency between volunteers and organizations prepared by local authorities: <http://kampaniespoleczne.pl/skrzynka-dobroci/>

“Cooperation is mainly based on working together for grants or on projects. We work together mainly with foreign organisations. Cooperation with other NGOs from Poland is usually established because the present or former members of our organisation are also involved in other groups, associations, and so on” (PLO7).

Growing professionalisation of organisations is observed. Most of them (except alternative organisations) can use grants or other EU funding. Organisations try to share their resources (for instance, like space for events) with others:

“We cooperate with a number of informal groups, such as jugglers, a dance group, a teacher collective and music bands. Cooperation is primarily about providing space for rehearsals, exercises and organising events to show yourself, go out to the people” (PLO6).

General Remarks and Discussion

There are still existing barriers and obstacles within the communication on the youth-elder axis, this has to do with Paternalism, Lack of Partnership and Fear of Youth. Paternalism, lack of partnership approach and equal treatment of the young by representatives of “adult world” institutions, like local government, schools, and so on, are reported. But parallel to that, we can observe the ongoing process of support of youth activity and participation – several programmes, tools and solutions have been prepared and developed or financed by local authorities. The most important problem identified in interviews lies in practicing and implementing solutions: The elders are fearful of giving responsibility and decision-making power to the youth. Step by step, the situation seems to be changing, and interviewees give many examples of better cooperation between local authorities and young people.

Growing Political Consciousness Among Youth

Growing levels of participation and citizenship consciousness can be observed among younger generation members. Voluntary activity is seen by many young people as their “way of life”, part of a life-style, or even an identity. Being active in organisations can be seen as creating alternative structures and spaces of action. The growing activity of youth is reported regardless of their political views and field of actions (ecology, minority and migrant tolerance but also conservatism, nationalism – all supported by young people).

Forms of Activity

Youth participation is based on activity in alternatively organised social spaces. In their main socialisation role, they remain institution of *moratorium*⁴². Youth organisations serve as “schools of life”, and create independent socialisation spaces, allowing young people to learn and experience efficiency and responsibility, and to act as part of a collective.

⁴² Moratorium is a term proposed by Erik Erikson (E. Erikson, *Childhood and Society*; *New York, 1963*). In Erikson’s theory of psychosocial development, the experimental period of adolescence in which, during the task of discovering who one is as an individual separate from family of origin and as part of the broader social context, young people try out alternative roles before making permanent commitments to an identity. Adolescents who are unsuccessful at negotiating this stage risk confusion over their role in life (source: <https://dictionary.apa.org/moratorium>)

7. Spain

Report by: Anna Clua, Núria Ferran-Ferrer, Núria Font,
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Introduction and Urban Context

Barcelona is the capital of the Autonomous Community of Catalonia. It is located in North-eastern Spain and is the second most populated city in the country (after the national capital, Madrid). The 1,625,137 inhabitants of the city (Idescat, 2018) places Barcelona in second position (after Hamburg) of the most populated European cities which are not nation capitals. The functional urban area of the city of Barcelona is its metropolitan area, the administrative name of which is *Àrea Metropolitana de Barcelona* (AMB). It includes 36 municipalities and a population of 3,247,281 inhabitants (2017). On an institutional level, several organisations operate in this region: city councils, metropolitan bodies, county councils, agencies and consortiums, organs of the regional and state governments, as well as European bodies such as the Union for the Mediterranean. On another scale, there is the Metropolitan Region of Barcelona, larger than the AMB and one of the largest urban agglomerations in Europe, which includes more than five million inhabitants. This area represents 63.7% of the Catalan population, and 10.2% of the Spanish population.

The demographic evolution of the city shows a growing population with a high rate of immigration and with a strong touristic impact over recent decades. Foreign citizens represent 18% of its total population (of which only 30% are from other European Countries). In terms of numbers, the top three origin countries are Italy, China and Pakistan. By age groups, 15.1 % of the total population are children and adolescents (0-17); about 22.4 % are young adults (18-35); 42.1 % are between 36-65 years old and 20.4% are 66+⁴³. As far as tourism is concerned, in 2018 Barcelona received 13,213,867 visitors. The city holds first position as a destination for tourism and international conferences worldwide, the fifth position as a cruise port worldwide, and the seventh position as far as passenger processing at a European airport is concerned (Observatori del Turisme, 2017).

Young people represent 15% of the population of Barcelona. The tendency towards lower birth rates in the last quarter of the twentieth century, and the increase in ageing populations have not been compensated for by the arrival of the foreign population during the first decade of 21st century. Migration movements in Barcelona are very sensitive to labour market fluctuations, and the facilities or difficulties the city offers its citizens to make a living. Besides, young people are the collective

⁴³ Sources: <http://estadistica.bcn.cat>

with the highest rates of mobility.

Socio-economic Issues

Barcelona has historically been in a privileged position in Spain's urban revolutions. The city has played a key role in pioneering several economic turns that have marked the evolution towards the current global economy. Barcelona was considered to be the "Catalan Manchester" at the beginning of the 20th Century when it ranked highest as the most important wool city in Spain, and it has continued to be a strategic city after the establishment of the so-called post-carbon economy. Today, Barcelona is representative of the knowledge-based urban development and its ICT-based activities. Globally, Barcelona enjoys a leading position as a place for production and research, as a tourist destination, business centre, cultural and innovative hub, and a commercial and leisure harbour.

The Metropolitan Area of Barcelona plays a leading role in the context of Europe. Its strategic geographical position and population density are supported by a network of transport (railway, road, sea and air) and communications that connect it to the other main metropolitan areas on the continent and in the Mediterranean Arc.

Several rankings place Barcelona as an important city in terms of foreign investment. According to the Global Cities Investment Monitor 2018 of KPMG, Barcelona occupies the ninth position among the world's urban areas in terms of foreign investment rates. Also, Barcelona was the European city with the best promotion and recruitment strategy of foreign investment for the period 2018-2019, according to the FDi Cities and Regions of the Future Report 2018-2019 (Financial Times Group).

From an economic point of view, the metropolitan area of Barcelona is one of the richest areas in Spain. It is at the core of the economic activity in the province of Barcelona, as well as of Catalonia. The AMB concentrates half of the total production (GDP) and workers of Catalonia. Nevertheless, after the last economic crisis of the late 2000s, indicators of poverty have been on the rise in the city. High rates of youth unemployment and an increase in precariousness in the living conditions were clear indicators during the post-crisis period, and they have become part of the current evolution of the city.

According to the latest available data provided by the City Council (Pla d'Adolescència i Joventut 2017-2021, Ajuntament de Barcelona 2017), throughout the period 2007-16, the youth

unemployment rate was more than twice that of the population as a whole. Job creation for young people over the last years has been minimal. By the end of 2006, there were 70,000 young people from Barcelona aged 16 to 24 years in employment, while that figure dropped to 31,000, less than half, over the same period of 2016. In 2016, 26.58 % of young people in Barcelona were unemployed. The situation in the city was slightly better than in the rest of Catalonia and Spain. In Catalonia, by 2016 the unemployment rate among young people aged 26-24 was almost eight points higher. The Spanish rate was almost 18 points higher. While the lowering of the unemployment rate has been remarkable in Barcelona in the post-crisis period 2012-16, the volume of the young working population has remained at a minimum, with small fluctuations of around 30,000 people.

Precariousness and risk of poverty have increased, particularly among young women. Gender inequalities are evident in terms of temporary work, work without a contract, acceptance of jobs with precarious employment conditions and average incomes. According to the same data (Pla d'Adolescència i Joventut 2017-2021, Ajuntament de Barcelona 2017), almost one-third of the young population who worked in the previous two years did so without a contract (29%). Just over eight per cent (8.1%) of young people have more than one job. In the specific case of young women, this figure increases to 9.7%. Half (50.6%) of the youth population works part-time (less than 40 hours). Young women are ten percentage points higher than men in part-time work positions. Only 48.3% of young people who work do a job that relates to their studies. Among young people who only work, six out of ten earn less than 1.000 euros per month.

Mainstream media have brought into the public sphere the the plight of a young generation that neither studies nor works. They are called the NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) generation. As stated in EURYKA's WP2 Report, hegemonic media discourses have contributed to building a negative image of youth. However, data coming from the Enquesta de Joves Barcelona (2015)⁴⁴ shows that NEET represents 2% of the younger population only. Data also demonstrates that almost half of the young people consulted in the last survey would accept a job without a contract, and in case of being unemployed, would accept a position that was under-paid.

Following the negative evolution of living conditions and the increasing inequality over the last years, the poverty risk or social exclusion rate (AROPE) of Catalonia stood at 19.4% in 2017. Although this rate is inferior to the Spanish one (26.6%) and the EU-28 one (23.5%) for the same

⁴⁴ This is the last panel survey conducted by the City Council

period, the city has experienced the effects of a higher cost of living (mainly related to the rising prices of the housing market). According to the Observatory of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in 2018, the main problem in Barcelona was access to housing. This has resulted in a significant increase in evictions since 2017. In fact, in 2018, there were an average of 20 evictions per day in the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona. Barcelona was the city with the highest ratio of evictions due to unpaid rents in Spain. Housing prices in the city have risen significantly over the last years.

This evolution of housing prices in the city, plus the precarisation of labour conditions are the main barriers to the emancipation of Barcelona's young people. According to the data provided by the Institut Català del Sòl, in just two years, between the first quarter of 2015 and the fourth of 2016, the average price of rental housing increased by 20.1%. According to the City Council's Survey on Youth 2015, 83.3% of emancipated young people lived in rented housing.

Socio-cultural Issues

Barcelona has a long tradition as a capital centre for social organisations. The social tissue of Barcelona has been considered as key in the city's political evolution since the restoration of democracy in the 1970s, as well as part of the city's cultural heritage. In 2017, there were 52 formal civic centres and 20 informal community centres, all of them offering a rich agenda of activities. The 2017 Panoramic Report⁴⁵ on the third sector activities in Catalonia estimates that there is a total of 5,350 entities in the city of Barcelona, among which between 4,700 and 4,800 are associations. There are different models of associations, from complex managerial structures to very local self-managed organisations, the majority of which are configured by militants, associates and volunteers more than by paid professionals.

Barcelona is also a vibrant city in terms of cultural production, offerings and consumption. Over the decades, it has been the capital of the editorial industry in Spain. In 2017, 49.5% of the Spanish editorial industry was based in Barcelona⁴⁶. Over the last 20 years, it has developed into an important cluster of creative industries linked to mobile technologies. It has also become the Mobile World Capital, with important events like The Mobile World Congress taking place each year in the city. In terms of the level of education, the city council offers data from 2017 stating that 47% of

⁴⁵ Torre Jussana -Centre de Serveis a les Associacions. Informe Panoràmic 2017 <http://www.elpanoramic.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/informe2017.pdf>

⁴⁶ Source: Spanish Ministry of Culture

Barcelona's citizens have a secondary education, 31% have a higher education, 18% have a primary school education, 3% have not studied at all, and the remaining 1% is unknown. According to the city council, in the academic course 2015-2016, there were 604 primary education institutions, including nursery schools, of which 44.5% were public. In the case of higher education, only 36% could study in public centres (Idescat, curs 2014-15) while in the rest of Catalonia, the public high school students number 66%. The results of high school education show differences among nationalities. While 93% of students with Spanish nationality graduate, only 73% of foreigners did not.

According to the Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency (AQU), the number of higher education institutions in Barcelona stands at four public and four private universities, with campuses in Barcelona and its metropolitan area. The economic crisis has impacted the entrance of young people onto the labour market, therefore some have extended their studies. That explains why the reduction in high school pupils has increased by 2%, and the elementary school have increased by 20.5% for labour market reasons (Estadística d'Ensenyament, 2011-15).

The youth population is the most diverse regarding geographical origins, languages spoken, religion and cultural practices than ever⁴⁷. Almost 30% of the people from 15 to 29 years old registered in Barcelona had a foreign nationality in 2016 (Idescat, Padró municipal d'habitants). These young people are mainly located in Ciutat Vella (62.8%), while the district of Sarrià-Sant Gervasi has only 15.2%.

Socio-political Issues

Local government in Barcelona is ruled by the Municipal Charter. The mayor is the highest authority and head of the municipal council, the organ of political representation of the citizens of Barcelona, which is composed of 41 councillors elected every four years. The municipality is divided into ten districts with powers over local services. Each has its own district council, the composition of which is proportional to the election results obtained by each party in that district.

In its more recent history, Barcelona's City Council has been run mainly by left-wing parties. The Catalan Socialist Party was in power for more than twenty years from the first municipal elections (1979) after the restoration of democracy, until 2011. From 2011 to 2015, there was a period of right-wing leadership with the political party *Convergència i Unió* (liberal Catalan nationalist) at

⁴⁷ Pla d'Adolescència, 2017-2021 <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/joves/ca/canal/pla-dadolescencia-i-joventut-2017-2021>

the forefront. The results of the 2015 municipal elections were in part a reflection of the social discontent manifested through the 15M Indignados movement, which had a significant impact on Spain, and gained an important local representation in Barcelona. The activist-based political organisation, Barcelona En Comú, won the elections with the support of the leftist parties.

There are political changes taking place in Barcelona now. The so-called “Catalan Process” developed after the bid for independence determined the political debates and has polarised political opinions in Catalonia and Spain. This process has had a strong influence on political participation at a local scale, too, resulting in an increased interest in political issues among young people. It is important to keep in mind that the interviews took place at a time when the bid for independence, linked to the vindication of democratic rights, represented one of the main issues of the political agenda, mobilising millions of people. To get an idea of the number of participants at the demonstrations, what could be considered as the first demonstration in the Catalan independence movement took place in central Barcelona on July 10, 2010 against limitations in the autonomy of Catalonia, and particularly against a recent decision of the Spanish Constitutional Court to cancel or reinterpret several articles of the 2006 Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia. The number of people taking part in the demonstration was estimated at between 1.1 million (according to the local police) and 1.5 million (according to the organisers). Following demonstrations (for instance, Catalonia’s national day on the 11th September) have attracted similar numbers throughout the years. The number of voters at the October 1st 2017 referendum on independence was 2,286,217.

Sample

The study of the youth organisations which will be presented in this report is centred in the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona. Representatives of 20 organisations were interviewed from March to July 2019 (See Table 1). We also interviewed seven experts on the matter of youth and political participation during this time-frame (see Table 2 for details).

The sample of 20 organisations was selected according to the criteria agreed in the WP3 regarding types of organisations. On the one hand, the Barcelonian sample tries to reflect the different groups present among the young population of the city. As for formal organisations, the youth sections of political parties and unions, as well as local youth agencies, have been included. As for informal organisations, both self-managed entities (with a higher or lower degree of professionalisation) and

grassroots citizen initiatives are included. Women's organisations were given significant weight because of their relevance in the city's current public debates. Finally, the sample sought to include topics from which inequalities and stigmas can be represented in the city, although the groups they affect may be considered minority or even marginal (racialized gangs, functional diversity, drug addiction, sexual work, and so forth).

As far as the stakeholders' sample is concerned, seven key personalities were selected. The aim was to balance the presence of experts who have direct vinculation with the decision making processes affecting youth policies (the "authorities"), experts whose background is more linked to direct on-the-ground work (social workers, youth representation agencies) and academics. In the selection of both organisations and stakeholders' samples, the gender perspective was taken into account in order to guarantee a balanced presence of male and female respondents.

Table 1. Classification of the Organisations

TYOLOGY	LEAD	DESCRIPTION	ABBREVIATION
Artistic	Youth oriented	Cooperative -Training young circus artists /Barcelona's working class Neighbourhood cultural facility	OS1
Entrepreneurial	Youth oriented	Association. Promotes youth leadership regarding economic local development projects	OS2
Ethnic minorities	Youth oriented	Association of young gypsies from Barcelona	OS3

LGTBQ	Youth oriented	Section of the Youth group of the centre for the normalisation of homosexuality	OS4
Functional diversity + Media	Youth oriented	Community radio (mental disabilities) in Barcelona. Young people taking part in it	OS5
Media	Youth led	Youth association for alternative broadcasting	OS6
Migrant	Youth oriented	Programme of a neighbourhood organisation for unaccompanied migrant minors (MENAs and Ex-MENAS)	OS7
Migrant	Youth oriented	Programme for youth people with important needs and necessity of an intensive long-lasting support	OS8
Neighbourhood	Youth oriented	ICT literacy, youth, Raval neighbourhood	OS9
Neighbourhood	Youth led	Youth association in Nou Barris Neighbourhood (Barcelona) City referent	OS10
Political party	Youth led	Right wing - youth branch	OS11
Political party	Youth led	Left wing republican- youth branch	OS12
Religious	Youth led	Scouts. Not-for-profit religious association	OS13
Trade Unions	Youth led	Labour union -Youth branch	OS14
Trade Unions	Youth led	Student Union	OS15
Women	Youth oriented	Cluster of feminist groups of Barcelona	OS16

Local Youth Agency	Youth led	Official organisation operating on a municipal scale	OS17
Health + women + transsexual	Youth oriented	Health assistance for women (cis and trans) at risk of social exclusion	OS18
Alternative	Youth oriented	Anarchist, anti-fascist association based in Barcelona (networked internationally)	OS19
Alternative + women + migrant	Youth oriented	Sex workers association, anti-trafficking, human rights' activists	OS20

Table 2. Stakeholders and Experts

ROLE	ABBREVIATION
Local authority	SS1
Social Worker	SS2
Professor	SS3
National authority	SS4

National authority	SS5
Professor	SS6
Representative of Youth Institutional Organisation	SS7

Interviews with Stakeholders

Frame of Opportunity

Barcelona has historically been a city where young people has had ample opportunities to construct their own discourse, develop a specific language, and express themselves. Nevertheless, accessing the city's public sphere has not always been accompanied by the public acceptance. There have been several waves of youth leadership in the city's debates (Garcés 2018).⁴⁸ During the last 20 years, Barcelona has consolidated its image as relevant scenario for youth agency, starting from the squatter movement in the late 1990s, followed by the 15M movement, and ending up with the 2019 street violent riots against Spanish unionist repression.

It is beyond doubt that Barcelona has been a centre of attraction for young people who want to be in the spotlight, either in terms of political participation or in terms of life opportunities. For generations, youngsters have moved to the city in search of education, work, leisure, culture and/or housing opportunities. The current context, however, gives us a different picture. According to all the interviewed stakeholders, young people in the Barcelona area are have been suffering an unprecedented lack of opportunities since the last economic crisis. There is agreement too on the recognition of increasing inequalities among the city's young population.

Young people are in fact the subject of public attention: the city council provides spaces and resources, programmes, institutional organisations, campaigns in order to minimise unequal access to opportunities. The offer of services to young people covers all the topics that directly concern them: housing, work, training / education, health, sex, emotion management or conflict resolution, access to culture, associationism, sports. The City Council also generates data on youth in the city

⁴⁸ Garcés, M. (2018). *Ciudad princesa*. Galaxia Gutenberg.

and analyses it periodically, and share their findings.

The organisations agree on the fact that there are difficulties including racialised groups. On the other hand, they also state that stigmatised social collectives (for instance, those related to mental health) do not sufficiently include or visibilise young people, which mainly affects young females. When organisations focus on these collectives, they work on the issue of empowerment in the neighbourhood, but they stress the importance of paying much more attention to the city as a frame. They stress the importance of including youth in debates on citizenship and on their right to shape the city. OS9 states:

“The group of young people we work with [in Raval neighbourhood where working-class ethnic minorities are very present] has a high degree of political disaffection. They believe that political participation does not concern them”

In general terms, the results of our analysis show that local government provides opportunities for young people and adolescents, but these opportunities are not accessible for everybody, as young people have different starting points depending on their socio-economic and cultural background. This is in addition to the fact that youth is considered as a collective with specific needs, rather than as citizens which circumstances that run parallel to structural constrictions, such as social class. Young people are often defined by public and service-oriented organisations as a target, but this does not mean that this attention generates real possibilities for taking part in a general debate on the future of the city. The youth-oriented programmes are automated in the gear of city governance, thus losing the ability to fit into the city’s project as a whole.

Stakeholders on the administration side talk about the importance of innovation and the use of online tools to bring young people to the city. However, people working in grassroots organisations (whether youth led or youth oriented) complain about the lack of resources. They also complain about the fact that the administration is working on short-circuit schemes, and that it has no real interest in young people other than considering them as potential voters.

A great deal of work has been done in Barcelona in order to create new spaces for opportunities in the public sphere. Several initiatives have been developed in order to promote youth engagement through online spaces (for example, the platform Decidim Barcelona)⁴⁹ in a way that is much closer

⁴⁹ <https://www.decidim.barcelona/>

to youth interests and practices. Respondent SS5 states that Barcelona's city Council has a long tradition and solid experience in participatory methodologies: "The public administration has the know-how, as well as the optimum resources to develop innovative spaces of opportunity. The citizens (and the young people among them) are far from reaching this level of development in their day-to-day practices of collective organisation". From a social worker's perspective, this issue is perceived very differently:

"The administration holds the view that young people should adapt to them, that it is the young people who should understand. This is a very egocentric approach. We should provide more spaces to give them a voice and give them presence in places where decisions are made. Design programmes for young people without knowing their reality, life in the neighbourhoods is very complicated. I have gone to working groups led by the Administration that try to promote youth participation, and in the end, they end up asking why they do not vote for them" (SS2)

Respondent SS1 introduces the work that is being developed from the city Council in relation to the UN Agenda⁵⁰. This programme provides a positive vision for youth development. SS1 states:

"Although the global economy has started to recover, the youth employment situation has worsened in recent years. Programmes should adapt to the individual and socioeconomic contexts in which young people actually live; this would represent a significant departure from the oft-repeated skills-for-employability rhetoric which says that there are quality jobs available, but young people is not prepared enough. In such programmes, entrepreneurship is viewed strategically. It is important to stress that the flourishing of youth is much more than just successful transitions to employment" (SS1)

SS5 states that in some areas, there is still a wealth of work to do. He takes a step beyond in his analysis by stating that it is important not to limit the opportunities' concept to the employment and education issues. This stakeholder points to the recognition of class inequalities as a key point:

"The collateral effects of the crisis are evident as far as the destruction of opportunities is concerned. The impact of creating new opportunities in this context is still very weak. By "collateral effects" I understand not those that affect employment, salaries, and so on, but those derived from the change of model, such as the death of the welfare state, gentrification, urban development based on tourism... This connects with the issue of inequalities: There are more opportunities being destroyed than created. The ones that are created affect the middle class up, and the destruction of opportunities affects the middle class down. The public administration has to face this problem"

Inequalities and Grievances

There is a common perception about inequalities that can be drawn from the interviews conducted. In the case of young people, the main cause of inequality is attributed to the way in which they

⁵⁰ Youth and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development <https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/world-youth-report/wyr2018.html>

suffer as a specific collective lack of opportunities. These are limitations basically conditioned by social class and translated into unequal access to education, the labour market and housing. Emancipation with no economic dependency is out of reach of the vast majority of young people. Focusing on the fact that the average emancipation age in Spain is 30 years old, SS2 states: “Life is always a sum of transitions; and young people live their first transition by becoming active agents of the labour market. The way you do this first transition can affect your life path”. Unemployment youth rates in Barcelona 2007-16 duplicates the working population in general (Informe de la Joventut, Ajuntament de Barcelona, 2017). SS3 remarks that a large percentage of young people in Spain live in their parents’ household. This situation makes their precariousness invisible. What it is interesting to stress here, according to SS3, is the fact that young people have to face unemployment under unequal conditions, insofar as they reach the status of unemployed from a non-emancipated social position. This stakeholder identifies education as a key piece towards equality:

“Local authorities should focus their efforts with young people on education; what matters is to get away from poverty. It is not the amount of assistance you get from the Administration, but how well you can establish your skills for the labour market, and education is critical (...) With the current welfare state, you have to pay for education (...) The social class is directly related to the level of education, and therefore the work you can have” (SS3)

A stakeholder from the Barcelona City Council sees inequalities as “the main factor for hopelessness”. According to this interviewee, education *per se* has become another kind of no-hope space for young people. According to this point of view, attention should be focused on the way labour market includes youth:

“Young people are aware that they have no opportunities. They think that education is useless. That is why the City Council is treating the youth as a special target and has its own plans of occupation with three main aspects: professional orientation, training and providing incentives to corporations to hire young people. Apart from that, the city council foresees entrepreneurialism as a solution for young people, as self-employment is seen as a solution” (SS1)

From the third sector and social workers’ side, there is agreement on the importance of education as a frame of opportunity, as it provides access to the labour market. Education is not only seen as knowledge-provision space, but also as a place for strengthening social networking and forging good connections:

“Having a network is vital to access the labour market; seven out of ten job offers do not translate in a formal offer as they are covered by personal contacts. This is an inequality that faces young people in a situation of vulnerability, young people that have been expelled from the education system, who have not auto-expelled, it is the system that does not recognise

their abilities and knowledge. Also, it is the system such as the Immigration Law that constrains labour offers or residence permits(...) For instance, young immigrant people have a better attitude to learning than some locals do, but education is being made elitist, access to higher education is expensive and you need a family or economic sustenance in order to obtain a university degree” (SS2)

There is agreement on the idea that the origin of the family should not condition success or failure at school. Many public schools from deprived areas are working in this direction. But the truth is that well connected people are more likely to reach success in labour (and then life trajectory) terms. We found this idea also in the discourse of the youth organisation that was interviewed as representative of the liberal model of youth entrepreneurialism (OS2).

SS1 insists on the idea that dependency on the family is an important cause of inequality. In this sense, housing opportunities are also seen as a key question: “Local authorities must work in order to guarantee good housing conditions for young people. We could generate a new local policy in order to designate 30% of the housing offers to young people”. The problem is that Spain is living through an important crisis concerning the housing sector. Evictions are more and more common, and the fact that they do not affect young people is due to the fact that they do not live on their own when they are not economically independent, rather than to the youth’s degree of vulnerability. In one sense, living with parents (which is a common situation among young, Spanish people) does mask the fact that young people are poorer than ever before.

SS5 states that there is a grievance that particularly affects young people in general, and not just in Barcelona. This is the fact that they are not recognised as full participative citizens until they reach voting age. According to this stakeholder, political disaffection has particular characteristics when it affects young people in the city:

“The political disaffection only attributable to the youth is characterised by:

- Disillusion: Young people do not trust the usual intermediaries (government, parliament, unions... and even NGOs)
- Inconvenience: Young people are used to moving through very liquid, granular, digital spaces of communication. Traditional spaces of participation impose tempos and structures that are too rigid for them
- Disinterest: The issues that have been traditionally attributed (from above) to young people are not the ones that focus their attention, or they are not raised in a way that interests them (SS5).

SS5 also states that the enormous challenge of public administrations is to allow bottom-up construction of citizens' agenda, and thus offer a place for youth participation and the expression of their real interests.

From the third sector, working closely with youth with social exclusion risk, SS2 states that:

“Political organisations work on an electoral perspective only. There is the need of recognising the particular needs and grievances that affect young people as a social challenge or, more importantly, as a core issue from which society must move forward” (SS2)

SS2 complains about the fact that the youth question is not considered a transversal issue:

“For instance, Urban Planning do not think of young people. Health, Environment... the same. We forget the future perspective. It has to be an international agenda that forces us to work with these issues” (SS2)

Organisations that work in deprived areas or with groups at risk of social exclusion agree on identifying differences in relation to cultural background and skin colour as a very important grievance for youth participation. Being a woman within these collectives is considered an extra-grievance in most of cases.

There is a low presence of racialised youth, both in organisations of a general nature and in organisations oriented to specific groups that have a transversal presence in the city (women, mental health, LGBTI...). Instead, racialised youth occupy few youth-led spaces (unless, as in the case of OS3, they form a thematic organisation linked to an historical cultural identity of the city). There is a common perception of the need to include these young people in the network of the city's youth organisations.

Inclusion and Visibility of Young Adults in the City

SS3 states that the initiatives that visibilise young people are promoted from the social and community level rather than from the sphere of formal politics. The context in which political consciousness takes form is very important, as the voice of young people tends to be much louder as social unease grows. This stakeholder uses the example of the youth-led coordinated protests that have recently eclosionated from civil society's claims in relation to the Catalan independence issue:

“The independence movement in Catalonia makes it impossible for young people not to participate in politics. The collectives adapt and react to the context where they live. Whether it is in opposition or in favour of independence, young people are stepping into the streets and getting mobilised” (SS3)

There is another issue related to youth visibility in the city concerning how the public sphere is being defined. SS6 stresses the fact that young people learn about citizenship and political participation from the outskirts of the classical arenas (and thus, far from parliaments, formal education, formal participation, institutionalised associations, and so forth). They confront and question the stereotype that young people are not visible and do not participate in politics. The anti-globalisation movements from the end of the 20th century have motivated this generation to participate in politics through new spaces. The most important, according to SS6, are the digital spaces:

“Young people are active, but these kinds of participation are not the classical engagement with a stable ideology or transmission of political knowledge. The transmission is not lineal, but interactive. They lose the experience but also the bad rules of the old politics. It creates a contrast between old and new politics. Young people are imagining new ways of performing the social/political pact” (SS6)

This stakeholder is optimistic about his estimations:

“The system is strong and controls the situation, and is reluctant to change. But in the second phase of the new future, new generations will introduce technological and ideological challenges. The situation is very similar to what happened with the 60s’ movements in the 20th century. Their proposals were somehow included in the social imaginary and were accepted in the end. Something similar could happen” (SS6)

SS5 raises a less optimistic analysis. This stakeholder stresses the idea that, in general, young people have little presence in the public sphere of the city, as informal political participation retains them in the margins:

“Surely they want to be more present in the city than in other spaces (namely Europe), but they have been held in informal spaces, which work very well for them. This is where the Administration is failing. The Administration should be more attentive to what happens in these informal spaces. On the one hand, public institutions take too long to understand what is happening on the street. On the other hand, the Administration does not recognise informal entities (taking into account that they are organised outside the lobbies) as valid interlocutors”

Therefore, young people are not present in the deliberative spaces because they are not interested in that. There are two main reasons for explaining this non-interest; that they have no interest in formal interlocation spaces and/or that formal politics is too short-term oriented and does not appeal to youth interests.

Respondent SS5 also states that young people’s voice could be underrepresented due to sociodemographic reasons and/or due to thematic reasons (the issues that are important to them are not relevant in the public sphere). SS2 respondent reflects on this issue as follows: “Young people

with a situation of social exclusion risk do not even know when elections take place. And these young people are invisible in the public sphere”.

There is agreement around the importance of redefining the spaces of political participation. Saying that young people “are not there” means that perhaps we do not look in the places where they actually are and become active. These places have to become legitimate spaces of political participation. Young people should be able to be independent in their way of claiming their spaces of political participation (that is, they should not be dependent on the means and spaces provided from above). Following this idea, SS5 affirms that autonomous or self-managed ways to access the public sphere should be guaranteed:

“There are two indirect ways of approaching young people from the Public Administration: looking at what happens in the digital spaces (and thus recognising youth mobile style of life) and focusing attention on informal spaces” (SS5)

Organisational Interviews

The housing problem is seen as one of the major causes of youth exclusion (or even expulsion from the city). It is a structural problem that affects the entire country, but whose consequences are severe in Barcelona. OS1 states that the cost of housing is one of the main causes of youth impoverishment in the city:

“Their living conditions have worsened because, although they have opted for an emancipated life, they cannot afford the price of a home if it is not shared. Housing prices are the main cause of the expulsion of young people from the city. The fact of having to attend to this right means that young people are in a worse condition to access other basic rights such as education, health or culture” (OS1)

The migrant condition has opened a sizeable debate around who is allowed to perform politically in the city. Institutional violence was applied in 2019 when non-white young street protesters were arrested during the Independence disturbances. In the case of not being able to prove legal status, immigrants faced repatriation. So the city was somehow seen as a risky territory to protest, especially dependent on the colour of one’s skin. In this case, the structural conditions, such as the

Spanish Immigration Law, determine to what extent the urban context could be inclusive (or expulsive).

Immigration Law also affects unaccompanied young migrants, who are subjected to arrests in public space and passing invasive age identification tests (they are expelled from public assistance programmes as soon as they turn 18 (OS7)).

Local laws also contribute to this structural conditioning. Municipal normatives can prevent participation as far as accessing public space is concerned. According to OS16, Barcelona's "Ordenança pel civisme" (Civic Ordinance) is being applied in a way that allows repression rather than mediation. This municipal law is under fire as it does not promote co-responsibilisation and social cohesion in the public space. Besides, the application of this ordinance does not help the inhabitants to find the conditions to fulfil the political and social realisation in the city as the spaces for freedom of expression and circulation become limited. The effects on young people are, for instance, that they cannot perform music on the street, they cannot play football or cricket in the square, they cannot skate, and other such restrictions.

The climate of repression experienced in the city during the demonstrations for the freedom of imprisoned Catalan politicians also generated the perception of limitations on young people to express political opinions. Apart from the deportation risks involved for young immigrants, there were numerous arrests of very young national demonstrators. In this specific context, there was a climate of fear regarding participating in street protests (OS15).

The Experiences of Working With Youth

The organisations in our sample have given us a picture of a diverse range of experiences in working with youth. They could be service oriented, or with a clear formative mission. Some of them (especially the ones working with vulnerable communities) provide assistance in terms of basic needs and health. We have found a very high level of professionalism and expertise in their respective areas (this is seen as a common characteristic that affects both formal and informal organisations).

Gender perspective is also a common place in their respective discourses. The vast majority of the interviewees (regardless of gender) adopt a non-discriminatory language as far as gender is concerned. Women are also taken into account even when the organisations do not declare themselves as feminists. Taking women into account is something very present when talking about internal management and work structures, but it also appears when talking about the content of their

activities. Thus, it could be stated that the gender perspective is well installed in the culture of youth organisations in Barcelona.

All the interviewees describe their experience of working with young people as fulfilling. Regarding some vulnerable communities, this work is located at the centre of the organisation's goals. The objective is not to achieve predetermined objectives. Young people facing precariousness and stigma often need to be heard. Their rhythms of adaptation to a challenging project are slower, so the activities must focus on the processes rather than on the achievements. This is something shared by all the organisations that are developing basic assistance in education, housing, media literacy, health. OS7 states:

“We started with an ideal of [social] transformation that was gradually replaced with a more organic conception of the project. We have seen that what really matters is the daily work with the communities. This work implies that young people live the process so that their involvement and participation is perceived as something natural, rather than as something imposed or contrary to their real needs”

OS15 youth-led organisation consider that they are “fighting for youth rights, for their closest needs, and therefore young people feel that they have to get involved”. OS1 considers that:

“...access to many basic rights is restricted for young people. First of all, because there are inequalities in terms of purchase power, and secondly because young people cannot access a labour market that is oriented to acquire that purchase power. Market-oriented rights are much more difficult for young people to achieve”

On the other hand, some organisations describe the average young people they work with as immature and victims of consumerism practices. This is not the real picture for all young people, but it is true that it speaks to something that is really happening. These organisations point to the fact that young people have limited access to emancipatory education and job opportunities. They all portray a generation devoted to leisure consumption rather than to political participation:

“The university is inaccessible due to the fees. Labour is precarious. Understanding free time as time for consumption, including addictions, continues to be hegemonic. In high school, young people are told that studying is worthless. Virtual relationships are a very worrying topic. Young people are totally dependent on mobile phones. We are mentoring young people until they become adults. They are weak people on an emotional level” (SO16)

“Young people need to find non-consumer spaces and activities because they are deeply affected by precariousness” (SO10)

Commodification of education is one of the issues raised in relation to the consumerist profile of young people. This introduces an interesting reflection about the responsibility of the public authorities in relation to the maintenance of the value of education. They see the cut in the public financing of education as a way to let the logic of the market enter into the educational institutions. Younger generations, especially young people coming from a working class profile, do not access

education as the space for training as young citizens, but just as young clients. The fact that education is more and more expensive contributes to more disciplined students, with less time for mobilisation and protest:

“The economic cuts in education directly affect young people. We work for working class students because they are really affected. There is a need for a public university model. (...) The student movement is the one that trains young people into democracy. But the Bologna process does not permit combining work and study... so they have less time to spend in activism and student movements” (SO15)

The work, historically initiated by the scout movement in Barcelona, has marked a way of working with young people so that leisure is transformed into training for the commitment to citizenship values. Despite the religious roots of this movement, the truth is that many associations in the city have shared those same goals. Among the organisations interviewed, we find representative examples of entities that understand art, communication or culture as spaces for political training and active participation, rather than for passive leisure consumption.

The organisations taking part in the sample include the spatial dimension. Beyond the fact of being categorised as neighbourhood-oriented organisations, the truth is that the vast majority of the interviewed entities develop their work with young people on a “proximity” basis. In the sample, we can find representation of two areas of Barcelona where working-class immigration has historically found a place, and where social stigma is more prevalent than ever after recent migration waves. These are the inner city areas called Raval, and the Northern-East area known as Nou Barris. In these two neighbourhoods, spatial segregation is very well represented in terms of racialised communities, high rates of deprivation, and social exclusion. None of the organisations working in these areas could be defined as “assistentialist” (in terms of providing help and support, but with no aim to tackle social injustice at its roots). It is important to stress the high presence of organisations that are ruled by self-managed structures, and that work for the accomplishment of youth empowerment in stigmatised areas. This is specially the case for OS6, OS7, OS9, OS10, OS18 and OS20.

Action Repertoires and Strategies

In the case of Barcelona, the analysed organisations are very different as far as their respective target groups are concerned. This shows us a variety of specific action repertoires and strategies, each one adapted to the specific challenges of working with young people. There are thematic organisations dealing with specific issues, such as gender equality, mental or sexual health, LGBTIQ, ethnic minorities, immigration, arts, community media, entrepreneurial skills, religion, political militancy

or trade unionism. There are also (as stated before) organisations with a strong spatial scope, especially in the cases of the organisations based in deprived areas of the city.

The vast majority of these organisations have a professionalised board. The interesting thing is that several of those initiatives do not put their professionals in the service of a project designed “from above”, but rather apply their expertise in facilitating the participation of young people from the beginning. Many of the action repertoires and strategies are thus oriented to providing tools and knowledge in order to reinforce youth’s capacities and active involvement in self-managed projects. In this sense, technological innovation is seen as a key factor. Rather than considering technology use as a goal, *per se*, the activities include the technological skills as part of a process oriented towards individual and/or collective empowerment. In the next paragraphs, we will focus on some examples.

The case of work with unaccompanied migrants that have attained the age of majority is worthy of mentioning. It is a collective with special needs in terms of action repertoires. Unaccompanied migrants have very hard life stories. They are in permanent transition, and they have to face drastic changes in their legal status by the time they turn eighteen. They have experienced social and institutional rejection on arrival in Spain.⁵¹ These young people are mainly young men (because unaccompanied young women enter the country through other circuits, often linked to sex or other types of labour trafficking). They do not see any need to participate in public life, and often do not want to. Besides, public space appears threatening for them. OS7 puts it this way:

“Our activities must be developed close to them rather than forcing them to go outside. In the street, they don't want to participate because they still have that resentment against the number of times they have been rejected. They find it difficult to leave their comfort zones, which are none other than the spaces where they establish ties with their peers, their friends. In their environment they feel protected, so they can feel confident to engage in a common adventure and to face new challenges”

OS7 trains these young people as filmmakers. For this organisation, it is important to explore the potential of audio-visual and digital tools, as forms to give shape to youth’s own voice. The strategy is to orient the activity to the completion of a short film, but the final goal is to give young unaccompanied migrants the opportunity to include their narratives in the city’s public sphere. In this sense, the films are presented at several festivals of short film that take place in the city annually.

⁵¹ In Spain, unaccompanied minors stop receiving basic assistance when they turn 18. They are forced to leave sheltered housing and to start a new life in a context that does not provide them with sufficient job skills or social acceptance.

Defining art and culture as innovative spaces for collective empowerment and political engagement is in fact something shared by other organisations in the Barcelona sample. This works also for OS1, OS5, OS6, OS7 and OS16. In the case of OS1, for instance, the intervention of the performing arts is aimed at claiming these spaces as spaces for emancipation and protest, and also as spaces for lifelong learning and socialisation in democratic values.

There are other repertoires of action apart from using technological skillmanship or art/cultural performance. These are practices more traditionally linked to youth engagement, such as street events. Activities are mostly designed and organised in assemblies or working groups of the members of the organisations. In the case of SO13, the actions that aggregate a higher number of participants are concerts, festivals and/or camp events. SO3 also organise “festivity” kind of events, giving special importance to music festivals. OS4 is also well known for their annual parade. We can see this very same scheme being reproduced through the students’ organisation, but in this case replacing festivity with violence: mass protests and riots led by young students provoked the chaos in the streets of Barcelona over several days within the framework of the Catalan independence movement. They were very well organised.

In the case of student organisations, street events are seen as a very effective strategy for making themselves “more visible”:

“Our demonstrations, strikes, and performative actions are really heard. The strike about the taxes was heard. And we were taken into consideration” (OS12)

There are other kinds of activities that are chosen by organisations in order to resonate with young people’s motivations. The final goal is not so tightly linked with the idea of making these motivations visible, but it shares the importance of focusing on the process of youth’s appropriation of the organisational space. Here we can find, for instance, the kind of activities oriented towards making people feel part of a project. Concretely, action repertoires fostering voluntary participation are seen as strategically effective:

“The projects that are successful are those where everybody feels involved. The volunteers are mobilised by passion, so it works” (OS13)

General Remarks and Discussion

Historically, Barcelona has been a city that has opened opportunities for participation through social innovation, strong methodology and citizen-oriented protocols. The city Council has been strongly linked to the city’s social movements. Many activists coming from those movements have taken

part in the city's government over several periods of the city's history. Apart from the current Mayor Ada Colau (who was one of the leaders of the anti-eviction movement in Barcelona), several city councillors and technical staff have their origin in the street movements (that was specially the case in the first Council mandate after the dictatorship, at the end of the 70s). The current municipal administration is very attentive to the discourses and the methods of organised civil society.

The definition of "success" or "failure" affecting young people's political participation has been linked (both by stakeholders and organisations) to the economic conditions, but this has different meanings depending on the cultural background and ideology. The public sector and the organisations oriented to boost youth talent following the neoliberal model of the labour market, stress the importance of the individual overcoming hardship and the capacity of resilience in times of crisis.

On the other hand, stakeholders and organisations working with young people facing inequalities, or living in deprived areas, question the neoliberal paradigm under which "success" is defined, and tend to stress the value of orienting youth talent to the construction of a *common* space of emancipation. This emancipation is not only seen as part of the life trajectory, but also as a social means for reaching real equality. This perspective should be put in the context of the expansion of the *commons* movement, which in Barcelona has certainly a broad space of expression since it is defended by the party which is in charge of the local government.

There is a consensual academic and public discourse (among stakeholders) that agrees that youth precarity is natural, and that we have all gone through this stage. On the one hand, the traditional definition of youth has had to broaden in order to include people who are 30 years old. The "young" label is being extended, in some cases, to 35 years old. On the other hand, youth cannot reach the status of citizens with a full capacity for political participation until they turn eighteen.

Therefore, the concept of youth has no analytic utility as some experts flatly affirm. Following the stakeholders point of view, it is quite comfortable to see deprivation as a simple transitory problem that will get solved during the transition from youth to adulthood (with the understanding that adulthood carries a better position in society and on the labour market, almost spontaneously). Some experts question the fact that social inequalities concerning young people should be considered as a simple demographic factor (a question of age). Therefore, data retrieved from the case study of Barcelona suggests that inequalities among young people are not exclusive due to the age factor, but they are mainly rooted in social class (understanding social class in its current diverse

ramifications). Thus, instead of talking about life transitions, we should be talking here about “descending social mobility through the generational prism” (Miret, 2008).⁵²

There is an interesting and quite common insight coming from the interviews, which acknowledges that the Administration does invest efforts in providing opportunities for youth. But there is the perception that those opportunities do not benefit all young people equally. The current situation described is that of education, job and housing opportunities being more accessible to upper middle-class young people, so unprivileged classes cannot really benefit from them. This does not mean that political participation is directly determined by economic conditions. On the contrary, many organisations work in order to break this deterministic statement.

The stakeholders and organisations that participated in this study were a sample of the kind of work that is being developed in relation to this complex definition of youth. It is within this framework that we should shed light on how inequalities limit the political participation of young people in Barcelona.

The main findings of our analysis are summarised in the following points:

- Good proportion of public facilities managed by the city council (for instance, Points of Information), or owned by the city council and managed by the youth communities (for instance, the “Ateneos”)
- Good proportion of organisations that are youth led and self-managed (decision making structure: democratic assembly)
- Many young people have responsibilities in the organisations
- Organisations emphasise civic, democratic training. It is not about leisure education, but democratic education, neighbourhood awareness, class, and so forth
- Entrepreneurial organisations are more likely to promote liberalism than neoliberal capitalism. Neoliberal capitalism is not hegemonic among young people. Rather, they construct their own version of personal success. There is healthy debate on opportunities based on individual empowerment

⁵² Miret, P. (2008). “La paradoxa de l’educació a Catalunya: entre el fracàs escolar i la sobrequalificació?” dins *Nous Horitzons*, 47 (189), p. 6-19

- Youth branches relating to formal political organisations (political parties, Unions, and so forth) are less likely to engage young people in decision making, programme design or policy making
- There is great emphasis, both from stakeholders and organisations, on topics relating to feminism, migration, minorities
- Feminism works as a mobilisation engine
- Criminalisation of the young people participating in street protests. Ensuing court cases
- Youth organisations led by young people are very relevant and always have in mind the training of new young members
- Compared to the German report, we have organisations whose members and volunteers are young people themselves. They are not worried about the low impact of the activities because they propose and organise them, so they fit with their own concerns and interests
- Young people has to face very commercialised forms of leisure, often nocturnal with easy access to addiction
- In Barcelona, more economic opportunities are destroyed than are generated. Opportunities affect the middle-class youth upwards. The destruction of opportunities affects the lower middle-class youth
- There are few opportunities regarding housing, culture and education
- Young people in Barcelona have a good perception of the importance of managing their own ways of expression. There are several initiatives around community media
- Young people have more opportunities in terms of work and political participation (but only the upper-middle class can benefit from them)
- The City Council leads innovation with technology use (digital participation platforms)
- Public administration failure consists of neither recognising informal spaces for youth political participation, nor listening to young people's concerns and interests

8. Sweden

Report by: Katrin Uba

Introduction and Urban Context

Stockholm is the capital of Sweden and the biggest city in Stockholm County (*Stockholms län*), the region where we interviewed people from youth-led and youth-oriented organisations, as well as stakeholders. With a population of 2.3 million, Stockholm County is the largest region in Sweden and accounts for approximately one fifth of the total Swedish population of 10 million (2017, SCB). The average age of the people living in the region is 39.2 years (40 for women, 38.3 for men; See Figure 1 for distribution of age groups). The region is composed of 26 municipalities, including the city of Stockholm. The region's population is increasing due to urbanisation, immigration, and a rising birth rate. Adolescents and the elderly are the two dominant age cohorts.⁵³ The population growth in Stockholm County make up about one third of the country's total population growth. The region is considered to be one of the most attractive metropolitan regions in Europe, alongside cities like Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, and Dublin.⁵⁴ About 33 percent of the people in the region were either born abroad or have two parents born outside Sweden. However, only 11 percent of the people living in the region are not Swedish citizens (SCB, 2017). There are about 100,000 foreign citizens aged 15-34, the majority of whom come from other Nordic countries, while the others are native to other EU countries, the former Yugoslavia, Asia (Iraq, Syria), Africa (Somalia) and South America (Chile) (Ibid). In terms of socio-economic composition, 72 percent of all the people between 15-74 in Stockholm County work, 4.2 percent are unemployed, and the rest are not in the labour force (e.g. students, retired people).⁵⁵ Among young people in Stockholm, the unemployment rate in 2019 was somewhat higher, 6.5 percent, but it also had the lowest rate, countrywide.⁵⁶ There are three large public universities in Stockholm, and in addition to that more than a dozen university colleges and other institutes of higher education. In 2017, Stockholm hosted approximately 91,000 students.

⁵³ <https://www.sll.se/verksamhet/Regional-utveckling/Nyheter/2018/11/lanets-befolkning-okar-med-en-miljon-till-2060/>, latest accessed 26/12/2019.

⁵⁴ "Läget i Stockholmsregionen 2016- uppföljningen av RUFSS 2010", accessible at <https://www.sll.se/globalassets/4.-regional-utveckling/uppfoljning/rufs-arsuppfoljning-2016.pdf>, latest accessed 26/12/2019.

⁵⁵ <http://statistik.stockholm.se/images/stories/excel/b214.htm>, latest accessed 26/12/2019.

⁵⁶ <https://arbetsformedlingen.se/om-oss/press/pressmeddelanden?id=DEE78152817EC605>, latest accessed 26/12/2019.

In the analysis of youth activism, we have opted to focus on the municipality and not only the city of Stockholm, because it has the necessary diversity in terms of socio-economic development (different parts of the city are very diverse), and there are also sufficient numbers of youth-led and youth-oriented civil society organisations active in the area.

Socio-political Issues

The city of Stockholm is currently, post the September 2018 elections, run by a centre-right coalition government of five political parties: Moderates, Liberals, the Green Party, the Centre Party and the Christian Democrats. The opposition is formed of Social Democrats, the Left Party, the Swedish Democrats and the Feminist Initiative. The municipal “parliament” has 101 members; while retired people in the municipality have their own special committee (pensionärsråd), there is no such committee geared towards youth issues. The most recent youth-related discussions in the municipality related to youth crime and prevention/elimination strategies (under preparation since December 2019), honour violence, seen as a problem by many political parties, in addition to the climate crisis and protests, calling on the municipality to address the climate emergency. Since August 2018, hundreds of school climate strikes have been held in Stockholm, including four global demonstrations in March, May, September and November of 2019.

Sample

The following analysis of youth activism and the issues important for young people in Stockholm is based on 20 qualitative interviews with the representatives of different youth organisations and 11 interviews with different stakeholders. Among the twenty organisations, there were 16 non-profit organisations, two youth branches of political parties, and one youth branch of a trade union; all but one stakeholder represents the public sector. Four stakeholders represented national government institutions, two came from local government, one from educational, one from cultural, one from housing and one from a medical institution. This combination of respondents was the result of a purposive sampling which sought to encompass maximum variability in terms of sector, level of structuration, background, and so on.

Our focus organisations were youth-led or focused mainly on activities important to young people. Even though some of the organisations did not see themselves as simply “youth organisations”, they had specific youth branches or activities directed specifically at young people. Twenty organisations active in the Stockholm region could be related to the total number of youth organisations (106) which received Swedish state-funding in 2015. (Olsson 2015).

Interviews with Stakeholders

The city's opportunities and constraints

The analysis in this section is based on the comments of the stakeholders who have youth as a target audience of their work, beneficiaries or clients. Their comments around the general opportunity structure for youth participation in Stockholm could be divided into three parts. **First**, there is a consensus among stakeholders that *youth from well-off families and affluent neighbourhoods have better opportunities to participate in youth-oriented activities than youngsters from socioeconomically less-advantaged areas*. Hence, socioeconomic inequality is seen to impact young Stockholmers' welfare and social and political participation to a degree. These opportunity structures are in the form of spatial (different suburbs) differences, as well as being related to parents' experience and knowledge of civil society and/or their financial situation. Stakeholders believe that these socioeconomic differences also have implications for graduating high-school students, drug and alcohol use (and abuse), and mental health support. This is not surprising since Stockholm has been framed by stakeholders as a segregated city, with the socio-economically advantaged neighbourhoods located in central Stockholm and a couple of suburban municipalities, and the socio-economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods, the vast majority, on the outskirts. Citizens must commute (by public transport or car) to the city centre to access many of the social, political and cultural activities. In this context, SSWE1 mentions the high cost of public transportation, which offers some price concessions for school children (up to age 20) and university students only. Indeed, according to the SL – the public transportation enterprise in Stockholm, young people at school (until age 20) or university cannot use public transport for free, although they can do it for a reduced price; young people who are not studying and are over 20 have no reduced price. Hence, the system is exclusionary towards young people (20+) who do not attend tertiary education and who are or whose parents are economically disadvantaged. The effect of socio-economic inequality also applies to education, as many people from a lower socio-economic status also have an overrepresentation of children not finishing high-school (SSWE5). A respondent in the education branch of the local government, SSWE3 points to a marked variation in the quality between schools in the city centre and the suburbs, which in general leads to significant gaps in opportunities available to young people. The problem of schools, according to the representative of a public high-school in the city (SSWE9), could be related to the national reform of the 1990s. This so-called “municipalisation” (de-centralisation) of the Swedish school system created a situation where the funding of schools is administrated at the municipal level, rather than the state level, and poorer municipalities and parts of the city face more problems alongside a fall in graduation rates. Some,

for example a representative from the police in Stockholm (SSWE2), called school the most important factor for a young person's future; if one fails at school, there is a greater tendency to get involved in drugs and to end up in the criminal justice system.

The socio-economic inequality is also seen as a determinant for varying participation in sport and health-related activities. According to a representative from local government, which is responsible for administering sports-related activities in Stockholm, within wealthier areas, both boys and girls do sports at a relatively higher level, but in poorer areas, there is a decline in the continuation rates with such activities (SSWE7). This drop-off is far steeper for girls, and the divide is even greater between boys and girls with a foreign background. Although stakeholders mainly focus on socio-economic differences, they also mention gender (in)equality in the context of dropping out of school (boys rather than girls), or in relation to the construction of a pro-youth infrastructure (for instance, the construction of skateboard parks with the assumption that they will be used predominantly by males).

Second, many stakeholders note that *young people generally are not heard by adults and state/local authorities*. This might seem paradoxical, as there are many formal opportunities for young people to influence political processes, for example, there is a clear focus on youth participation and inclusion in the national policy for young people aged 13 to 25 (Prop. 2013/14:191). Additionally, a recent report about youth involvement in local politics in Sweden published by The Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (MUCF) and the regional agency (SKL) shows that seven out of ten municipalities or regions work specifically with youth issues (Fokus, 19:2019). Almost every other municipality or region has one or a few specific forums including youth into policy-making processes, and they also evaluate their work with the help of various surveys. However, according to their information, 40 percent of the representatives from the municipalities and regions in Sweden do not know whether youth involvement actually has any impact on policy processes; 18 percent say that there was no effect in 2019, while in 2015, this number was 33 percent (Ibid. p.21). If young people have had any influence on decision-making, it is related to the issues of culture, free time and youth activities. Therefore, it is not so surprising that when we asked our respondents to comment on whether young people are taken seriously by other public institutions, a representative of a public cultural institution said:

“I don't think so; it's almost like a buzzword, there is no substance. Often there are short-term projects or very specific projects following a political agenda, [like] now we're doing projects, so young people can share how it is to live in the suburbs” (SSWE6)

The issue of inclusion also resonates with the thoughts of a representative from a government agency (SSWE1) responsible for youth political participation and civil society, who said that young people often have a variety of political opinions and are actually very engaged in social issues. They just feel that they are not listened to, which leads to low levels of participation. This non-responsiveness could be related to the lack of focus on youth issues in politics in general. Many stakeholders mention that the political debate about youth issues is non-existent, and that there is a need for public debate about organised life in Sweden. These comments suggest that the recent policy initiatives and investigations about the possibility of increasing youth involvement (Prop. 2013/14:191) have not paid dividend yet.

Stakeholders note that the state and municipal authorities do recognise the problem of youth inclusion and (in)visibility, and acknowledge that there have been institutionalised attempts to provide more opportunities for youth participation. For example, there are many municipalities which have youth councils (SSWE4), libraries are actively working with and for young people (SSWE6) and in Stockholm, there was even a specific council for youth issues at police (SSWE2). Still, this council was mostly comprised of young people from rather well-off backgrounds, and the councils did not continue for long. The interviewed police representative noted: “Would a local politician in Nacka (context: rich municipality) listen to a young person from Fisksåtra (relatively poor neighbourhood in the municipality)? I can only see that happening if it is some type of PR stunt for a politician” (SSWE2). The best option for including youth perspectives is to go to visit schools and to use “locally” stationed police officers. Another stakeholder noted that it is a pity that “youth unemployment”, which was an important issue at the time of economic crisis (2009-2010), has lost its priority status (SSWE5). The interviews suggest that it is not for a lack of institutional initiatives for young people that the main problem exists in Stockholm, but rather because of the fact that these initiatives are often short-term projects, and young people are not taken seriously. Only a few stakeholders referred to the responsibility of the young people themselves:

“Long-sightedness and long-term engagement are often important to make change happen, but young people do not always have that” (SSWE3)

SSWE3 adds that young adults move frequently and this might make it difficult to maintain a high social engagement in some neighbourhoods. This frequency of movement might be partly related to the problems of housing in Stockholm – there is no special help for youngsters with finding an apartment to rent or buy (SSWE8). Still, SSWE3 relates the lacking long-term engagement of young people to their life-cycle – being young also means that there is more flexibility and/or will to change things.

One way to improve youth inclusion in politics, according to several stakeholders, is investment in digital technology. Their institutions or organisations invest in digital infrastructure to support young people; making healthcare (for mental illness) services more readily available, developing apps to reach politicians, establishing a social media presence, holding webinars on job seeking, to name but a few. Some respondents (e.g., SSWE9) also noted that contemporary young people spend too much time on social media, which contributes to a heightened risk of addiction. Although digitally-organised youth might have harder time influencing politicians because of their lack of off-line organizing experiences (SSWE4), technology is still seen as a way to increase young people's interest in society and politics.

The **third** main theme raised by several stakeholders is the *importance of school*. School is compulsory up to the age of 16, and since the 1990s' reforms, education has been controlled by the municipalities. Attendance at school is free (there are also free school-lunches), yet less than two percent of children graduate (SOU 2019:40). The problems of school-related inequality are often related to the quality of schools inside and between municipalities (for example, the suburbs and the centre of Stockholm). School is seen as an important channel for fostering citizenship or teaching young people the skills necessary for societal and political activism, and therefore the inequalities related to the varying quality of teachers and education, directly connected to social and ethnic segregation, is an important national problem (Ibid.). School provides a structure for participatory opportunities such as student councils and committees, which can work as an introduction to voluntary and civil society participation. School also affects future possibilities for social and political participation. According to one stakeholder who represents a private psychiatric clinic in the city, mental illness is also more common among youngsters who have dropped out of school (SSWE10). On the other hand, there are also concerns regarding the issues taught at school – the focus is maybe too abstract and mainly relates to the national level of politics. In the words of one respondent:

When young people are taught about democracy (which is a significant goal of the school), they are almost never taught about ways it can actually affect their current lives, which is almost exclusively at the *municipal* level. (SSWE2)

To conclude, the general attitude among stakeholders is rather critical towards opportunities for young people, despite the numerous political initiatives at the national or local levels. The critique refers to the lack of inclusiveness and trust, as well as the related inequalities, so it is clear that the interviewed stakeholders speak on behalf of young people. Some of the aforementioned problems might be related to how the needs of young people are perceived by public officials. A representative

from a government authority argued that young people are seen by authorities as persons who need to be moulded into responsible members of society, and not as individuals with valid concerns, rights and opinions (SSWE1). SSWE1 also talks about negative special treatment and collective punishment of youth: communication opportunities between authorities and youngsters often open up after something breaks, for example, a ping pong table at a youth club. The stakeholder notes that such relations are very different from the usual relations in a professional work environment, and this discourages young people from speaking up on their issues. Similarly, a representative from a public institution for youth culture (SSWE6) said that other public institutions sometimes ask them to “send them some young people” - not understanding that the institutions which provide space for young people do not “own” them.

Thus, one could say that young people in Stockholm are hindered from participating due to socio-economic inequalities, also reflected in their ability to be seen in politics, as well as their ability to be heard by the authorities. The stakeholders’ interviews indicate that the serious issues for youth – such as schooling, housing, and attention to their opportunities to be heard, are not sufficiently dealt with by the Swedish state and local authorities. The picture is similar to the one provided by the studies focusing on the perceived opportunities for influencing political thinking among young people themselves (Fokus, 19:2019), allowing us to expect that similar issues will be raised by the representatives of the youth organisations.

Organisational Interviews

The 20 organisations in this sample form a representative picture of youth organisations in Stockholm, including organisations working with different minority groups, political, cultural or student organisations, as well as volunteering organisations. More specifically, there are three integration related organisations, two youth branches of political parties, one trade union branch for young people, two religious organisations, two recreation-related (culture and sport) groups, three gender issues or sexual minorities focused organisations, and organisations focusing on issues such as voluntary work, youth entrepreneurship, peace and the environment. Some of the organisations are well established (up to 100 years old), while others are relatively new (the youngest was set up in 2017). One of the organisations is an umbrella one for smaller youth-organisations in the city. All organisations included in the analysis are youth-led and youth-oriented, though it is important to note that “youth” for these organisations means a rather diverse group, from teens to people in their 30s. Young people are both targeted audiences, as well as the volunteers, employed staff, as well as the leaders of many of the organisations. All respondents were active in their respective organisations, knew them very well, and half of the respondents held leadership positions. It is also

important to note that all organisations have a democratic structure in terms of internal decision-making: members have the opportunity to vote for the leadership, there are electoral committees which propose the candidates, and the leading committee elects the leadership. This is not only true for youth branches of political parties or old organisations, but also for Swedish civil society organisations. Almost half of the respondents mentioned internal elections for leadership positions. It is noteworthy that financial support for civil society organisations in Sweden is democratic in structure (SOU 2019:35).

Experience Working with Youth

Among the examined organisations, young people are mainly targeted group members or participants or employed in the organisation, and to a small extent also volunteers and active in leadership positions. While in general there is a mixture of young people among targeted audiences, as well as volunteers or employed staff, only four organisations see young people more as a beneficiary than members. The targets' age varies, but is usually up to 30 years old, and there are diverse groups such as ethnic and sexual minorities, as well as young people with specific religious, political and cultural interests. All organisations work with young people, though almost half of them target people over 30, and offer activities geared to them. When discussing the differences between the older and younger people as targets or participants, it is noted that young people find more time for volunteering. Still, two representatives (SWE5, SWE6) note that over time, interest in volunteering wanes among young people due to different societal pressures (for instance, doing well at school, finding a job). While some organisations emphasise that they try to be very open, inclusive and welcoming of youth from different backgrounds, representatives also note, in contrast to the often-emphasised issue of youth apathy, that young people are active and interested in societal and political affairs (SWE3, SWE12, SWE19). Even though the interviewed representatives often meet the (potentially) most active young people, the current climate change related mobilisation in the frame of the Fridays for Future movement in Stockholm and countrywide suggests that youth today might be more active than a decade ago. On the other hand, it should be noted that our interviews were mainly done in the context of emerging youth climate activism (initiated by Greta Thunberg) and many respondents referred to this as something positive for young people in general. There were, of course, some more critical notes; for example, a representative with a great deal of experience working with young volunteers suggested that the often-noted discrepancy between the high interest and low level of actual volunteering among young people might be related to the rigidity, or bureaucratic character, of Swedish civil society organisations (SWE18).

Repertoires and Strategies of Action

One could divide the dominant repertoires and strategies of working with youngsters from the examined civil society organisations into four main groups - educational, social, political, and direct-action related. Although the use of digital media was probably not the major innovation in 2019, the representatives mainly focused on digitalisation when asked about innovative strategies. All organisations in the sample use digital media to some extent – mainly for the exchange of information with the members and targeted audience, and the majority also opt for the various social media channels (Facebook, Instagram). Some also use digital platforms in their mobilisation (e.g., digital petition) and everyday work (for example, a digital platform for meetings between politicians and young people, the so -“digital valstuga”, live-streamed major events via the Internet or specific chat-rooms or web/phone applications (apps) for providing direct aid). This more direct use of digital tools could be labelled as major innovations of the examined youth organisations. A few of them emphasised the need to use and offer digitally-based services even more in the future, and only one organisation clearly emphasised that they actually prefer to focus on face-to-face meetings (SWE5). Importantly, digital means were used for facilitating all kinds of mobilising strategies and action repertoires, and in the case of SWE14, the organisation functions almost exclusively via on-line means of participation. Returning to the repertoires: first, there are diverse set of **educational** activities such as workshops for young people at school, as well as workshops for youth organisations themselves (such as, projects on how to write applications for funding, or how to run a social media campaign). A few organisations also educate volunteers. In general, educational activities could range from seminars for the members of a football team on how to talk in the locker room, to how to write a CV. Religious organisations also have some educational practices for identity building and discussing what it means to be religious in a secular society such as Sweden.

Second, almost all organisations have some **social activities** where young people from different backgrounds can meet, chat, have diverse conversations over coffee (“fika” in Swedish) or pizza, do various sporting activities together (skiing, playing football, swimming, electronic sports) and also train their social skills (e.g., friendship matching skills) or second language (L2) practice (Swedish). Many activities not only target young people in general, but also newly-arrived asylum seekers, but there are also specific activities for religious minorities, girls-only or sexual minorities. Often, the social activities are combined with the educational and political activities.

The third type of strategy used by the organisations in the sample focuses on **politics** and the inclusion of young people in the **public sphere**– discussing political affairs, raising awareness of youth related issues in the public, aiming to influence political processes, and working with the so-

called “positive integration” in terms of increasing the number of young migrants visible in media debates (six organisations). While young people are used to talking via social media, organisations also focus on traditional media, and help young people to raise their issues via more “traditional” agendas. While some note that access to politicians in Stockholm is relatively easy (SWE19), others note that these strategies are not always very successful: “They [young people] do not feel like they are taken seriously by their politicians” (SWE20), especially newly-arrived migrants, who have problems with inclusion (SWE1). A representative of one of the political youth organisations also notes that schools are not very open to campaigning for youth branches of political parties at schools, and this hinders the youngsters’ political activism.

Fourth, only a few organisations in our sample work with **direct aid** of young people in the form of breakfasts for socioeconomically disadvantaged children and young people, helping them to do homework, and providing chat service (stand-by friend) where people can call and talk to personnel of the same age, anonymously. Only two organisations focus directly or indirectly on entrepreneurship, and two more on employment issues and helping young people to find a job. Some organisations are involved in organising larger social events that not only target youth issues, but the population at large (for instance, Pride parade).

In summary, one could easily note that the *majority of the repertoires of examined youth organisations are related to social activities* rather than political ones; the last was only important for the organisations related to political parties, trade unions and two pro-integration organisations. One third of the organisations mentioned strategies targeting migrants, especially newly-arrived young people without families: another third – mainly feminist, gender equality or LGTB+ organisations - emphasised that the gender question is an important part of their work with and for young people. Still, the majority of the organisations use similar kinds of educational, social and direct-aid strategies – only the targeted groups – newly arrived migrants, sexual minorities, women, youth in precarious situations, which varies according to the organisation’s main focus.

Perceptions of Youth Inclusion and Opportunities for Participation

There is some divergence in perceptions about youth political engagements among our respondents. Some note that young people are visible (SWE6, SWE9, SWE11, SWE17), youth political engagement is seen as a “cool” and brave thing to do (SWE3), referring also to the positive reaction to the mobilisation of school strikes for climate by Greta Thunberg (SWE3, SWE5, SWE7, SWE9). As SWE5 said: “For a long time, there was little interest in youth engagement in environmental issues, but now, thanks to school-strikes, it is changing.” In general, however, authorities are seen as being supportive of youth organisations and are perceived as being inclusive of youth in decision-

making processes in Stockholm (SWE3, SWE6), but others stated that youth with minority (ethnic, religious) backgrounds are not listened to as much, or that the resources/funds have been decreased (SWE5). The last point resonates more with the views of stakeholders discussed above.

Others reflect that society expects much more youth participation and that young people do not seem so visible in the media (SWE4), especially young religious people (SWE16). One stakeholder even said: "Youth issues in Stockholm are hardly talked about at all" (SWE10). Respondents note that media attention to youth issues is there when something negative happens (SWE18), and usually focuses on issues such as school, education, youth unemployment and youth crime rates (SWE5). This is particularly true for young people from the outskirts of Stockholm, and young people with immigrant backgrounds (SWE19, SWE20). The perspective is often given through the eyes of adults rather than youngsters themselves (SWE8). This reflects the findings of the recent media analysis by Uba and Stendahl (2019), which shows that young people are often described in the media from a negative angle, referring to the "moral panic". The lack of attention in the regular media is, however, compensated for by the significant presence of youth on social media (SWE8, SWE9, SWE18).

Of particular concern is the lack of political interest in issues of how young people spend their free time and the impact of youth on politics is considered by several of the respondents to be rather small. In theory and in words politicians and even the adult-based organisations use, "Youth are welcome", but in practice their participation is hindered by statements: "It is not a good time to come now" (SWE16). Similarly, in relation to climate activism, one respondent emphasises that activism does not get the necessary response (SWE4), or that there is too much focus on individuals rather than the youth movements in general (SWE7). There is low public awareness of activities of youth organisations, especially lesser-established ones such as the youth branches of political parties (SWE15).

Many respondents list specific **challenges** for young people in Stockholm in general, as well as challenges for increased political inclusion and participation. First, with respect to the challenges for young people, according to the organisations, there are a few key issues: *mental health* - pressure to achieve different things in society, and loneliness (SWE1, SWE4, SWE8), the lack of jobs and *racial/religious discrimination* in the job market (SWE5), *the lack of affordable housing* (SWE3), the lack of being *taken seriously* as worthy members of society (SWE6), and the lack of knowledge of how Swedish society functions and opportunities to meet the "native" Swedish youth (in the case of newly-arrived migrants). For example, in relation to the negative consequences of societal pressure, SWE2 notes that young people's participation in sport decreases only partly due to the

lack of resources, the main reason being the pressure to become elite players and the overfocus on competition. *Inequality* in terms of parental educational attainment, or prior experience in voluntary activities, is also seen as a strong predictor for youth involvement in volunteering (SWE17). Gender inequality is emphasised not only in relation to the lack of young women among the leadership positions of youth organisations (SWE15), but also the tendency of migrant girls to face difficulties integrating into society (SWE1). Interestingly, the representatives of political organisations, of ideology, note that youth is challenged by attitudes, such as: “You are very good, despite being young” or that young people in general are not taken seriously enough.

The representatives also perceive that there is increased dependency on social media and technology among young people, which in turn decreases the commitment to off-line activities and makes the organising work of older organisations more difficult (SWE5). Even though youth engagement is not hindered by a lack of time to the same degree as it is among older people, their activism is much more unpredictable due to precariat situations (uncertain jobs, irregular working hours) (SWE9). Although stakeholders did not mention the exact same problems, their focus on instability and stress among young people (SSWE1), is partly related to these issues.

Resources, funding and cooperation with other organisations

The lack of resources is seen as a hindrance to organising youth by many respondents, though there is no clear trend in the type or character of organisation commenting on that – except that this is not taken up by the political organisations. The explanations for lack of resources vary a little, with some suggesting that it is so because the local and national financing schemes are supportive of activities that are more typical in the non-youth organisations (SWE10), others note that the general funding of youth organisations by public institutions has decreased (SWE18), especially in times of economic difficulties in the municipalities (SWE5). One organisation (SWE13) has solved the lack of funding issue by engaging both young and old people, and using the know-how of the older ones to find and apply for funding. Such use of existing skills is seen as very beneficial for the organisation. Others have combined public funding with donations (SWE5), but many representatives argue that the general focus on project-based funding is not sustainable (SWE14, SWE15, SWE17). They also do not see any improvement in this respect.

The Swedish civil society organisations often get funding from public coffers – state, municipality or larger civil society organisations. For youth organisations, there is an institution called the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (MUCF), but the way it provides funding is heavily criticised by several of the respondents. It is said that the MUCF base their funding on the number of members and physical meetings, not taking into account the importance of technological

innovations for youth organisations (SWE10). Many youth organisations also note that they provide various services (lectures, workshops) for municipal, regional or state institutions. Due to the recent increase in the number of newly-arrived young refugees (2015), many youth organisations have related their activities to this particular group (treating them merely as beneficiaries or involving them as participants).

Many of the youth organisations in our sample closely cooperate with their “mother” organisations, to increase funding opportunities (youth branches of political parties mainly get support from the party), to help organise larger events, and reciprocal learning. The majority of organisations have strong collaborative ties with the municipality (Stockholm), municipal institutions (e.g. libraries) and state institutions (for example, the department of culture). According to interviews, this has always been the case, though some youth organisations have been given an important role in service delivery for newly- arrived migrants since 2015. This cooperation means both funding, as well as opportunities to hold workshops and lectures for municipal and/or state employees, and to cooperate within the framework of various direct aid organisations or educational projects.

In cases where the organisation does not receive state or municipal funds for some years, financial support is gathered from other larger civil-society organisations with similar interests and/or private donors. Collaboration with different enterprises is less frequent, but it is the case mainly for organisations that receive support from various enterprises for their direct services (for example, food for breakfasts, clothes distribution, and so on). While some organisations report extensive cooperation with respect to direct aid (SWE9), others argue that organisations in the same field should cooperate even more:

“It is a shame that we don't work more closely with other organisations that are doing roughly the same volunteering work [as we do]; this would increase impact and decrease overlap.”
(SWE4)

Otherwise, the respondents note that collaboration with other, often larger organisations for organising social and educational events is very frequent. This cooperation occurs fairly regularly, and is often based on specific projects.

General Remarks and Discussion

While the general picture of the spread of youth-directed activities and the number of youth organisations in Sweden in general, and in Stockholm in particular is positive among our examined twenty youth-led or youth focused civil society organisations, there are also some negative aspects.

These are summarised in the following quote:

There is a view among [politicians/older people] that young people are passive; or not as politically interested. There is a need to include a youth-perspective in all kinds of issues. It isn't discussed enough among public authorities, and the consequences are cuts in funding. (SWE18)

This resonates with the dominant view from the stakeholder interviews, as well – although young people in Stockholm are said to have opportunities for participation, the real attitude towards youth and especially young people from less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds is not very inclusive. While the youth organisations – regardless of their character of focusing only on young people or having youth as one of their major targets did not significantly differ from each other in problem or strategy descriptions, the organisations working with vulnerable youth (ethnic, sexual minorities, asylum seekers) were more critical of the lack of youth opportunities for participation and did not perceive that youth are listened to much in Stockholm (or at the national level). The interviewed stakeholders were even more critical of the authorities' attitude towards youth, but it is also likely that they meant the limited opportunities for underprivileged young people, which refers clearly to existing inequalities for participation and inclusion. The interviews demonstrate that (ethnic and socio-economic) segregation, the varying quality of schools, the stress-related mental instability, and non-welcoming attitude among some adults in public authorities might be major hindrances to youth participation in society and politics.

On the other hand, both stakeholders and representatives of youth organisations also see the improvement and are hopeful that future improvements are soon pending. The fact that youth is considered interested in politics is not only reflected by recent events of school-strikes for climate in Stockholm, but also by the educative work at schools, seen as positive both by activists and perceived to be positive from the perspectives of both authorities and young people participating in these activities.

The general level of youth engagement is seen as high by stakeholders, as well as by the representatives of organisations, despite the fact that school stress, or societal pressures to focus on future jobs might have decreased youngsters' engagement in political organisations and volunteering. Combining the social activities with other – educational or direct-action related activities, seems to be one way to keep youth engaged. The other innovation is the focus on digital tools, although it seems that stakeholders emphasised this even more than organisations which had actually already started to use various social media or other digital applications. Hence, it seems that

future technological innovation in terms of youth engagement should probably come more from the side of public authorities than organisations already utilising digital tools.

Finally, the major challenge that was mentioned by the stakeholders and even more by the representatives of the youth organisations was the issue of respecting and listening to youngsters as young citizens - not just asking them about their opinions on school, education, youth crime and youth unemployment, but also on current issues such as the environment, politics and elections, inequality and/or integration. On the whole, our interviews show that youth organisations in Stockholm work with many diverse issues and probably have knowhow and ideas for solving many problems, not specifically related to young people, but relevant for society at large. The fact that many interviewed stakeholders also recognise the problem of youth inclusion in politics raises expectations that some changes in relation to youth politics in Sweden may take place in the near future.

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9. Switzerland

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Introduction and Urban Context

Political Context

Since the late 2010s, childhood and youth policy have been in a far-reaching development phase in Switzerland, and especially in the Canton of Geneva. On the one hand, due to the Civil Code (CC) revisions enacted in 2013, which re-organised cooperation and institutions, connecting specialised cantonal services, social services and family services to increase relevance and benefit childhood and youth issues. On the other hand, the Federal Law on Encouraging Extracurricular Activities for Children and Young People entered into force in 2013, encouraging the development of children and youth policy at lower administrative levels. These policy frameworks have enhanced policy-making opportunities for cantons to create their own strategic and legislative tools (CDAS 2016; CFEJ 2019).

With respect to the features of the Swiss policy of childhood and youth policy framework:

- First, it is deeply enrooted in the executive federalism tradition, through which the law implementation and development take place at the cantonal level and lower administrative levels due to the principle of subsidiarity. In this sense, cantonal and local political traditions influence the development and implementation of the law at each political- administrative level (Giraud et al. 2007).
- Second, the policy domain benefits from a very rich network of actors; it is marked by cooperation between the Confederation, the cantons, the municipalities, civil society organisations and private initiatives.
- Third, the policy domain could be considered a low-profile domain as developed by Duyvendak and Giugni (1995), allowing much more manoeuvrability for local stakeholders and organisational structures.
- Fourth, the policy changes are a first response to the structural changes young people are facing today, with respect to technological development, massive communication systems and increased employment insecurity (Sécurité sociale CHSS 5/2008).

Within this political context, the canton-city of Geneva has recently developed and implemented legal and institutional structures to address childhood and youth needs on three particular aspects: protection of children and young people and encouragement of the latter to participate in political life, and the development/promotion of youth initiatives and youth-led civil society organisations. Currently, the canton-city of Geneva has a new legal framework for childhood and youth, which entered into force in 2018 (modified last in 05.2019, in order to introduce a consultative youth council). The canton's main actor on youth issues is the Department of Public Education, Training and Youth (DIP), with a specialised youth service. Another important actor is the Foundation for Socio-Cultural Activities (FASc): a parastatal organ in charge of youth extracurricular activities and of managing the Canton's community centres. Additionally, other social departments also have side-programmes for young adults and families. At the local level, the city of Geneva has created a youth service to support collective projects in neighbourhoods, with a focus on integration, dialogue and exchange with young people.

Canton-city of Geneva Context

The Canton of Geneva is considered a *canton-city* due to its high densification combined with an extended socio-economic region, which surpasses the canton's green belt (agriculture zone). Accordingly, the canton-city of Geneva is the central core of the Grand Genève, which extends beyond the city agglomeration and international frontiers with a highly densified inner corona. The canton benefits from an international profile also represented in its population distribution of 493,706 people from which at least 41% are from a migratory background. With respect to our target population, the young people, it is almost self-evident to consider that this group is also strongly characterised by the city's international profile. The young population (14-34 years old) represents approximately 26% of the canton's population, besides young people aged (18 to 34 years old) correspond to the 21% of the cantonal population. The Canton's residents with a migratory background are strongly represented in infant, young and working cohorts, and in some cases with equal proportions of immigrant and Swiss populations, particularly relevant for young working cohorts (24-39). Currently, the canton's rate of dependency for infant and young people under 20 years old corresponds to at least three young individuals over 10 individuals of active working age. That being said, starting from this year (2020), various demographic scenarios will sustain a future proportion reduction in the 20-29 years old group and an increase in the 30-39 years old group. In each of the scenarios, the importance of the young groups' impact on the active population is dependant on the decrease or increase of the canton's net migration rate (OCSTAT 2016). With respect to youth unemployment, rates in Switzerland have increased since 1991 from 3.2 % to 6.2%

in 2019. More specifically, the young unemployment rates in the Canton of Geneva are very similar to the Swiss average (6.6%) in 2019⁵⁷, which is low with respect to the EU mean.

Socio-political Issues

For a long time, the canton-city of Geneva has been considered a politically, socially and culturally progressive canton. Since the 2000s, cultural practices have been a salient issue at the Canton and City and municipality levels; squats once seen as the alternative cultural sites for young people started to be dismantled. This battle was strongly symbolised with the closure of the places Rhino and Artamis (2007-2008), once considered the last bastions of the city's self-managed alternative cultural spaces. Cultural issues have strongly mobilised the canton's young population through non-conventional forms of political participation. At that time, Geneva offered very few institutional spaces for young people to participate in politics. By the years 2012-2013, several young people structured themselves into a "Youth Parliament", a structure present in several cities and cantons of Switzerland. Under the form of a civil society organisation promoting youth political participation, it quickly became the privileged interlocutor for cantonal authorities on issues regarding youth. Nowadays, young people living in the Canton-city of Geneva benefit from several forms of expression, thanks to institutional and non-institutional channels for their claims making. Additionally, in May 2019, a "youth council" was created by cantonal authorities, which serves as a formal consultative organ on youth issues at the cantonal parliament and government. The City of Geneva is particularly interesting to our study: First, it has a specific department for youth issues with 20 years of operational history, developing several programmes and venues for youth participation. Second, Geneva being a Canton-city, benefits from a very dense network of organisations and practices for young people to engage in organisational politics.

Sample

Following the previous description of the Swiss childhood and policy domain, our sample frame covers various organisational and institutional actors. We conducted in depth interviews with 20 youth-led and/or youth-targeted organisations, in addition to 10 interviews with cantonal and municipal stakeholders. With respect to the civil society organisations, the interviewees include youth party branches, feminist and LGBTIQ+ groups, environmental groups, non-profit

⁵⁷ The youth unemployment rate follows the International Labour Office (ILO) indicator for unemployed persons in the population aged 15 to 24 years.

Source 1: Office fédéral de la statistique (OFS) 2019

<https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/fr/home/statistiques/themes-transversaux/monitoring-programme-legislature/tous-les-indicateurs/ligne-directrice-1-prosperite/taux-chomage-jeunes.assetdetail.10207138.html>

Source 2: Office cantonal de l'emploi (OCE) 2019

https://www.ge.ch/statistique/graphiques/affichage.asp?filtreGraph=03_03&dom=1#cb6

associations, religious organisations, student unions and youth-related subnational umbrellas. On the other hand, interviews with stakeholders were predominately done at the cantonal level, targeting the institutional infrastructures created to respond to the policy developments related to youth. Indeed, most of the policies regarding youth issues are conducted at the cantonal level. That being said, as aforementioned, due to the strong Swiss municipalism, we also conducted an interview with the city service for youth. Lastly, the stakeholders' interviews were complemented with additional interviews with young politicians and private sector foundations. With respect to gender traits of our sample, stakeholders and organisations share a higher representation of young women working in the field.

Interviews with Stakeholders

Frame of Opportunity

As summarised before, the current state of the Swiss childhood and Youth policy is in a phase of important change and development. In this sense, all the interviewed stakeholders share more or less optimistic views about the policy development and infrastructures created to increase youth political participation. During our interviews, we observed that there is no contentiousness between stakeholders' views on youth political participation. There is some sort of common satisfaction in the domain across the stakeholders. That being said, some of them also suggested that even though important efforts have been made, it is key to enhance more participatory cultural settings and less segregated environments to reduce inequality.

Likewise, the interviewed actors share two other major premises concerning young people's situation diagnosis. First, they believe there is an evident lack of youth-related issues within media and public debates. Some suggested that youth views are not captured in conventional media settings, or are not well represented, giving very simplistic views on young people's behaviour. Nevertheless, they do advance that young people have their own media platforms in which discourses are portrayed more accurately and disseminated massively and at speed. . In this regard, most youth portrayal that is found in conventional media settings is mainly related to young politicians (institutional political behaviour) and on a few occasions, discussing young people's role in mobilisations.. Second, stakeholders' interviewees share the need to increase connections between the private sector and youth-related issues. Aside from some programmes financed by private institutions (mainly foundations) to sustain young people's projects (civic- oriented), the business sector engages shyly towards young people mainly on market- related issues, perceiving young individuals as "work force".

Concerning the issues tackled during the interviews, stakeholders were very keen to discuss the institutional participation of young people, especially with respect to young adults' voting behaviour. Throughout our interviews, policy-makers and politicians constantly address issues related to the voting behaviour of young people and the need to address this group's distance from institutional politics. On the other hand, charities and more local service stakeholders complemented the discourse on youth apathy to institutional politics, with issues related to access to cultural-life and increased economic insecurity. That being said, the views on institutional politics were developed under the perspective of "civic behaviour" and the important role of organisations for the development of civic skills. In this sense, a relevant part of the programmes and activities highlighted by the stakeholders were oriented toward sociocultural activities, socio-educative activities, and associational activities. Their views assume civic life to cultivate special skills and virtues, within the neo-Tocquevillian perspectives on civil society that perceives civic activity as being at the core of the voluntary sector, where associations are said to enhance participants' democratic virtues or skills (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; Putman 2001; Schlozman, Verba, and Brady 2013). Thus, for most institutional actors, the question becomes how to restore the link between non-voters and politics. Even when they highlight that each generation has its own way of reacting to issues (such as the current climate strikes), they sustain that indeed, electoral politics is not the only way to act. However, it is necessary to pass, at an early age, the message that voting is important.

"At 18 years old, when young people get the right to vote, they use it but then the turnout decreases quickly. In this sense, there is some work to do to explain the importance of political participation. However, there are other forms of participation (as shown by the recent climate strikes). We suddenly see many young people mobilised for a cause that they do not know very well, but thanks to social networks, something is happening (in terms of mobilisation capacity). The question is whether this mobilisation will take other forms. How to make young people understand that in a democratic state, there is the rule of law, and there are some specific venues of participation?" (SS4)

With respect to the concerns regarding the lack of institutional participation of young people, stakeholders share (obviously keeping some differences between views) ideas on young people as self-centred and issue interested, with very pressing time frames. They all agree that young people participate in politics, and participate a great deal but through non-institutional channels, suggesting a rupture/duality within the political space that moves young people away from institutional channels. We observe a condescending position towards young political issues, in which stakeholders justify young people's political behaviour as autonomous with and dependent on each generation that decides how to act in politics; still the young need to understand how important it is to vote: "The only way for youth to influence the political agenda is through conventional means of

political participation. Non-conventional means are not part of the Swiss political culture" (SS7). Additionally, some of the interviews perceived youth's grasp of politics as similar to the ones we might find in older groups; that said, they explain youth distance from institutional politics as being due to impatience "because young people want to have quick outcomes to their demands, while politics takes time to produce solutions" (SS2). These transcriptions suggest an idea of young individuals who find themselves in a learning process through which they will grow closer and will come to terms with more general political issues, political times and arenas.

Concerning the main disagreements captured across stakeholders, interviewees tend to have contrasting positions with respect to youth-related inequalities and the recognition of young people as a group with particular needs. While most of the stakeholders share views on specific issues that interest particularly young people and other issues that interest the rest of the population, most of them tend to justify this lack of convergence between the young population and older groups as relating to the transitioning phase that youth represents. These perceptions on youth suggest that young people do not identify with issues like taxation until they become part of the labour market. They do not see young people as *having* particular needs, but as a group that *identifies* itself as having particular needs. This identification tends to take place at the local level and on very concrete issues. Yet, even though these stakeholders tend to identify young people as autonomous, with strong organisational skills for mobilisation, in sum, they consider youth political participation as low due to the lack of good tools, and their role as stakeholders charged with increasing youth awareness on the relevance of participating politically. Against these perspectives on youth, only two stakeholders suggested that young adults as a group have particular needs, which explain the generational gaps we find between the various age groups political behaviour. First, they advanced on the idea of generational gap that has deepened across age groups. Second, these stakeholders suggest that the generation cleavage and mutual misunderstanding between young people and the rest of the adult population rely on very diverse contextual realities: Today, young people live in increased labour precarity, pay abusive housing prices, experience worldwide market competition and greater inequality: "Youth are not concerned with retirement issues, mainly because they think they will never benefit from retirement at all" (SS6). These generational gaps are supposed to be at the root of the disconnect between more generalised policy issues and youth-related ones.

Similarly, perspectives on youth inequalities between stakeholders can be divided into two major positions. Most of the stakeholders consider that the inequalities touching young individuals are related to socio-economic and demographic characteristics, rather than to recognisable structural inequalities impacting young individuals as a group. These views on inequality advance that family

economic conditions will have a differentiated impact on young individual opportunities. The discriminations between young individuals are mainly based on their gender, the geographical area where families with less income are mainly concentrated, and whether or not they have a migratory background.

The differences among neighbourhoods regarding the youth situation might intensify to segregation towards poor populations that are pushed to the suburbs, while the city centre gentrifies. These geographical differences are striking regarding high schools' access: In the suburbs, there is a minority of young individuals pursuing secondary education degrees (college) against a contrasting majority in the rich areas of the city or countryside. In contrast with this view on inequality, few stakeholders suggested that inequalities with respect to the young population also relate to unequal access to public spaces that the young population have. . These views suggest that young individuals in Geneva lack space to socialise and to culturally express themselves. Several years ago, "there were many more spaces for youth (squats, squats restaurants, squats nightclubs, and the like), more spaces for youth socialisation. Nowadays, when young people go out, they have to go to bars or restaurants, which are often expensive. There are no public spaces which are attractive, accessible and free" (SS2). Likewise, these more critical views on the inequalities touching young people also maintain that, as a group, young individuals are facing increased job precarity with unaffordable housing prices that delay their emancipation and socio-economic autonomy. Finally, concerning the unequal participation between youth publics, some of the stakeholders' views suggest that poor socio-economic backgrounds hinder young people's political participation:

"Disadvantaged youth are more vulnerable, and less conscious that they have a role to play in society...an important factor of differences in participation among youth is the socio-economic background" (SS7)

Organisational Interviews

By looking into the civil society supply side, we will be able to picture how youth organisational politics is structured in the canton-city of Geneva, also in relationship to the city youth policy framework. First, with respect to the context of opportunity for youth organisational politics, we advance that at least two thirds of all the interviewed organisations were created between 2010 – 2017, and this period corresponds to relevant policy discussions on youth issues at the federal and cantonal level. Second, most of the organisations centred their activities in very specific sub-areas; only a few could be considered as multi-issue. Third, concerning the beneficiaries of the organisational activities and the members of the organisational structure, we observe that less than

a third of the interviewed organisations offer services or engage with people over 30 years old. Moreover, most of the organisations' beneficiaries and leaders are between 18-30 years old. This age group definition is also in line with the policy framework and institutional definition of youth.

About the issues mobilised by the interviewed organisations, we observe that most of the organisations are issue specific (gender, employment, culture, environment or politically-oriented). Only the more left-wing politically-oriented organisations mobilise various issues (related to environmentalism, feminism and political action), in addition to umbrella organisations in their role of lobbying on youth related issues at federal and cantonal levels. Consequently, most of the organisational activities are also target-oriented within specific issues. That said, all the organisations share the fact that a large set of their activities are to enhance youth participation, visibility and associational tissue.

Moreover, most of our organisational sampling share the use of social media platforms to communicate and mobilise their beneficiaries and constituencies. With respect to perceptions on innovations and digital forms of participation, young organisational structures conceive (Instagram, Youtube, Facebook, Snapchat, WhatsApp) as common communication tools. Indeed, these venues are seen as the easiest way to reach a young audience. Furthermore, some social media such as Instagram and Snapchat are used to specifically target the youngest ones:

"Using Snapchat is a specific strategy to reach the young for events for 16-18 year olds. Younger people have fled Facebook because they are more concordant with the speed responsiveness of videos and photos found on Instagram and Snapchat" (OS4).

The use of these digital tools is not seen as innovative. Most of these individuals have been strongly socialised within these platforms. However, what is innovative is how they use these tools to communicate in more reduced time-frames (for instance, WhatsApp or Telegram groups and communities), speeding up discussions and debates, as well as expanding their audiences: "Internally, we organise a lot through WhatsApp for daily management, but we also use e-mails to include the less young publics" (OS6). Additionally, what the organisations highlight as innovative is the use of these technologies to create inclusive forms of decision making, as well as discussion procedures in which you limit the monopolisation of the arenas by particular individuals.

In this sense, the discussion on innovation preludes how these youth organisations experience and develop inclusive democratic procedures. When asked about their procedure and democratic experimentation, most of the organisations, at least in their discourse, displayed ideas of horizontality. We observe various forms of decision-making procedures, the most structured

organisations, party branches, as well as the employment-related organisations engaged in decision-making procedures based at least in co-decision between the organisational bodies. On the other hand, less formalised organisations tend to engage in the so-called "sociocracy or holocracy" functioning systems; they rely on self-management and self-evaluation with no leader among them:

"We have developed a functioning system based on sociocracy or holocracy. Radical collaboration is our way of organising. We have published a "guide book" to explain how [we] work, how we organise and our internal processes: We rely on self-management and we self-evaluate among ourselves; there is no leader" (OS5).

These decision-making procedures are based on horizontal and loose networks of collaborations between constituencies and beneficiaries. Likewise, the various forms of decision-making procedures are not only related with the organisational structures, but also to their level of cooperation with institutional actors. In this sense, party branches tend to have more formalised organisational forms, as well as umbrellas and youth councils. These organisations are the most visible actors in youth institutional arenas and policy discussions. Nevertheless, we advance that independently of the issue and organisational forms, all the interviewed organisations engage in multiple partnerships and networks of collaboration, which suggests the existence of a very dense network of collaboration between the associations and institutions in the domain.

With respect to issues related to youth experiencing inequalities, findings suggest that at least with regards to inequality, most of the organisations consider health access, education access, housing, labour market access and migratory background at the core of youth inequalities. However, as in the previous section of the report, most of the organisations consider these inequalities as a result of socio-economic and demographic characteristics:

"Inequalities affect everybody. It is a question of social class. Youth from the proletariat are discriminated against in terms of educational access. You can see it in the statistics of university students who largely come from families where the parents have studied at university, too. There are also labour-access inequalities. The wealthier your social class background, the fewer struggles and inequalities you will face" (OS17)

From this perspective, social inequalities influence young people in terms of access to education, academic help and job training. The social and economic situation of the young person increases opportunities, while young people who is more disadvantaged will be less valued skillswise. In contrast, only a few organisations considered these inequalities as uniquely related to young individuals in general. Nevertheless, some organisations suggested that young individuals face particular inequalities concerning their access to the labour market because it is temporarily impossible for young people to have the required work experience demanded by employers.

Additionally, they consider that the school system is based on strong social selection that discriminates between young populations, privileging access to very specific groups: "Social inequalities affect young people especially regarding access to education. It is very elitist and it discriminates against young people who must have a job during their studies to live, but who will not have the same time to concentrate on studying or to benefit from academic mobility" (OS2). Moreover, as a group, these organisations suggest that young people face structural problems with respect to their access to health insurance and housing, hampering their autonomy. In addition, they consider age as transversal to the lack of structures of support for gender and culturally-diverse young groups. Lastly, some youth organisations also consider that socio-economic inequalities are at the root of the political disengagement of several vulnerable young people groups:

"Depending on the social and economic situation of the young people, they will not be valued in the same way [by others]; in this sense, it will be more difficult for a young immigrant. If the young people come from a more privileged background, they will tend to be more aware of their value because they will have had more access to opportunities, while more disadvantaged youth will be less valued for their skills. Youth living in more disadvantaged neighbourhoods tend to be less engaged due to lack of encouragement [and the less given value to their skills]"(OS9)

Finally, concerning the discussion on young people experiencing discrimination, findings advance that young people experience discrimination concerning their political visibility and voicing. Even the less contentious and institutionally oriented organisations consider that policy changes have been important, but that there is still a lack of youth visibility in political institutions and in the public media. The organisations highlighted that young individuals are often targeted as not having enough experienced, not being mature, being too idealistic, just wanting to have fun, with no projects or commitment to a cause. These views are considered extremely biased towards youth, increasing their political discrimination and in-visibility: "People think youth is only constituted of little fools who do nothing. We are, in their vision, lost and lazy. The public opinion about youth is horrible today. They stigmatise youth a lot because they are afraid. They say *You are youth so you will change later*" (OS17). Also, these organisations suggested that even though public opinion is rather favourable to the political participation of young people, yet, specific groups of young people who suffer from racist, sexist and classist stigmatisation experience some sort of benevolent paternalism. The findings advance that youth organisations in Geneva consider discrimination toward young publics as related to the lack of spaces to express and to meet their demands, necessary to increase their political visibility.

General Remarks and Discussion

A few years ago, youth political participation was not a relevant issue in the Canton-City of Geneva. Young people voted less than older ones, as they do now, and there were no specific venues for them to participate or be consulted. These past two decades, youth political involvement has mostly been related to the demand of alternative and self-managed cultural and recreational sites. Young people lost their main venues of politicisation due to major closures of alternative sites by the authorities between 2000 and 2010. With respect to political contentiousness between youth organisations and local stakeholders, we advance that major contentious issues revolved around the cultural arena, such as the result of the closure of these alternative cultural sites. That being said, since 2010, the cultural arena continues to be a major political issue, however, the type of organisations involved have changed and engaged in other political repertoires to demand more cultural venues. These new politically-oriented youth organisations mainly represent three organisational forms: -youth branches of traditional political parties; -issue-specific organisations (environment; gender-LGBT); -organisations for the promotion of youth civic and political engagement.

In parallel, cantonal authorities started to be concerned about young people's turnout. They developed programmes to promote electoral participation, in partnership with some newly-created youth organisations, notably the so-called Youth Parliament of Geneva. Therefore, between 2013-2016, there was a clear momentum for issues related to youth political participation in the Canton. As an example of the POS momentum, some of the interviewed organisations under the leadership of members of the Youth Parliament gathered almost 160 youth-led or cultural organisations to demand from the city of Geneva a site for meetings and cultural activities. They were successful and in 2016, obtained an important building in the city centre, which is now the epicentre of youth cultural, social and political engagement. This particular success of youth mobilisation has partially pacified the cultural issue in the canton.

Furthermore, this political moment coincided with important institutional developments on the youth issue, at both national and cantonal level. Examples of these are the recent youth legal framework of the Canton of Geneva and the Law on childhood and youth that was developed in 2017 and entered into force in 2018, with major political consultations. That said, in the spring of 2019, while these interviews were being conducted, the youth political participation started to regain additional visibility and momentum, with the massive mobilisations of young publics in climate and women's strikes. This particular context also helped the amendment and modification of the recent childhood and youth Canton law (2017) by introducing a consultative council for youth issues as

mandatory to the law, triggering as well important reflections on participatory mechanisms for young people's political participation.

While these recent contextual developments depict a positive situation for the youth of Geneva, major inequalities that young people are still facing in Canton cannot be hidden. First, most of the stakeholders and organisations agree on the invisibility of youth issues in political institutions and the public media. Nevertheless, some positive changes have been observed like the election of several young people to the Cantonal Parliament in 2015 (mostly from the Greens and Socialist parties), and the inclusion of young people in most of the parties' electoral lists, enhancing the institutional visibility of young people. Second, the majority of the interviewed organisations and stakeholders acknowledged that several young people encounter difficulties mainly in the areas of housing and job access. Regarding these specific issues, young people are seen by several interviewed actors as being particularly vulnerable. Third, regarding the important inequalities regarding access to (higher) education and job training, the majority of organisations and stakeholders consider that it is due to socio-economic backgrounds, rather than solely on the fact of being young. Fourth, most of the organisations interviewed highlighted a generational gap between youth and older people, notably on environmental issues, or societal issues such as gender equality or multiculturalism. The minority of organisations considered the existence of some ideological cleavages among young people and other generations. Nevertheless, most of the organisations and stakeholders converge on the fact that young people are not adequately taken into consideration by their elders.

Regarding lessons to be drawn from this material, it is important to stress that young people engaging in political activities, whether institutional or not, are not in the majority. Despite several youth-related and youth-led active organisations, and countless informal groups and one-off projects, an important number of young people are not part of organisational activities at all. Once again, their socio-economic background is of importance, since most of the engaged young people come from middle- to upper-class backgrounds. Some institutional responses to this inequality in opportunity could be: a targeted support and promotion of youth projects, especially for young people with limited organisational skills; the development within public schools of educational and training programmes that promote citizenship and democratic life. So far, the current programmes tend to focus exclusively on institutional means of political participation, especially on electoral participation. As the data gathered through these interviews clearly demonstrate, young people prefer to engage in specific projects and issues, especially because they do not feel part of institutional politics, and they care about issues that are closer to their need gaps. Furthermore, a

growing sector of youth seems to be attracted to and experimenting with new democratic practices, centred on horizontality. Public authorities, and public schools in particular, could take these recent developments into consideration, as well as youth aspirations in innovating democratic practices. The aim of making young people fit for the existing structures of participation could be shifted into developing a culture of participation by stressing its meaning, importance, diversity while leaving important room for innovation and creativity.

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10. United Kingdom

Report by: Katherine A. Smith

Introduction and Urban Context

Sheffield is a city in the north of England, in the Yorkshire and Humberside region of the UK. The Yorkshire and Humberside region is divided into four sub-regions and of these, Sheffield falls within the sub-region of South Yorkshire. Furthermore, recent government devolution policy has created another sub-region known as Sheffield City Region (SCR) with its own regional authority, elected mayor and (albeit limited) devolved powers from UK Central Government.

Sheffield is the sixth largest city in the UK⁵⁸, yet retains a sense of a smaller city in its position on the edge of the Peak District National Park. Income per capita of Sheffield city proper is 27 000 Euro according to Eurostat⁵⁹. The population of Sheffield is 575,400 (mid 2016)⁶⁰. For the purpose of reference with regards to most available data on SCR, the population of Sheffield City Region is 1,877,000.

According to Office of National Statistics (ONS) data, as presented in Sheffield City Council JSNA, 15-19 year olds make up 6.8% of the Sheffield city population, 20-24 year olds make up 11.2%, 25-29 year olds make up 8.8% of the population, and 30-34 year olds make up 6.2%. For these age categories, with the exception of 30-34, youth population in Sheffield is higher than the English average. A relatively higher proportion of young people in the city is in part due to Sheffield having two universities; there is a bulge in the population age distribution of Sheffield for the age groups 20-24 and 25-29⁶¹. In Sheffield, 51% of the population is female. The gender pay gap across the city is 17%, meaning that women on average earn 17% less than men in the city⁶². While nationality data is less available, 88% of Sheffield's residents were born in the UK. Furthermore, data on the ethnicities of Sheffield residents show that White British is the biggest ethnic group (80.8%)⁶³. Other ethnic groups each account for less than 5% of the population, with Pakistani the next largest group (4%)⁶⁴.

⁵⁸<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/adhocs/008264midyearpopulationestimatesformajortownsandcities2016>

⁵⁹ <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>

⁶⁰<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/your-city-council/population-in-sheffield.html>

⁶¹ <https://sheffieldcc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=7b2a6bd47a4645d4a67d8a6c62328f44>

⁶² <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/content/dam/sheffield/docs/your-city-council/community-knowledge-profiles/Women%20in%20Sheffield.pdf>

⁶³ <https://sheffieldcc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=73885c6943cf47648ca5af9c49caa110>

⁶⁴ *ibid*

The number of unemployed people within Sheffield city region who are economically inactive is 46,600 (5.0% of the population)⁶⁵. However, since economic activity also accounts for students and other economically inactive people not seeking work, the Claimant Count, which measures the number of working age people claiming out-of-work benefits, is 3% across Sheffield city region. Age-based data from SCR shows that in comparison to the average rate working age unemployment of 3%, younger age categories in the city region are experiencing higher than average rates of unemployment (as measured by the claimant count): 4.1% for the 18-24 age group, and 4.6% when considering only 18-21 year olds⁶⁶.

Rates of poverty in the UK can be summarised using multiple measures. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), an index based upon multiple variables relating to poverty (income, employment, education, health, crime, housing and living environment), shows a rate of 27% for Sheffield city. This rate is higher than the English average of 22%⁶⁷, yet slightly lower than the other areas of Sheffield City Region (outside of the core city). Furthermore, according to a national ranking of deprivation, Sheffield was listed as the 57th (out of 317) most deprived council area in England⁶⁸.

Politically, the city of Sheffield has strong levels of support for the Labour Party. In the 2019 general election, five out of six constituencies within the city elected a Labour MP, despite some closely contested marginals. One electoral constituency elected a Conservative MP. Sheffield city council is also controlled by Labour. Despite the party suffering some losses in the May 2019 local election, Labour hold 49 of the 84 seats (other parties: Liberal Democrats, 26, Green, 8, UKIP, 1). There is also a Labour elected Mayor of Sheffield City Region.

The municipal budget for services related to youth engagement has experienced significant cuts in recent years, in particular since the austerity programme enacted by the UK Government post-2010 whose decreases to local authority funding heavily impacted youth Services across the UK. Sheffield City Council budget for youth services reflects this trend with a fall in the annual budget from £14,166,444 in 2010-11 to £4,762,000 in 2015-16, a fall of 66.4%⁶⁹.

⁶⁵ <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/lep/1925185559/printable.aspx>

⁶⁶ *ibid*

⁶⁷ 'Vital Signs: South Yorkshire's Vital Signs Report 2018', SYCF.

⁶⁸ <https://sheffieldcc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=d3358b124a964624ae2457535a1a60b4>

⁶⁹ <http://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/documents/s21736/CYPFS%20Scrutiny%20Youth%20Services%20Report.pdf>

Sample

Given the city's characteristic as a student city the range of stakeholder interviewees reflects the need for knowledge of the opportunities and challenges faced by young people across the city, from both a student perspective and in relation to non-student youth in the city, including under 18s. It also reflects knowledge of wide ranging services from religious youth work, student organisations, council funded youth work and voluntary youth work organisations. The 10 stakeholder interviews were conducted with a journalist with knowledge of local youth issues, a staff member from a religious youth group, a local charitable foundation offering financial support to youth projects locally, a University academic with knowledge of youth and community work in the city, a member of staff with policy knowledge from a Student Union organisation, a local community organiser of youth projects in response to local need, a member of the police who has worked with youth issues, a local youth work policy organisation, a member of staff from the city administration and a member of staff from the city's devolved regional administration.

Furthermore, 20 interviews were undertaken with organisational representatives of youth organisations which engage young people in a range of political (broadly defined) activities. This included 1 sports organisation, 6 student (non-party political) social action or political groups, 1 youth branch of a trade union, 3 organisations offering 'youth council' or youth voice initiatives, 4 voluntary organisations offering youth engagement activities other than youth voice, and 4 youth or student branches of political parties. These organisations were selected in order to represent the range of activities, not only for different types of young people (student, non-student, under 18, youth with particular characteristic of disadvantage), but also to represent the range of intensity of 'political engagement' in youth organisations, ranging from youth engaging in their local communities or in developmental activities, to young people engaging in explicit political discussion, relating to unconventional and conventional political action repertoires.

Interview with Stakeholders

Frame of Opportunity

The main recurrent theme of the stakeholder interviews regarding the opportunities and challenges faced by young people in Sheffield is the various range of impacts of Central Government austerity programmes upon the residents of the city. These ranged from the effects of the roll back of public services, including public services aimed at young people, the impact upon residents' incomes and

the range of opportunities including for employment and in terms of personal development opportunities for young people. While the interviews present the main impact of this as being upon socioeconomic inequality, (a consequence of not only the present policy of austerity but also of the historical post-industrial context), but also on the intersection of socioeconomic inequalities with other axes of inequality. Secondly, a theme of inter-generational inequalities is clear from the stakeholder interviews. These relate to pressures, which for a range of reasons make young people's lives very different from those of the previous generation, which while indeed stemming partially from issues of austerity and socioeconomic themes, also present many themes which are qualitatively distinct.

There were few stakeholders interviewed who were critical of youth, and few who did not see the role of inequality as important in mediating opportunities for participation. Indeed, most stakeholders outlined how wide-ranging inequalities intersect and exacerbate these barriers. However, some stakeholders did have a narrower view of inequality which related to the specificities of their particular sphere or sector. For example, the student union organisation conceived inequalities in relation to the specific inequalities that exist within the student population, and law enforcement conceived inequalities in terms of crime and vulnerability to crime. Nevertheless, all recognised the role of inequalities and their effect on participation.

By far the largest form of inequality discussed by local stakeholders was the levels of socioeconomic inequality and deprivation within the city. Stakeholders conceived the consequences of these inequalities both in relation to their impact upon political participation, but also their impact upon the standard of living of young people in marginalised communities. Firstly, there is a link between socioeconomic inequality and ability to access youth organisations in the city when a financial contribution may be required. As one stakeholder highlighted:

"The economic group that a young person is from impacts their ability to access services, and particularly as some of the funding and support for universal services has been reduced. Because the extra-curricular activities that young people from wealthier homes can engage in is larger" (SU1)

Many stakeholders, just as SU1 above, highlight a link between socioeconomic inequality and cuts to public spending. Other themes included the reduction in funding to further and higher education (and the increase in cost on the individual), reduction in funding to youth services, and cuts to benefits that have led to severe decreases in household incomes. Furthermore, several stakeholders spoke of increased risks to young people in marginalised communities in the wake of deindustrialisation in the city following the policies of the Thatcher government in the 1980s:

"Some of those big estates that were built in the outer-lying areas, the employment that they were built for is no longer there. Where you get these problems, you often get young people involved in low-level crime or antisocial behaviour because of the stressful situations they are living in" (SU5)

Similarly, but citing the reduction of household income due to austerity, stakeholders made reference to socioeconomic inequality leading to increased risk of taking part in illegal activities to earn money for their households. Some stakeholders also made analytical points regarding the relationship between being socioeconomic inequality and a low sense of political efficacy and hence propensity to take part in politics, with a young person once having commented to them:

"Who's going to listen to us. Where we live, we've got into trouble, we've got these people and these interventions...who's going to listen to us?" They do feel very disenfranchised'(SU5)

Further to discussions around socioeconomic inequality, many stakeholders also commented on the role of geographical inequality in the city, especially in neighbourhoods more removed from the city centre, who consequently have a reduced access to services and are excluded from services by limited transport infrastructure. The provision for young people in walking distance from their homes is also in decline, with many of these services having closed as an impact of austerity.

While discussed in less detail, stakeholders did discuss further elements of inequality in the city. Many recognise the multiple challenges faced by young people who have recently arrived in the country, with little support network or language skills. While there are some programmes aimed at supporting people with these needs, the multiple inequalities experienced by this group are significant.

In the student context, universities are aware of inequalities of access to student services and student political participation opportunities between home and international students, stemming from a variety of factors relating to inclusion, most significantly how activities are targeted but also from geographical differences between patterns of where home and international students live in the city, and where the student union typically promotes its activities.

Regarding inclusion and visibility of young people's voices in the city, stakeholders cite the number of youth voice programmes in the city including youth councils for the city and regional level, and relating to specific subgroups of young people. Nevertheless, aside from these programmes, very few stakeholders were aware of significant fora for youth voice. The journalist interviewed (SU3) cited that young people were encouraged to participate in contributing to the local newspaper, and that students had participated regularly in work experience placements. However, SU9 also

commented that especially for those under 18, publishing young people's contributions to the press can be problematic, especially due to safeguarding issues and risk of stigmatisation, thus highlighting that access to public debate is unequally distributed even among young people. Several stakeholders commented that young people had a greater visibility online than through traditional means, participating more through social media, a platform which one stakeholder commented allowed them not to have 'an age' and thus experience less age discrimination in the public sphere (SU9).

Despite some stakeholders referring to only all-age issues of inequality, the large majority of stakeholders recognised that young people are a group with particular needs, grievances and challenges. Indeed, the large majority of stakeholders recognised the wide range of inequalities and factors affecting young people specifically. As SU6 summarises:

"I think young people have it very hard in lots of ways, they're facing a very uncertain future. You know with Brexit which will possibly close down opportunities for travel and work in Europe. The housing market is against them. They're paying through their noses for education in a way that my generation didn't... so this generation have got a lot of pressures in terms of immediate job prospects, going through higher education and taking on debt, not being able to afford housing, uncertainty surrounding Brexit. And then you have all these much more ontologically challenging issues that they face. Just think of global warming issues and what's going to happen to the environment. And it's that generation who are going to have to bear the brunt of what we, my generation, have done to the environment. I think it's pretty bleak for young people. I can understand them being angry about all that. Then you have the more mundane but significant pressures of social media...with the perfect body, the perfect everything else and our obsession with celebrity.. having to look perfect for your snap on Whatsapp... I do think the combination of all those things is bound to have a negative impact on people's mental health" (SU6)

Beginning with mental health, this is the most prevalent issue raised in relation to youth. This theme was raised, and was discussed both in relation to the increasing demand-side pressures on young people, and the pressures on the supply-side of mental health services. Linking to the overall theme of the impacts of austerity, it was noted that youth mental health services do not have the funding to cope with the number of referrals leading to a long waiting list. This is reiterated by stakeholders knowledgeable about the student population of the city, who commented that students face particular pressures when away from home and trying to be independent for the first time.

The housing market and youth homelessness was also a major theme of struggles particular to youth. Stakeholders recognised the levels of youth homelessness in the city. The high and rising cost of housing, compared to low wages, has made buying housing quite inaccessible to younger generations. Similarly, in the social housing sector, local authority housing stock is low, and the local authority is finding it much more difficult to meet their responsibility of housing young people leaving the care sector.

Austerity, while an issue affecting all generations, was framed as a cause of intergenerational inequalities by some stakeholders. Cuts to youth services were recognised as one of the most significantly affected services, with major impacts for young people. Similarly, the state of the local economy of the city, relating to both the current slow rate of economic growth and the post-industrial context, was raised as a particular struggle of youth, despite appearing prima facie as a cross-generational issue:

"If you're a young person, [you think] why can I easily get a job at H&M or somewhere else, but can't get a well-paid job doing something that my Grandfather did (such as well-paid manual labour jobs and service jobs associated), and people who are older than me. That can be frustrating, and you start to think what's in it for me...The industrial legacy is still hanging over young people and it will shape their futures. It shapes communities to this day" (SU2)

Furthermore, some stakeholders, albeit not all, recognised that all issues of inequality are experienced at intersection with a range of other attributes. For example, SU2 commented that despite youth unemployment being high, white male young people are more likely to be employed than young women or young people of colour in the city. Another youth specific struggle which related highly to intersectional inequalities, in the perception of stakeholders, was youth stigmatisation. While they recognise that young people were stigmatised in general, many examples demonstrate that this stigmatisation is more severe when multiple axes of inequality are combined. These examples included that young LGBT+ people were particularly stigmatised for their appearance and that the Lord Mayor of Sheffield, a young British Somali, faced a lot of criticism from the public for 'breaking protocol' and speaking out on political issues (SU3).

One final area of disadvantage which stakeholders associated specifically with youth was a sense of vulnerability in terms of being involved in, or a victim of crime. Several stakeholders raised the issue of knife crime, and fear of knife crime, as a particular issue facing youth in the city. Where referring to crime, it was notable that some stakeholders viewed the issue as a structural one, citing issues of socioeconomic inequality (SU7, community organiser) and those who explained the issue in terms of individual agency and decision making (SU8, police officer).

Although stakeholders did discuss the youth participation opportunities that remain in the city, which for a large part exist in the voluntary sector, what is clear overall is that there is a multiplicity of youth-specific areas of disadvantage. As summarised by the quote of SU6, none of these can be understood in isolation. Different axes of inequality intersect to explain multiple dimensions of disadvantage between different young people. Furthermore, of the wide range of inequalities discussed, a high number of these stem from socioeconomic disadvantage and can be traced to a

great extent to government policies of austerity post-2010 and to a lesser (albeit significant) extent, the impact of industrial strategy in previous decades.

Organisational Interviews

There are two distinct categories of youth organisation within this sample: self-organised youth organisations (11 organisations), and youth-orientated organisations who work with and sometimes on behalf of young people (9 organisations). While there are variations in experiences between these different categories of organisation, there is also significant within-group variation to be explored.

Self-organised youth organisations

A significant proportion of self-organised youth political organisations in the city (in terms of numbers of organisations) consist of student ‘society’ organisations. These are student-run groups existing in the university contexts (across the city’s two universities), supported in a legal and administrative sense by the student union organisations associated with each university. The vast majority of such organisations are small, with membership of between 5-25 students, with some exceptions where groups have a higher profile across campus. There is a diversity of issue and focus of such groups, since students are encouraged to establish new groups by their student union, and young people are able to campaign, organise and deliver social action on wide ranging issues, with some administrative and financial support. Of the eleven self-organised youth organisations within the sample, eight are student societies. Additionally, the remaining three youth-organised groups within the sample are larger organisations existing outside of the university/student sphere, legally associated with larger national political parties or trade unions, yet run by young people in the senior positions of leadership. Of the total of eleven self-organised youth organisations, our sample consists of four youth or student branches of political parties, one youth branch of a union and individual organisations on the following issues: food waste and poverty, refugee support, mental health, human rights, Brexit and the environment/sustainability.

Youth-orientated organisations

Our sample consists of nine organisations which are youth-orientated, largely professionalised, and managed operationally by employed staff who are largely non-youth (despite a high number of examples whereby young people are given strategic influence in the organisation). Of these nine organisations, four run specific ‘youth voice’ programmes, for young people in general or relating to specific attributes/axes of inequality, one is a dedicated volunteering/ social action organisation aimed at students, and four of which offer recreational activities or personal development/welfare programmes- of these four organisations, two have a clearly defined social action remit (which is

also the case in one of the aforementioned ‘youth voice’ organisation) in the form of national government funding to deliver the National Citizens’ Service (NCS) programme. This is a school holiday social action programme for 16 and 17 year olds. Of the nine youth orientated organisations, there are five organisations who perceive their activities and organisational role as fulfilling some political objective (which could amount to encouraging political participation among young people in general). There are four organisation who conversely do not perceive their activities as intrinsically political, despite their activities fitting into a broader definition of what may be defined as political; they conceive their purpose as community development orientated or youth personal development orientated (for example, improving health, developing skills and improving confidence in young people with low self-esteem). Youth-orientated organisations in our sample exist, in the large majority, within the charity/third-sector, with a small number of groups receiving public funding or existing as a consequence of a historical move of previously council funded youth services from the public sector to the third sector.

Self-organised youth organisations

Of the self-organised youth organisations which exist inside the student/university sphere (8) there were a number of notable commonalities in the action repertoires and activities of these organisations. While politics and political action is central in most of these organisations, the importance of social events in the university sphere also dominates activities. To recruit students to these organisations, ‘freshers’ fair’ and ‘refreshers fair’ events run by the student union in order to showcase the work of student societies at the beginning of each semester played a highly important role, which for some groups made up the whole of their recruitment for the academic year. Attending demos, running public stalls, as well as door knocking and leafletting (for those associated with electoral parties) were common action repertoires, especially among left wing student groups. Social events and meetings were important sites for political discussions and for fundraising. Where such student political groups have an affiliation with a national organisation, there is a degree to which their activities and repertoires reflect those of the wider/national organisation. However, some interviewees identified notable age-based approaches and action repertoires between themselves and those in associated all-age or ‘older’ organisations. For example, a student human rights group noted that while there were several joint events between them and the non-student version of their organisation in the city, that while older activists tended to focus on letter-writing, activists in the student group preferred to focus on more public-facing forms of political action.

On the issue of the particular struggles of youth, a variety of political issues were discussed including the impact of mental health pressures, access to affordable housing, young people facing more

insecure working conditions and the dismantling of the welfare state. Some of the self-organised youth groups which exist in the student sphere were less reflective on these such issues, with a greater focus on the particular changes encountered when beginning student life. These included the pressures of balancing their academic courses with socialising and activism, having greater financial struggles and the impact of a high turnover of people (students commonly leaving after three years) on the continuation and survival of self-organised groups. One organisation reflected on their particular situation: "A lot of the membership is third year. It's going to be a challenge, they're going to have to recruit hard next year" (OU6). Another reflected on the impact of this factor upon the forms of action undertaken by the group:

"As September comes, one year is gone and another year arrives. The committee are all third years and masters students, as of 8 months' time, they'll all be gone... so having such a turnover in not just the committee but the members as well, it's difficult to do any long term projects I guess...I guess smaller campaigns are easier to run and easier to advertise" (OU8)

Self-organised youth organisations, both from within and outside of the student sphere, also reflected on a number of dynamics on the nature of relationships between younger people and older people in activism contexts. One organisation (OU13) reflected, on the one hand, on a sense of "paternalism" they felt the student group experienced in their interactions with the non-youth wing of their campaign, and on the other hand on age-based insults such as the use of the term "snowflake" towards young people as another feature of negative experiences of their activism when working with older groups. Meeting spaces are identified as one location of some intergenerational conflicts. In the view of a youth branch of a left-wing political party, the experiences of young people when attending party meetings in all-age spaces, are of wide ideological differences corresponding to age differences within the organisation, leading to some areas of conflict within those spaces. The nature of relationships between age groups for some youth organisations justifies the need for safe spaces according to age. Notably even the coordinator of a right-wing political party who spoke broadly positively about their experiences of working with the non-youth branch wider party stated that youth need their own space within the political party, explaining that:

"I was talking to people who were over 60 all the time and it made me feel very alienated/disenchanted with how it operates, but really if you get involved you see there are tonnes of people who are involved" (OU14)

However, it should be noted that not all experiences of working with older activists or all-age spaces were negative, with multiple organisations explaining that older people are often very happy to have young people or students on board, and pleased when they are visible in their activism campaigns.

On the issue of digital forms of participation and social media, interviewees of self-organised youth organisations explained that there is a sense in which social media is used by all young people, and therefore a sense in which it is required for an organisation, even if it is not used for all events or forms of recruitment, as a “go to” place or a substitute for a more formalised web page:

"If you've not got that social media page, people aren't going to find you. It's kind of like free advertising as well. If you hammer out content" (OU6)

While social media pages were common amongst organisations, the extent of its use was very inconsistent across organisations and many expressed a wish to use the pages more, or more effectively. One student organisation with a focus on mental health also mentioned that their interaction with social media had to operate around clear rules surrounding positive messages, hence paying attention to the positive mental wellbeing of users. Another student branch of a left wing party stated their own strategies for limiting social media use, so that it can be most effective for the organisation:

"Obviously we advertise events on social media, because all students have social media.. It works best when you have a big event and they get a lot of people in the group who consciously push it to their friends... But the problem with that is that if there is an event every week that people are constantly trying to push their friends to come along to, then people get bored...so we perhaps try to reserve that for a big meeting" (OU15)

Other innovative uses for digital forms of participation cited by self-organised youth organisations included the use of Skype platforms in order to hold talks and meetings with other ideologically-aligned or cause-aligned groups internationally, thus enabling discussions on more diverse issues and with young people globally.

In relation to public authorities and self-organised youth organisations, support by public authorities appeared much more limited than for youth-orientated organisations. For those organisations, both within and outside of the student sphere, with connections to political parties, their link to the council/ local authorities took the form of activism links to local politicians, but not with any youth-related public authorities. In the student sphere, many student society organisations struggled to respond to questions relating to public authorities, explaining that they have little interaction at all with them; there is a sense in which many of the public services provided in the city by public authorities are replicated in the university sphere (student advice, health service, representation, administrative support for social action projects), hence allowing some student organisations to operate in a separate “bubble” to the rest of the city.

Within self-organised youth organisations, there was a contrast in the design of decision-making processes between those inside and those outside the student sphere: those outside (often as more formalised wings of larger organisations) had clearer organisational structures, separation of responsibilities and decision-making structures, which usually take the form of voting among committee members. Student-society organisations, by contrast, had a much more informal decision-making process; while each student society is required to have a formalised committee, much decision making is made through informal ‘consensus’ decisions made in meetings. Many examples of committee members themselves, as interviewees, had not reflected thoroughly the decision making process, or lack of, within their own groups. However, a smaller minority of such groups had considered decision making more substantially; one student group referred to a “horizontal decision making process” (OU3). While this referred to a lack of substantial leadership positions, and the opportunity for any member to be involved at any level of the organisation, the interviewee also described more formalised features of this horizontal structure, including the ability of any member to add to the meeting’s agenda, and the practice of breaking up an activist meeting into smaller discussion groups, to ensure that all voices are heard and to give less confident people an opportunity to speak.

The subject of confidence to speak within activist meetings was a strong theme of responses surrounding inequalities in participation for self-organised youth organisations in the university sphere. While by contrast, self-organised groups outside of the university sphere reflected to a greater extent upon factors such as socioeconomic and educational inequality, more similarly, as we will find, to professionalised youth-orientated organisations, student organisations focussed more on the nature of verbal power dynamics, which in their observations derive from levels of personal confidence and from gender. One university in the city has in fact introduced a requirement that each student society committee have an ‘Inclusions officer’ post in each student society, in order that each student group consider how best to improve inclusion of underrepresented groups in student societies. On the issue of gender, one student organisation explained:

“certainly girls are less likely [to make a verbal contribution to meetings]. If you have a lot of people [who] are a bit nervous about making contributions or asking questions, girls will tend to be more likely ... and it always seems to work like if one year you get a core group of girls who do speak a lot, that can work well for other members of the group, but if another year you get not so many of those.. some years it has been almost an exclusively male group, and that's a tricky one". (OU15)

While the issue of inclusion in debates and meetings was not the only form of inequality discussed with student organisations, indeed issues such as antisemitism in political movements (relating to a

left wing student group), and access to political events which cost money (relating to a right wing student group) also featured in discussion.

We will next turn to analysing the perspectives of youth-orientated organisations: largely professionalised organisations managed operationally by employed staff who are largely non-youth, working with or on behalf of young people.

Youth-orientated organisations

As this report has outlined, youth-orientated organisations within Sheffield include a combination of organisations running ‘Youth voice’ projects in order to gather the views of young people, social action community projects, recreational activities with a personal development/ collective welfare focus and political education activities. In contrast to the self-organised youth organisations already explored, these organisations work with and sometimes on behalf of young people, despite many examples whereby young people have a significant level of influence in decision making at the strategic level. As these 9 organisations have professionalised structures, in contrast to more informal structures we have seen in some of the city’s student organisations, and are run by people often trained to work with young people in either the youth work or social work model, we see a greater focus upon the importance of concepts such as skills development and personal development (broadly defined), even in more explicitly political activities such as campaigning, where this takes place. These factors are central to the approaches of these organisations for a number of reasons. Firstly, with the exception of one student volunteering group which forms part of a university’s administration, youth-orientated organisations within this sample take the registered charity legal structure, which requires charitable purposes and activities, and does not allow ‘political purposes’ (although political is not clearly defined). Secondly, youth-orientated organisations are based upon the models of practice associated with those who work for them (e.g. youth work and social work). Finally, some of the organisations in this sample were previously run from within the local authority structures or with greater funding from the local authority than presently. Despite changes to legal and funding structures in recent decades, including the impact of post-2010 government austerity programme, many retain personal development goals, as outlined in central and local government youth policy.

The perceptions of interviewees regarding the particular struggles of youth are indicative of the fact that professionals may have a different perspective as ‘outsiders’ than for example the young people leading self-organised youth organisations. While many of the same issues to self-organised youth organisations were discussed such as mental health, other more distinct issues were raised, which were discussed much less frequently by self-organised youth organisations, including safety,

identity issues/ a lack of belonging, and exclusion. This demonstrates that issues are to some extent perceived differently by professionals than by young people themselves. In relation to the particular struggles of one client group of vulnerable young people, one professional stated:

"I think there's exclusion of young people on lots of levels. Obviously in terms of voting rights, and I think more broadly about choice in their own lives... I think information is withheld from young people quite a lot, which is deemed as being protective towards them, but it damaging potentially" (OU17)

The role of professionals in youth-orientated organisations also had an influence on organisations' perceptions of the role of social media and digital innovations. While, much like self-organised youth organisations, there was an understanding of the ubiquitous nature of social media in young people's lives, there were many more nuanced opinions expressed as to how to use social media responsibly, which balanced the advantages of social media with clear criticisms and reservations regarding its use. Furthermore, as with self-organised youth organisations, social media use was used to differing extents by different organisations. Nevertheless, some organisations expressed that social media helped to improve the accessibility of engagement in their organisation:

"Social media shapes everything these days. All youth and all of us are on social media. And I guess it's a way to reach out to girls that we can't guarantee engagement in the centre all the time, for location purposes" (OU18)

Furthermore, a different youth voice organisation indicated that social media, in particular closed Facebook pages, allowed them to operate more effectively in advocating on behalf of young people by acting as a convenient tool for consultations:

"For consultations, it works really well because it gets that quick response that you might need for short turn arounds for [funding] bids. They get back to you straight away" (OU12)

Other discussions concerned barriers such as age, in the cases where organisations worked with younger teenagers and the prevalence of bullying online. Professionals highlighted the importance of keeping young people safe online and the associated social media policies of their organisations. One organisation (OU9) expressed a sense of discomfort surrounding social media; their organisation does use it but not extensively, as they see it as potentially damaging to encourage young people to engage with the organisation online while knowing that social media is detrimental to young people's mental health. Despite such concerns and considerations, most organisations continue to use social media to communicate with young people in some form, with a recognition that the communication styles of young people are different to previous generations, thus requiring an "individualised approach" to staying in touch (OU17).

As previously outlined, there is a stronger link between youth-orientated organisations and public authorities than with most self-organised youth groups. Many youth voice activities are designed to influence council services and policy, and many of these charity-sector youth organisations sit on council-run policy networks whereby organisation staff (and sometimes young people) advocate on behalf of young people to feed into such policy making fora. Regarding the council's responsibility to the representation of young people's interests and voice, many organisations highlighted a lack of investment in youth voice initiatives; while several projects remain, they highlight that this is much less than the situation prior to the post-2010 programme of austerity and that there is not enough recognition of the resources required to ensure that youth voice projects take place. Nevertheless, it was noted that local authorities have had little choice regarding the post-2010 government cuts, due to the fact that their budgets are largely controlled by Central Government grants. Nevertheless, the impact of reduced youth voice initiatives on reinforcing existing societal inequalities was highlighted:

"The more deprived communities in Sheffield. Those communities and those families are not used to having a voice. You don't know where to go or how to vocalise it. You might have an opinion, but you have to keep it to yourself cos you've got no one to go to. Whereas in more affluent areas, you could ask your next door neighbour and they'll probably know where to go" (OU12)

Indeed, interviewees were highly perceptive of the wide-ranging inequalities that exist in the city and indeed the different barriers to participation that they pose. Most also reflected honestly at the gaps in their service and who they are not reaching. This differs to some extent to self-organised youth organisations, who consist largely of student organisations, whose perceptions of inequality were reflected upon largely relative to the university context, i.e. inequalities within the student population rather than the city as a whole. Socioeconomic status was a key inequality perceived by youth-orientated organisations, while asylum status was perceived as a major barrier to participation:

"There is a big issue about them having to prove their age. If they've come without their papers and people want them to be older than they are, because then they don't have to accept them as children. There are huge mental health and trauma issues for young people who have experienced awful things.. dealing with that is really different". (OU5)

Disability, gender and geographical/transport exclusion were also key recurrent themes in these discussions. As a strategy against inequalities, safe spaces were proposed as one potential solution to unequal voice and influence. A young women's group highlighted that this had been requested by young women and worked effectively. Furthermore, an organisation working with multiple

groups of young people on youth voice highlighted how they perceive the link between disadvantage and the need for safe spaces:

"I think it's harder for young people when they've got multiple disadvantage. That's why we have this model. When young people identify as being part of a group, they need and want to be in that group sometimes and to have that safe space. Because to be able to have those conversations and to talk about your experiences, you need to feel like you're with people who can understand and who can share some of that with you" (OU5)

As well as safe spaces, some organisations also explained the process of protected seats for young people according to gender, ethnicity, sexuality and other descriptive attributes/ liberation groups, as a way to guarantee inclusion in youth voice fora. Protected seats are a structured way for young people with protected equality characteristics to have a voice in spaces where they may otherwise be underrepresented. Nevertheless, there does remain some perceptions among organisations and stakeholders as to some lack of diversity (especially socioeconomically) in the young people participating in such youth voice projects, despite the measures put in place to combat this on a number of youth voice projects, such as protected seats, fixed term involvement and the removal of selection from within the school system. Decision making in youth-orientated 'youth voice projects' involved a combination of majority voting and consensus decision making processes. However, carrying out consultation activities with other young people was also highlighted as an important method to gather a wider understanding of young people's voice in the city, and to influence decision-making in these organisations. For those organisations delivering social action or recreational activities without a youth voice programme, more informal processes of decision making were cited, whereby young people and facilitators held informal discussions regarding the direction of the activities and social action projects. Variation in the degree of influence in the organisation and the qualitatively different nature of influencing opportunities highlights wide discrepancies is professionally referred to as "youth-led" activity.

General Remarks and Discussion

Stakeholders with knowledge of the city, its youth population and the particular opportunities and challenges for youth organisational participation summarised a number of key features of Sheffield including its high student population, its higher than average rate of poverty, the impact of the post-2010 central government programme of austerity upon youth service provision and inequality more broadly and a range of particular needs of young people. While many of these characteristics of inequality affecting young people would be expected in similar cities across the UK, Sheffield's higher than average rate of poverty is associated with higher instances of other disadvantage

including geographical mobility, crime and fear of crime (as well as antisocial behaviour) and greater pressures on mental health. For students, the particular pressures of social isolation, mental health and balancing different features of university life were highlighted. It was noted that “youth voice” projects were understood by most stakeholders to be the biggest opportunity for youth participation in public debates for young people up to the age of approximately 18 in the city. Above this age, student union organisations were the biggest opportunities for youth participation in public debates for young people 18+.

An exploration of the different forms of youth political organisation within the city indicates a distinct division between the experiences of, the structure of, and the young people within, between youth-orientated and self-organised youth organisations (which exist largely within the student sphere with the exception of unions and non-student youth branches of political parties). While to some extent this is to be expected in a city with two large universities, thus entailing multiple ‘populations’ of young people often with different attributes and needs, it also serves to highlight how operationally dissimilar self-organised student groups and youth-orientated charity organisations are. Indeed, there is not a large degree of overlap in terms of the age groups that these separate forms of youth organisation cover, with youth-orientated organisations broadly working with young people up to the age of 18-21, whereas student organisations are designed by and for students aged mostly 18+. A correspondence between form of organisation and educational stage also raises the question of how participation is affected by educational transitions (and hence also participation transitions). Furthermore, we can also see that there are largely two separate networks of youth organisations operating separately and with distinctly different partner organisations: youth-orientated organisations working with the local authority and with other youth-orientated charities and self-organised youth organisations operating within university and where applicable the networks of political parties and social movement organisations. Furthermore, this highlights how participatory opportunities are much more scarce for young people over 18 who do not attend university; with the exception of political party youth branches and youth branches of trade unions, there are few equivalents to the opportunities provided by student societies for young people who do not attend university at the age of 18+, where they pass the age of eligibility for most youth-orientated organisations’ participatory opportunities. We can also see the division between the student and non-student sphere reflected in the views of different stakeholders; those from within the university sector discussed pressures which to a large degree are specific to university life, whereas stakeholders whose knowledge related to the youth population from across the city indicated more wide ranging features of disadvantage, including factors such as crime and educational exclusion. It is clear that young people with experience of crime, educational exclusion,

or other features of multiple disadvantage will have a much higher chance of exclusion from participating in higher education and hence from political participatory opportunities in the university sphere.

Nevertheless, interviewing a wide range of youth organisations highlighted a number of particular struggles of youth, and approaches to participation that unify most youth organisations. Firstly, increasing rates of poor mental health was a common feature of discussions with all types of youth organisation, both in terms of a political issue that young people are advocating for, and in the sense that it acts as a barrier to participatory opportunities. Secondly, intergenerational inequalities were a common feature of interviews across the different forms of youth organisation, with cross generational differences affecting multiple issues including standard of living, access to education, access to the job market, access to public services. Thirdly, a common approach to most youth organisations was a desire to be inclusive of young people from diverse backgrounds or with different features of disadvantage. In particular the idea of providing safe spaces, both for young people and for different equality/liberation groups was highlighted multiple times, by youth organisations operating across the multiple sectors and networks that have been described.

The interviews with youth organisations also highlighted important differences in the operational structure and decision-making structure within different youth organisations. Here the main distinction lies between self-organised student organisations on the one hand and the more formalised organisations (charity sector youth-orientated, and youth-organised wings of larger unions and parties) on the other hand. The less formal student organisations had less clear decision making processes beyond the basic committee structure as defined by their supporting student unions, to the extent that in many examples decision making processes were unclear (this is not to forget the minority of student organisations who had considered their decision-making processes more extensively). By contrast, more formalised organisations had clearer decision-making processes, albeit with large degrees of variation in the extent of youth influence on the organisation.

While this report has highlighted differences between the ways in which inequality is perceived by different youth organisations and in how youth participatory opportunities are structured, a common feature is that most organisations are highly reflective on issues of inequality and access, which, although conceived of in different ways, recognise on the whole the impact of multiple disadvantage and multiple intersecting features of disadvantage, upon young people's political participation. This is achieved through varying action repertoires, and according to multiple different models of practice, such as the youth work model, youth advocacy, the university society model and the structural set up of political parties and trade unions.

