

Youth Transitions, Youth Policy and Participation

State of the Art Report



Research Project YOYO

”Youth Policy and Participation. Potentials of Participation and Informal Learning for the Transition of Young People to the Labour Market. A Comparison in Ten European Regions”
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Working Paper 1

Written by

Andreas Walther (IRIS Tübingen),
&
Gry Moerch Hejl, Torben Bechmann Jensen (University of Copenhagen)

With the assistance of Amanda Hayes (University of Ulster)

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1. Introduction¹

The transitions of young men and women towards adulthood have become a major political concern across Europe. As young people are a strategic age group for the integration of society as a whole, problems like youth unemployment or disengagement with formal institutions (education and training or counselling) have led to an increase of programmes aimed at reducing transition related risks. Yet, not all of these programmes do succeed in improving the career opportunities of their addressees nor do all programmes succeed in attracting their target group to the same extent. The general assumption of this report is that many policies and programmes are structured by a concept of social integration that is narrowly interpreted in terms of labour market integration, a concept which disregards individuals' biographical perspectives in a comprehensive sense. This is supported by the fact that young people in education and training or in labour market programmes are rarely heard concerning their experiences, needs and aspirations. We therefore suggest that integration policies for young people have to be structured in a way to allow for young people's active participation in the shape of their transitions to work.

The research project "Youth Policy and Participation" is aimed at analysing the "Potentials of Participation and Informal Learning for Young People's Transition to the Labour Market" in ten European Regions. This report is based on the general objectives and documents of the first findings on the relationship between structures and institutions of youth transitions and discourses of participation. It starts with a reference to two main concepts which represent the theoretical foundations of the project: the de-standardization of youth transitions and the contradictions in the concepts of participation and citizenship (Chapter 2). Chapter 3 to 5 are based on national reports which have been produced in the first stage of the project (see Annex). The third chapter of the report draws on trends and structures of youth transitions in the regions involved in the study. The fourth chapter compares meanings and institutions of youth policy. And in the fifth chapter current discourses of participation are documented. It concludes by reflecting on consequences for inter-generational relationships emerging from a participatory shape of transitions to work.

¹ Special thanks go to Amanda Hayes (University of Ulster) for a final proof reading.

2. Foundations

2.1 The de-standardisation of youth transitions

In contemporary modern societies young people's transitions to adulthood in general and to work in particular, have lost their linear nature. Compared to some decades ago when standard biographies were highly predictable and therefore provided both individual orientation and social integration, they may now be pictured as 'yo-yos' going up and down, back and forth (Pais, 1996). While linear transitions corresponded to a gender specific normal biography which was in many respects predetermined (Levy, 1991), yo-yo transitions relate to biographies in which two aspects emerge simultaneously: *choice* and *risk*. However, with an unequal distribution of economic, cultural and social capital and other resources that are necessary for social integration, analytically three types of trajectories might be distinguished:

- trajectories of risk biographies
- trajectories oriented towards the normal biography (yet with ambiguities and insecurities)
- trajectories of choice biographies (see du Bois-Reymond, 1998; Sennett, 1998).

Yet, compared to the inequality between standard biographies choice and risk do structure transitions in less collective ways but result in more individualised trajectories. The fragmentation and pluralisation of life worlds have led to situations in which individuals have to choose and to plan their own lives. People must take individual decisions for or against certain educational and training routes, for or against flexible jobs offered to them by employment services, for or against leaving home early or late, for or against cohabitating with a partner and deciding on a certain life style etc. Criticism against the concept of individualisation has been raised arguing that it neglects persistent structures and mechanisms of social reproduction and of class and gender inequality (e.g. Furlong & Cartmel, 1997). Instead, the concept of individualisation has to be understood as a diversification of life situations and of the necessary resources for social integration. These resources are distributed unequally according to education, gender, social background, ethnicity, or region. Yet the modes of social reproduction and inequality are less linear and increasingly disconnected from collective cultural experiences as family, class culture, neighbourhood or religion, and have become less visible in their structural determination. It is therefore helpful to understand individualisation as "structured individualisation" (Evans & Heinz, 1994).

It is evident that in transitions to work qualifications play an important role in the differences between individual trajectories. High qualifications are an important prerequisite in keeping options and choices open but they are no guarantee. This is especially the case for *young women*. The category of *gender* does not simply increase class or educational (dis)advantages. The persistence of gender inequalities on the labour market makes female identities highly contradictory: on the one hand it is considered normal that young women have professional orientations due to higher qualifications. On the other hand, they still experience barriers on the labour market. However, whereas in Northern countries (e.g. United Kingdom and Denmark) the trend towards increased employment opportunities for young women seems to be improving, this is not the case in Southern countries and in Germany (Bradley, 1996; Walby, 1997; European Commission, 1997a; Stauber, 1998; López Blasco et al., 1999).

Under conditions of individualised and fragmented transitions *subjectivity* plays an increasingly crucial role, as individuals have to integrate decisions into their life plans. In their every day life transitions in different life spheres are *interlinked*: education and work, family, partnership and sexuality, life style and consumption, citizenship etc. (Coles, 1995; MacDonald, 1998). Some decades ago these transitions were experienced as more or less distinct but parallel status passages between youth and adulthood. In the meantime they have de-coupled, they follow different rhythms and logics – they lead to fragmented lives and transitions which individuals have to reconcile in the attempt of balancing their identities (Bauman, 1995; Pais, 1999; Keupp et al. 1999).

Apart from that the clear distinction between dependency and autonomy, between youth and adulthood which has been central for the standard biography for many young people, ? does not correspond to their subjective experiences and self-concepts, or to their real life situation. Increasingly they live in situations of semi-dependency and should therefore be looked at as *young adults* rather than youth. Yet, the de-standardization of transitions takes different forms in different social contexts: whereas in Southern Europe this has led to the “long family“, young men and women living with their parents until their thirties, in Northern Europe a broad range of life forms have emerged: living alone but dependent on family resources or welfare provision, having their own family – formally or not – while at the same time not having completed education or training etc. (Cavalli 1997; Walther et al. 1999).

The increased relevance of young people’s subjectivity in constructing their biographies locates the concept of de-standardized transitions at the centre of the relationship between

structure and agency (Giddens, 1984). Young adults create their life worlds by symbolic and social action reproducing or transforming their life situations and modes of social integration. By doing so, young women and men find new paths and detours and produce new transitional patterns and gender roles. They thus create new patterns of normality. Young adults' orientation towards the present rather than the future emphasises this trend. Often it does not matter to them whether classic landmarks of social integration (job and economic autonomy, an own family) have already been reached (Rudd & Evans, 1998; Walther et al., 1999).

A viable access to the ways in which young people experience transitions and try to make them fit into their everyday lives and life plans lies in the sphere of *cultural practices and life styles*. It is obvious that young people in their use of institutional offers prefer settings in which they can integrate youth cultural orientations and practices (Willis, 1991; du Bois-Reymonds, 1998; Pais, 1999; Miles et al., 2002). The simultaneous nature of 'adult' demands in trajectories – work and family building on the one hand and involvement in youth cultural contexts on the other is one of the most important and at the same time contradictory aspects of young people's lives today. Many young people between 18 and 25 years (and even older) do not regard themselves as adults, yet they expect to be treated and respected as adults, i.e. to have a saying in institutional decisions affecting their lives (see Evans & Heinz, 1994; Walther et al., 1999).

The constellation of de-standardised transitions is a challenge for policies addressing youth transitions that is highly contradictory. Kelly has characterized the complex, fragmented and de-standardized social arenas of youth transitions as "wild zones" which are increasingly less likely to follow formal institutional criteria. This is in line with Zygmunt Bauman's diagnosis of uncertainty being the main structure of the post-modern condition (Kelly 1999; cf. Bauman, 1999). As a response, government and policies of public institutions try to turn them into "tame zones" – institutionalised trajectories with formal structures and predictable outcomes. For young people this is a dilemma: they find that the trajectories that are provided by the institutions do not correspond to their actual life situation nor do they correspond to the actual demand of the labour market. This makes participating in public institutions unattractive. At the same time self-chosen trajectories are available only to a minority who have enough resources, skills and courage (Kovacheva, 1998; du Bois-Reymonds, 1998).

Apart from aiming at the re-standardisation transitions policies addressing young people are strongly compartmentalised. As Figure 1 illustrates, we can roughly distinguish a hard and a soft sector:

Figure 1: Hard and soft policies addressing youth in transition

	'soft' → 'hard'		
<i>Logic</i>	individual development subjective dimensions local level		allocation/normalisation systemic dimensions national level
<i>Sector</i>	Youth Policy (youth work, youth information)	Education + Training Welfare Policy	Labour Market Policy
<i>Aims</i>	Self-realisation Leisure time Political education Civic socialisation Community development	Selection / Human Resources Civic education Prevention/Compensation of Social Problems	Labour allocation Segmentation Employability

The distinction between hard and soft on the one hand refers to the rigidity of organisation and the extent to which only systemic or subjective dimensions of social integration are taken into account. On the other hand it refers to power: in terms of funding, in terms of defining what is normal and legitimate in people’s lives. This reflected by the fact that soft sectors are more often organized at the local level whilst the hard sectors depend more strongly from the national level (see below). And it is the hard policy sectors that structure young people’s lives more than the soft ones, especially with regard to the work part of their biography.

This dilemma between young men’s and women’s transition experiences and transition policies has been conceptualised as “misleading trajectories” (EGRIS 2001). It refers to a comprehensive understanding of social integration in which systemic success (qualifications, jobs, income etc.) and subjective satisfaction (experience of recognition and motivation) are interrelated. It implies that if only one of both dimensions is neglected trajectories intended to lead young people towards social integration may in fact be misleading. Young people may drop out from trajectories that are apparently successful in systemic terms if they do not perceive a correspondence with their subjective orientations. Vice versa trajectories that are experienced as subjectively satisfying but lack social recognition (and institutional support)

may lead into a dead end situation. It has been argued that policies have to be flexible enough to contextualise with regard to individual cases. Individual contexts only can be assessed and considered appropriately with regard to subjective dimensions if the individuals concerned are actively involved in the definition of problems, objectives and needs regarding their own biographies. Consequently, young people's *active participation* is a central prerequisite of policies aiming at young people's social integration (Walther et al. 2002).

On the level of policy discourses participation is referred to under the notion of *active citizenship* – and it is pronounced as main objective by all European governments as well as the representatives of European Union and European Commission. Yet, citizenship is a highly normative concept. It implies that young people actively shape their lives and it calls for policies making this possible. The underlying hypothesis of this report is that in most contexts participation is either restricted to the 'soft' sectors of leisure or non-formal education or - with regard to the 'hard' facts of school to work transitions - has a mere rhetorical function.

2.2 Participation and citizenship: concepts, implications and contradictions

With the social status of young people diffusing due to prolonged and fragmented transitions from education to the labour market, participation and *citizenship* have become leading concepts in the discourse of national and European youth policies (CDJ, 1997; European Commission, 1997c; Bynner et al. 1997; European Commission, 1998; Kovacheva 1999). This corresponds to a tendency to replace socio-economic models of social integration by notions of a civil society in which the relevant modes of integration shift from the spheres of rights, economy and work towards social bonds and participation. This trend is even more pronounced in the societies of Eastern Europe where the transformation process implies economic, political and cultural changes. Beside from the implementation of democratic institutions the discourse of developing the civil society has also the function to hide socio-economic contradictions emerging from the transformation process.

When Marshall (1950) conceptualised citizenship as the civic, political and social rights of individuals, he referred to the first decades after the Second World War in which social integration was achieved by following the regular pathways into work and family building. Social integration seemed achievable for all just by enrolment into education and training, and by social insurance systems. In this context participation and citizenship both had a more passive connotation but they were related to the 'hard' facts of social integration: democratic influence,

employment and income security. In the meantime, the Fordist idea of “ever lasting prosperity” (Lutz, 1984) has ceased to be a reliable point of orientation for the development of Western societies. Thus, the views on social integration of state institutions and individual citizens increasingly split. While the state continues to advertise enrolment in formal institutions with promises of integration, individuals have become sceptical about both the relevance of these promises for their lives and their probability to become realized. Across Europe the emergence of social anomie, political apathy or dissatisfaction and disengagement with formal institutions are thematised (cf. Bourdieu 1993; Böhnisch 1994; Williamson 1997; France 1998).

Discourses of participation and citizenship are umbrella terms to signal the danger of social exclusion (Stevens, Bur & Young, 1999). It is rightly assumed that in as much as young people especially get the opportunity to identify with relevant institutions and actors, they will be willing to participate and take on responsibilities as citizens (cf. CYRCE, 1995 and 1999; Helve & Bynner, 1996). All European states therefore try to relate policies addressing youth to the principles of participation and active citizenship (see for examples Reviews of National Youth Policies in the Netherlands 1998 or Romania 2000). However, ‘participation’ is not as unequivocal a term as it might seem, certainly not in respect to policy measures geared to young people. If we have a closer look on the diverse discourse arenas we find different ways in which the term participation is used:

- *Political participation* is especially thematised with regard to dropping election rates
- *Participation in education and training* refers to being enrolled in respective institutions whether organised in a participatory way or not, whether being active learners or not.
- *Education for participation and citizenship* in school and youth work refers to young people’s ascribed lack of skills and competencies to participate (in a recognized way) – later.
- *Social and civic participation* refers to engagement in associations, voluntary work, youth work activities and youth councils.

It is quite obvious that across Europe the meaning of participation differs according to the different social sectors which we have broadly characterised as ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ sectors. These sectors correspond to more formal or more informal ways of participation and we find a more formalized and passive understanding of participation in the hard sector, compared to more informal and active forms of participation in the soft sector. A form of participation which might be seen as lying between ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ and which has been referred to increasingly in the last years are local youth councils. The aim is to link social participation and political participation by giving young people an opportunity to raise their voices with regard to community related

issues or projects. However, as ‘real’ influence is limited due to councils’ restriction to ‘soft’ matters and to little financial resources only a minority of young people see councils as an interesting option of engagement. And this minority in most cases comes from middle class families and is oriented towards academic careers (Matthews 2001; IARD 2001; see also Chapter 3 of this report).

Apart from the different sectors it is also the different levels of governance that have an impact on the meaning of participation. Employment policies and in many (not all) contexts education and training are also governed from the national policy level. And as regards youth policies on the *national* and the *European* level young people’s participation is interpreted in the sense of corporatist representation – either by youth organisations or by inquiries into the living conditions of young people in the context of planning future policies (see Herrmann, 1998; Kovacheva 1999). *Locally based youth policy* can be more open for individual life-course needs. However, local youth policies and the community sector are part of a wider national and economic context and therefore are not wholly independent in their actions and decisions. Participation offers for youth-in-transition depend on national as well as community policies, and it cannot be assumed beforehand that they lead to the same results and degrees of participation (cf. Bentley & Gurumurthy, 1999).

Across these different levels, arenas and forms of participation two general concepts of participation can be distinguished:

- *Participation as objective*: Education, training and employment measures are designed by youth policy and educational experts for particular target groups in order to facilitate their transition into employment and therefore into *later social participation* as citizens. This idea of participation and citizenship comes close to the concept developed by Marshall under Fordist economic and social conditions (see above). They both share a deep mistrust of individuals’ and especially young people’s capacities to take responsibility for their lives (cf. Brown & Lauder, 1998). While the measures might be intended to further active participation, young people often perceive them as coercion. In fact, the majority of youth training programmes suffer from that discrepancy (MacDonald, 1998). And while it is true that unemployment is one of the main factors of social exclusion, it does not follow that a job is the only prerequisite for social inclusion and active participation (Henderson, 1997; Duffy, 1998). In as much as transition policies are reduced to providing qualifications for the less

educated, young people have little or no opportunity to experience active participation. Their scope to choose the direction of their lives is more than limited. And so it is difficult for them to understand these schemes as a way to participation. The dilemma for youth and/or transition policy is then to convince them by forcing them to accept the training programmes. The promise that participation will come subsequently depends on the functioning of frustration tolerance which however is lower in those with little social and cultural capital (Coleman, 1990).

- *Participation as principle*: Isin and Wood (1999) suggest that participation and citizenship require identification (see also Wenger, 1998). Referring to recent identity theorists (Bauman, 1995) and to the fragmentation of identity under the conditions of post modernity, they argue that participation and citizenship have to be conceptualised as processual. Participation therefore has to be a principle in the *practice* of policies, not only a goal or a result of such policies. Progressive youth work is well aware of this dilemma (Williamson, 1997b; Banks, 1999). How to instil a sense of participation whilst compelling young people - more or less overtly - to take part in programmes that they do not choose voluntarily? Within the context of the EU various programmes try to solve the dilemma by designing ways of reconciling participation and qualification needs (see European Commission, 1997c). While many of those examples refer to the age groups of youth in transition, their participatory content and intention are not specifically geared to transition problems.

Applying the dimensions active versus passive participation and participation as objective versus participation as principle one gets a first rough framework by which scopes of participation entailed in different policy sectors can be assessed:

Figure 2: Dimensions of participation in different policy sectors

	<i>Objective</i>	<i>Principle</i>
<i>Passive</i>	Education & Training Labour Market Policies	Representative Democracy
<i>Active</i>	Education for Citizenship	Youth Policy

We want to argue that participation can only strengthen social integration if it is an integral principle of policies. Further, we assume that the development of ‘the’ civil society only increases social integration and cohesion if implying a strong and universal welfare regime.

Zygmunt Bauman agrees that especially under post-modern conditions of uncertainty participation requires security going further than mere existential survival. He argues that the universal principle individual autonomy can only be guaranteed by an unconditional basic income (Bauman 2001; cf. Standing, 1999). If we look at the relation between youth and welfare policies, especially young people's access to social security, we find considerable differences across Europe. One can say that the extent and the conditions of young people's entitlements stand for the degree in which young people are seen as full citizens although being in transition in the respective societies (European Youth Forum, 1998; Leibfried & Leisering, 1999; CYRCE 1999).

It is interesting to interpret the concept of *welfare regimes* in this regard. The concept of policy regimes refers to general orientations of politics in given contexts and in a certain sense to the respective culture of politics, i.e. the dominant values and norms governing concrete policies. It is evident that such a typology represents ideal types whilst concrete cases may be more complex (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Gallie & Paugam, 2000; IARD 2001):

- In sub-protective welfare regimes young people do not have individual access to social security (especially in Southern Europe) their participation possibilities are limited considerably – being young means to depend on the family of origin; youth has no recognized status.
- In post-socialist welfare regimes young people experience the liberation from and the deregulation of a system that protected young people via highly standardized trajectories towards a regime which is more and more sub-protective (e.g. Romania).
- Liberal welfare regimes (mainly the UK) provide universal access to a residual social security which however is strongly linked to responsibilities; the basic orientation is that young people should be economically independent as soon as possible.
- In employment-centred welfare regimes (as for example Germany) training routes are part of a corporatist constellation providing those included (e.g. in vocational training) with a much better status than those relying on social assistance. Policies aim at integrating young people in regular training rather paying social assistance or forcing them to accept 'any' jobs.
- In universal welfare regimes citizens over the age of 18 are entitled to social assistance, young people are supported for being young; youth and citizenship do not exclude each other (e.g. Denmark, Sweden); however, there are tendencies to make benefits more conditional.

In Chapter's 3 and 4 we will show how this is reflected in the programmes for unemployed youth and by institutional arrangements of youth policy.

Finally, we want to stress the point that beside institutional factors, the degree of participation is also structured by factors like gender, education, family situation, age, ethnicity, and personal characteristics like energy, optimism or depressive mood etc. According to such differences needs and chances to participate vary. Youth policies which do not take account of such individual differences and needs, fail to meet their target groups. This happens if programmes are narrowly geared to training, neglecting the cultural desires and resources of young people, if programmes neglect the different needs of young men compared to young women, or if programmes overwhelm their participants with ‘participation and active citizenship rhetoric’ which is based on no real influence. At the same time, focussing the needs of specific groups entails the danger of stigmatisation. Programmes for so-called ‘disadvantaged’ youth are likely to undermine participants’ self-esteem through both the recruitment procedures and their special status which marks them as the ‘losers’. Banks et al. (1999) have shown that young people’s experience of coercion by formal institutions even prevent them from getting involved in youth work projects even if these projects provide opportunities of participation (cf. Hall & Williamson, 1999). Based on various qualitative research we suggest that most young people who disengage with institutions like the employment service or formal training are motivated for training and work. However, in the formal settings in which transitions to work are organised they do not succeed to relate existing offers to their subjective life plans and rather feel their personal dignity neglected. Whereby, the construction of identity and biography is undermined. If young women and men are expected to actively participate in their transitions, institutions must provide space in which these cultural practices can be realised.

2.3 Theoretical foundations and perspectives

The distinction between participation as objective and participation as principle corresponds to the distinction between *systems integration* by functional (formal) institutions and *social integration* through inter-subjective communication embedded in everyday life-worlds suggested by Habermas (1981) and Giddens (1984). Both authors make clear that on the one side modernization of systems integration (e.g. expansion of education and training) – or the development of new social structures (‘structuration’) – depends on a prior rationalization of social integration (e.g. individuals' motivation). On the other side the rationalization of social

integration requires autonomy from systemic functionalisation in order not to be colonized. From this, two general prerequisites of active participation may be derived:

- *competences of participation*: Many youth work programmes are based on the assumption that it is the individuals' lack of specific competences restricting their participation: social competence, skills of expression and negotiation etc. (European Commission, 1997c).
- *opportunity structures of participation*: participation is by definition a concept in which not only one party has the power to decide. On the contrary, as the interests of participating individuals, groups or institutions may be controversial, Stevens, Bur & Young (1999) argue that participation always involves compromise, negotiation and conflict which, however, is neglected by official policies – at least by those dealing with the 'hard' issues of education, training and employment.

The concept of *empowerment* refers to this reciprocity between individual agency and structural opportunities in a critical and at the same time practice-oriented perspective. It means to enhance both individual's possibilities and capabilities to pursue subjectively relevant objectives. It starts from the respect for young people's life plans (even more in contexts of democracy and individualisation) rather than making them fit into existing measures (Rappaport, 1981).

In as much as policies refer to young people's lack of respective skills and competencies that inhibit them from active participation they refer to participation as an objective of policy. By this participation is separated from the political arena and individualizing tendencies are reproduced instead of embedding them in a social context. The notion of civil society behind these approaches is one of friendly and competent individuals helping each other when necessary. 'Hard' structures of inequality and competition, of alienation and exploitation, of unemployment and poverty are excluded from these visions.

Under the title "Justice Interruptus" Nancy Fraser (1997) argues in this perspective that late modern societies are structured by a dilemma between two modes of social justice: redistribution for equality and recognition of difference. Policies that concentrate only on one aspect are at risk of reproducing injustices. She applies this argument to the example of gender policies: on the one hand, the mere recognition of women as equal but different from men can undermine their citizenship if they are still restricted to the social sectors which suffer from lower income and mobility opportunities; on the other hand redistribution-oriented policies of equality may neglect that women have to cope with different demands in everyday life compared to men. Gender

justice therefore requires reconciling both equality and recognition. The only way out of this dilemma is what Fraser in earlier works has called “*the politics of needs interpretation*” (Fraser, 1989). She argues that the social acceptance of welfare institutions claiming to produce social justice depends on the extent to which the individuals are included in the formulation of their needs (to which these institutions address) whilst often these needs are formulated in advance (e.g. by experts) and according to bureaucratic principles.

This balance of policies between individual and collective is also found in Giddens’ notion of *life politics* which he conceptualises as “politics of life decisions” in contrast to the emancipatory model of “politics of life chances”. Yet, in late modernity both policy models are necessarily connected in a dialectic relationship. Whilst life politics deal with forms of self-actualisation, emancipatory politics are related to the access towards means of self-actualisation (Giddens, 1991).

An important reference in this regard is the notion of *lived citizenship* introduced by Hall and Williamson (1999) and taken up by Lister (2001):

“Young people’s transitions to adulthood can be understood as a process of developing citizenship in which, over time, young people become eligible to enjoy the rights and to exercise the obligations and responsibilities associated with citizenship. It is also a pivotal period in the process of ‘citizenship-identity formation’, a period during which (children and) young people have been described as ‘learner citizens’ (Arnot and Dillabough, 2000: 12) or ‘citizens in the making’ (Marshall, 1950: 25; Hall and Williamson, 1999). Such labels should not be read as a denial of young people’s citizenship status but more as indicator of the ways in which, more than at other points of the life-course, the relationship to citizenship is in a state of flux. For young people, in particular, therefore, citizenship can be understood as ‘as much a transitional process as an outcome status achieved at a particular stage of life’ (Bynner, 1997: 238). It is a process that young people actively negotiate but within structural constraints, which shape citizenship as an exclusionary as well as an inclusive force.”
(Lister 2001: 1)

Lister consequently distinguishes between citizenship as a status and citizenship as a practice (Lister, 2001). The *status of citizenship* - interpreted according to Marshall’s concept of political, civil and social rights (Marshall, 1950) - however is more and more difficult to achieve for young people due the de-standardization of transitions. Especially young adults suffer from a

“socio-political vacuum” (Müller, 1996) between the institutionalised life phases of youth and adulthood. In contrast, she locates the *practice of citizenship* in the sphere of unpaid work, especially voluntary work. The reduction of citizenship to either paid or unpaid work might be plausible with regard to the central role of work for social integration in contemporaneous labour societies. However, this entails the risk of reproducing a separation between status and practice as well as between paid and unpaid work – and therefore to miss the objective of linking both under the umbrella of ‘lived citizenship’. According to Hall and Williamson

“... lived citizenship (is) the meaning that citizenship actually has in people’s lives and the ways in which people’s social and cultural backgrounds and material circumstances affect their lives as citizens.” (Hall & Williamson, 1999: 2)

It may be the fact that only in unpaid work individuals can fully realize their meaning of citizenship but instead of separating different aspects of citizenship to different spheres of social life we relate the practice of citizenship to the act of negotiating (or not negotiating) rights and social participation and to the respective relationships between social actors. As we have argued above young people develop work related orientations, aspirations and motivations which, however, often are neither perceived nor understood nor recognized by institutional actors. The practice of citizenship relates to the “struggle for power” (Honneth, 1992) in defining and interpreting rights and responsibilities.

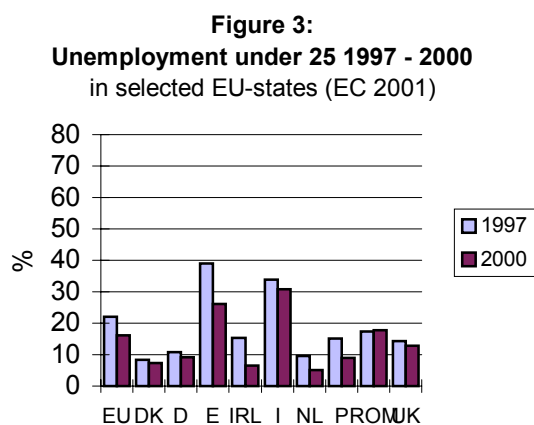
To conclude, we want to propose a *biography oriented understanding of participation* which starts from the increasing individualization, fragmentation and uncertainty of young people’s transitions to work and adulthood. This understanding refers to active participation as an integral principle of governance and institutional regulation. It refers further to a perspective, which integrates welfare state and civil society, allowing for a balance between flexibility and security so that individuals are enabled to actively engage in the public shape of their biographies. And we argue that such policies are most likely to succeed at the local level where relationships between policies, community and individuals are more concrete.

3. The ‘hard sector’: trends in youth transitions

In this section we will briefly assess the situation of young people’s transitions to work in nine European countries: Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Spain, and the UK. First, we will look at structural trends in youth transitions. Second, we will draw on recent policies adopted in these countries to regulate transitions. Third, some basic concepts and trends will be highlighted.

3.1 Structural trends in youth transitions

Unemployment



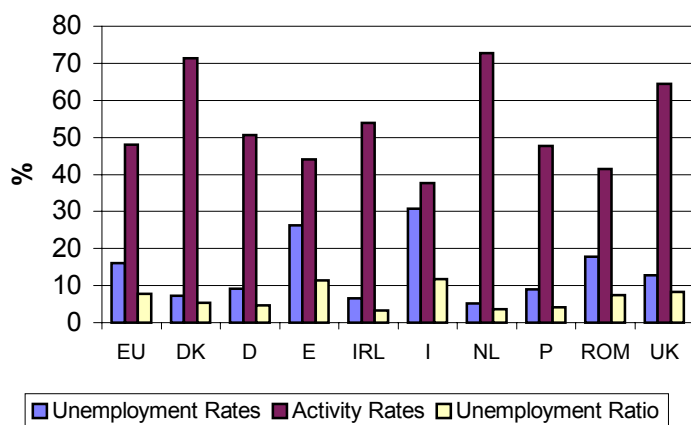
Though providing only a superficial picture requiring further comparative and qualitative differentiation already the national unemployment rates for the under 25 year olds in 1997 and 2000 unfold a highly diversified situation across Europe. Figure 3 reveals enormous differences not only in the percentages of unemployed young people (e.g. the rate in Spain being four times higher than in Denmark) but also as regards the

developments since 1997. There are dynamic youth labour markets as in Ireland, the Netherlands and Spain. By contrast we find more stagnant situations as in Germany, Italy and Romania.

There is a broad discussion on the comparability of youth unemployment rates. On the one hand national systems apply different definitions and rules of registration; a difficulty which may be alleviated by using data such as the European Labour Force Survey which does not depend on institutional differences. On the other hand unemployment rates refer to the active population and not to the whole age group of under 25 year olds. As increasingly young people are expected to stay on in education and training the significance of unemployment rates might become even more blurred. Correspondingly, as figure 4 demonstrates unemployment rates are higher where activity rates are lower. If comparing unemployment ratios, i.e. the percentage of unemployed in the whole age group of 15 to 25 year olds we find

that differences remain but are significantly lower. Yet, the huge differences in activity rates derive from the different methods of organising education and training. Participants in school based vocational education and training will appear as ‘not active’ in contrast to apprentices

Figure 4:
Unemployment and Activity of under 25 year olds
in selected EU-states 2000 (Eurostat 2001)

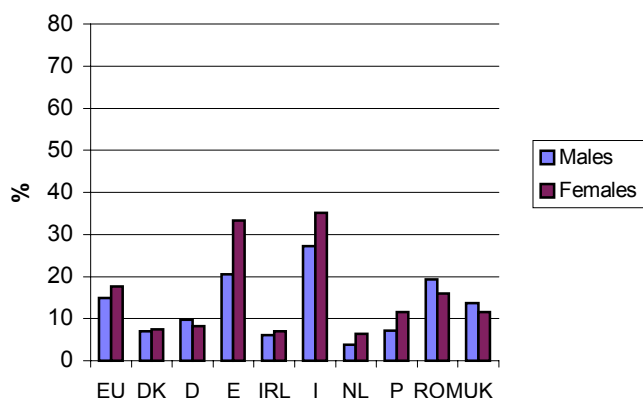


(also if training is standardised by national training systems).

A contradictory concept in this regard is that of ‘youth labour markets’. It refers to the fact that the entrance of the younger generation to employment and work may be regulated in a specific way, for example by youth specific wages or labour protection or by apprenticeship systems. At the same time the category of youth is connected to

the emergence of a phase in the life course structured by education and training (Mørch, 1985). There is still a broad difference between transition systems in dealing with this contradiction. In the UK for example youth is still seen as instrumental for entering into the labour market as directly as possible. In Denmark in contrast, education and training are increasingly oriented towards individual development and recognise youth as a quality of its own. In countries with a strong system of vocational training like Germany, youth means to be in training which on the one hand is related to later labour market activity. On the other

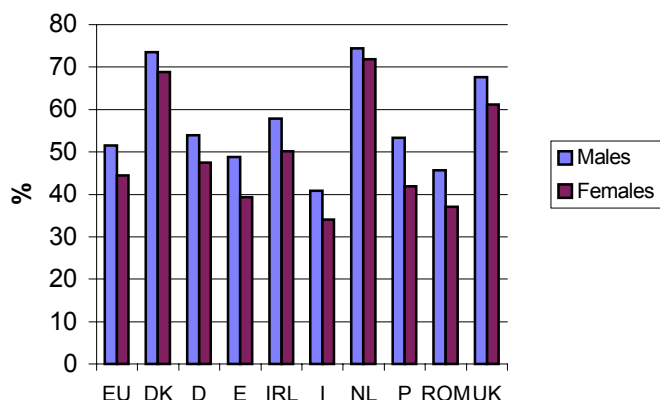
Figure 5:
Unemployed males and females under 25 in 2000
(Eurostat 2001)



hand, the training system provides a youth specific place in society (cf. Furlong et al. 2001).

Figures 5 and 6 show important differences according to gender. However, these differences are not parallel across Europe: in southern countries (mainly Italy and Spain) young women are even more

Figure 4:
Activity rates of males and females under 25
 (Eurostat 2001)



affected by unemployment than young males, whereas in the UK and Germany we find the opposite. In most other countries gender segmentation of youth labour markets is not visible in unemployment rates but remains more latent. In general, activity rates of females are significantly lower than that of males reflecting gendered family obligations, a higher

rate of females in school based education and training (whilst males are dominant in company-based training), and a stronger tendency of young women to ‘disappear’ in inactivity in cases of restricted employment opportunities.

With regard to this rather superficial comparison it is plausible to assume that different rates of unemployment and activity derive from different forms of division of labour – according to the generations and the genders – and from different regional economic and labour market dynamics. Apart from this it can be assumed that youth transitions are segmented according to ethnicity. Schools failing in dealing with cultural diversity and employers’ biased recruitment practices result in discrimination against members of ethnic minority groups. This is most visible in countries such as Denmark and the Netherlands. In Germany this effect is even increased by the selective school system (cf. OECD, 2001).

Education and training

A much more contradictory aspect of youth transitions is in how education the lack of a certain level of qualifications makes young people vulnerable for risks of social exclusion in their transition to work. On the one hand, data suggest that those with lower qualifications are more vulnerable for unemployment or precariousness than those with higher qualifications. However this is not true to the same extent across Europe, as in Southern Europe especially young people with qualifications from post-compulsory education and even from higher education struggle considerably in entering the labour market. On the other hand, data on EU-level show that qualifications have increased enormously in all member states without

reducing young people's general vulnerability on the labour market (European Commission 2001; CEDEFOP 2001). Investment in education and training therefore appears to pay off in terms of improved employment perspectives on the individual level but not for the whole age group. It seems rather that the so-called "elevator effect" (Beck, 1992) has raised the level on which labour market competition leads to social selection according to educational qualifications; this is most visible with regard to restricted opportunities of young women. This trend also referred to as the "de-coupling of education and employment" (Beck, 1992; European Commission 1993) necessarily influences the strategies of young people, especially of those for whom a qualification that leads to recognized and satisfactory jobs seems to be difficult to achieve. In the EU on average, one fifth of school leavers stop their educational career when they have completed their compulsory education. On average the percentage of 18-24 year olds who are low skilled and not in education or training, is higher for men than for women and it is especially high (about 30%) in Italy, Portugal, Spain where the benefits of education and training for young people can hardly be assessed because they pay off only more than a decade later (Eurostat, 2001a). The difficult situation caused by socio-economic transformation is also reflected in central and eastern Europe. Whilst in the EU, in 1997/98 between 50 per cent (UK) and 95 per cent (Sweden) of 18 year olds were in education and training, in Romania this was the case only for 40 per cent (Eurostat, 2001b). However, problems of dropping out or status Zero are difficult to tackle as respective measures in most cases are experienced as an increase of control by young people – which in effect they are. The most ambitious policies to reduce dropping out and to facilitate re-entering have been undertaken in Denmark and the Netherlands.

The expectation that the expansion of practice-based vocational training might motivate young people who are fed up with school and at the same time reduce problems of mismatch between education and employment by meeting employers' demands until now has not been evidenced. Although apprenticeship systems such as in Germany are characterised by a low youth unemployment rate they increasingly struggle with leading to later employment in the same sector and on the level of qualification provided. Instead, the structure of the service sector as the most dynamic in creating new jobs, rather suggests that employment requires at least post-compulsory general education whilst specific training is difficult to organize. Required skills do not coincide with curricula in a conventional sense but with a broader concept of contextual competencies (cf. OECD 2001). These might still be provided better by general education but at the same time often leads to over-qualification compared to available

jobs (European Commission 2001; Walther et al. 2002). However, it seems that the concentration on vocational training to close the gap between education and employment has to do with the need of policies to refer to linear logic of input and output; the latter – in form of qualifications – being measurable and comparable according to institutionalised standards. The most far reaching reforms as regards the integration of education and training have been undertaken in Italy, Spain, Portugal, Romania and the United Kingdom thus aiming at a prolonging of educational phases. In Ireland the strong demand for labour has led to an increase of short-term training for specified skills required by the economy. In some countries at the same time access to higher education has been improved thus confronting both structures of selectivity and the service economy's need for a broad general education. These are Romania, Portugal, the Netherlands, Denmark and the UK.

3.2 Programmes for disadvantaged and/or unemployed young people

As policies regarding the re-structuring of education and training are not always sufficient, nor capable to reduce youth unemployment directly, governments have implemented programmes addressing those considered as most disadvantaged. These measures can be both preventive (e.g. prevent dropping out) or explicitly aimed at unemployed young people. In accordance to whether unemployment is interpreted as a decline in labour demand or as problems with labour supply, policies against unemployment are either structure- or individual-related. Structure-related policies primarily aim at diversifying opportunities by increasing the demand for labour (incentives for employers or programmes of public or private job creation):

- *Wage subsidies for employers*: By this method the status gap between adults and young people shall be reduced due to which young people do not develop work experience (very important in Southern Europe, increasing in the UK and Germany).
- *Job creation* policies engage in developing additional employment opportunities, either in existing companies, or in the public sector or in environments that can be characterized as artificial. This is because they provide a particularly protective work situation which is funded for social reasons and not for the services and products delivered.
- *Assistance to self-employment* is a strategy which directly aims at structures of the labour market – be it gender segmentation or a lack of enterprises that need labour. Such facilities may be financial, counselling, management training or comprehensive support in the form of incubators combining different dimensions of support and providing young

entrepreneurs with a basic infrastructure. Self-employment oriented policies may address young people with higher education diplomas but also young people without any formal qualifications (e.g. in the sectors of tourism and services). Often programmes have a priority on women (especially relevant in Italy, Portugal and the Netherlands).

Individual-related policies aim at the ‘employability’ of individuals in the sense of increasing their competitiveness on the labour market and to compensate with lacking or maladjusted skills and qualifications:

- *Improvement of counselling*: In principle services of vocational information and counselling refer to both the structural as well as the individual level – in the sense of matching supply and demand. In Southern Europe and Romania such services have not yet been implemented until recently, to a considerable extent the focus is on standardising a level of information to smooth labour market flows. Yet, in most cases counselling means that an individual is allocated to existing jobs – or placed in courses to become more employable – than vice-versa. In Northern Europe this is obvious where the individualising of counselling for those assumed to be most disadvantaged is explicitly on the agenda. On the one hand, this improves the services capacities to provide individuals with targeted and motivating offers. On the other hand, it entails the danger of increasing social control and pressure by more differentiated means (especially in Denmark, Netherlands, Germany and UK).
- *Additional training offers* that either increase the regular supply in quantitative terms, or that consider learning difficulties and lower qualifications of trainees, or that overcome segmentation by providing training for specific groups in professions in which they have not yet had a chance to enter (e.g. for females in technical occupations) (in all countries).
- *Pre-vocational education and training schemes* start from the assumptions that those who have failed to enter regular training or employment first have to compensate with individual deficits as regards active job search, lack of qualifications, learning difficulties, social behaviour or language problems. In some cases pre-vocational courses may be accredited to further training, in others they are a mere waiting loop before entering regular training (very important in Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark and partly also in the UK).
- *Workfare programmes*: Relate to discourses of “rights and responsibilities” as there is an increasing trend to inhibit young people from staying in the status ‘unemployed’ and receiving social benefits without engaging in job search or education and training. Obviously, young people’s entitlement to any form of benefit is a necessary prerequisite

for such policies so that in Italy, Spain, Portugal and Romania especially such policies lack the necessary means of realisation. In contrast, countries such as the Netherlands, the UK and Denmark with a universal access to social benefits, workfare is an explicit strategy. Still there is a difference between the UK on the one side where young people are under pressure to enter paid work as directly as possible and Denmark where the focus is on motivation and individual development. Activation not necessarily means to enter employment or directly labour-related training but to engage in any developmental activity. In other countries (as in Ireland and Germany) trends towards coercive strategies can be observed. Yet, young people's entitlements to social benefits are not universal enough to serve as a basis of explicit workfare policies.

Concepts of 'disadvantage'

Behind this structure- versus individual-related policies we can distinguish two different concepts of '*disadvantage*'. In most cases national transition systems consist of both concepts – according to different target groups – but at the same time it is possible also to identify dominant tendencies:

- Disadvantage as the *result of being unemployed* points to a *structural perspective*. It goes together with weak standardised transition systems from school to work, i.e. employment systems accepting labour without formal qualification credits. Disadvantage in that structural perspectives can be seen as an effect of negative macro-economic constellations such as socio-economic transformation, de-industrialisation or economic dependency, a situation where it is not the individual who is blamed in the first place.
- Unemployment as a *consequence of disadvantage* by contrast blames the *individual* for his or her status of being vulnerable by focussing on personal deficits like a poor education, or not enough ambition, etc., thus veiling structural causes of the labour market system. The notion of unemployed youth as an 'underclass' accounts as well for this individualising approach as individuals' unemployment is ascribed to a culture of dependency on social benefits. Young people are referred to as 'not willing' but as parasites needing re-socialisation for work.

Our hypothesis is that in as much as individual ascriptions prevail, policies fail in preventing de-motivation and disengagement but lead to what Goffman has characterized as 'cooling out', 'gate-keepers' of the transition system deal with individuals in such a way that make them believe that their aspirations (in terms of careers and decent jobs) are too high compared to their qualifications and abilities. On the contrary, empowering individuals implies to

increase not only individual abilities but also structural possibilities (see Figure 7; cf. Goffman, 1963; Walther et al. 2002).

Figure 7: Types of ascription patterns and of disadvantage policies

consequences (type of policies) ascription of disadvantages	Individualising: Deficit-oriented (adaptation to selection)	Structure-related: Widening (or alternative) pathways of integration
<i>"Objective" (e.g. physical / mental disabilities)</i>	Re-habilitation	Protected employment
Individual deficits <i>Constructed (e.g. education, labour market competition, 'underclass')</i>	Compensatory measures, e.g. pre- vocational education Workfare-policies	Broadened access to recognized education, training, and employment Second chance programmes
Structural barriers	(pre-vocational) qualification schemes in the area of home-economics for young women or language courses for youth from ethnic minorities	Wage subsidies Job creation Promotion of self-employment

Cooling out  Empowering

Concepts of youth in transition

Finally, policies can be questioned with regard to their main objective and orientation in terms of education, training, employment or youth policy. It is assumed that these orientations stand for respective concepts of youth and the scopes for participation by young men and women are allowed for during their transition period. And it can be further assumed that these orientations and concepts can be related to the typology of youth welfare regimes introduced in Chapter 1 (Gallie & Paugam, 2000).

- *Young people as 'inhibited' adult labour force – employment-oriented policies* are characterised by their main (or even only) success criterion being the direct transition of unemployed young people into employment. These approaches depend on a concept of youth as solely transitory and they view a prolongation of youth as a problem resulting either from a lack of jobs or from individual deficits. The national policy model corresponding the most with such a model is the British one and it coincides with the liberal welfare regime.
- *Young people as being adapted to social positions – training-oriented policies* are the result of translating citizenship into occupations and professions. To make sure that

individuals fulfil this role in a responsible role – according to the labour societies’ rules – individuals have to go through a socialisation process that regards both the acquisition of vocational skills and vocational identity. This model is most pronounced in Germany and it corresponds to the employment-centred corporatist welfare regime.

- *Young people struggling for social status – education and training oriented policies* can also have the function to complete the process of institutionalising youth as a recognized life phase – be it transitory or not. In countries where youth transitions are thematised in terms of a structural deficit with regard to education, training and access to welfare policies primarily aim at re-enforcing the status of youth by extending and modernising education and training structures. This being the case in Italy, Portugal and Spain this model corresponds to a sub-protective or Mediterranean welfare regime.
- *Youth life as a value in itself – youth (education) policy approaches* ascribe young people’s lives a value which is at least equivalent to the requirements of a later life as adults on the labour market. Individual development, biographical construction and motivation are central to this approach which is most developed in the Scandinavian countries. While in Sweden a specific youth bill has been adopted in order to influence all legislation and policies in a cross-sectoral way, in Denmark it is the education system (referred to as ‘youth education’) which is structured in a youth life-oriented way. We therefore find a correspondence with the universal welfare regime model.

This typology refers to ideal types and therefore fulfils rather more heuristic than empirical purposes. There are several countries that have to be located across this model. In the Netherlands aspects of a liberal and employment-oriented, a normalising training-oriented and a biographical youth-oriented approach are mixed. In Ireland we find a combination of liberal employment-oriented, normalising training-oriented and sub-protective traits. Romania can be characterized as shifting from an employment-centred model in which training structured standardised trajectories between education and work towards a sub-protective reality in which the transition system is in process of fundamental re-structuring and in which meanings of youth are re-defined. Apart from this, in the other countries also referred to, examples of policies can be found that correspond to other objectives.

Despite its limitations the scheme shows that different welfare regimes prioritise different policy approaches and that consequently there are different concepts of youth that are predominant. Interestingly, success in terms of a significant decline in youth unemployment can be stated in Denmark, the Netherlands, Ireland, Portugal, Spain and the UK whilst in Germany, Italy and Romania the situation is stagnant. However, it is difficult to distinguish

positive and negative effects of youth transition related policies from employment effects of the economic performance and general labour market policies. It seems that in Ireland and Spain especially, the general economic development has had major effects on young people's labour market entrance whilst in Germany the enormous investment into the Immediate Action Programme has decreased youth unemployment only slightly.

3.3 Conclusions

In the course of this chapter we have looked at the structural aspects of youth transitions and the risks emerging from these. It is obvious that state institutions have undertaken efforts to confront these risks. With regard to reducing youth unemployment policies seem to have been successful in a number of countries which lie across the typology of transition policies. As regards the level of participation which we have defined as a necessary prerequisite of social integration in late modernity we find a clear predominance of a passive and system-related interpretation of participation: participation in education and training referring to the status of young people, participation as objective of education and training in the sense of facilitating later participation through employment. Only in the youth policy oriented Scandinavian transition regimes we find a potentially more active and individualised notion of participation which can be related to our notion of biographical participation and which is claimed to be an integral principle of policies. However, even in these cases the realisation of objectives into practice needs evaluation and it is likely that institutional gate-keeping may distinguish between acceptable and non-acceptable directions of personal development, thus reproducing and individualising structural disadvantage. At the same time it is not at all said that employment- or training-related policies per se, cannot be experienced by young people as participatory or as subjectively meaningful. We assume that for the majority of those with average or higher qualifications the possibility to choose between options is equivalent to participation. For low qualified young people the opportunity to enter the labour market directly may be more attractive – because providing independence – compared to recognised education or training. Yet, in these cases the more subjective or biographical experience is not institutionalised as a success criterion.

4. The ‘soft sector’: youth policies

After assessing the ‘hard sector’ of policies addressing youth transitions we will focus in this chapter on the ‘soft sector’ of youth policies in its narrow sense. Youth policies in most contexts are institutionally separated from education and training and from labour market policies. Yet, in some contexts they are concerned with transitions to work related issues as well – either because affecting their core issues or because of socio-political responsibility of the respective actors. Such core issues are first of all youth work with its culture and leisure oriented offers, youth information, political education, health education, holiday camps or international exchange. In some contexts youth policy also includes the field of child and youth care (e.g. Germany) which in most other countries is subsumed under either social or health services.

In the following paragraphs, we will refer mainly to report on the "Study on the state of young people and youth policy in Europe", carried out for the European Commission DG for Education and Culture (IARD 2001) involving 18 European countries and coordinated by IARD - Istituto di Ricerca S.c.r.l. (Milan, Italy). The report relates to a comparative study attempting to provide a general overview of youth conditions and youth policies in the EU member and associate states and coincides with the information provided by the national reports produced for the “Youth Policy and Participation” research (from which additional information with regard to Romania will be inserted where applicable).

Due to the comparative character of the study, a central task has been to develop a relevant and useable typology, according to which different countries’ various policies can be categorised. This has been achieved at several levels and will presented shortly. However - as the authors of the IARD-report do recognise themselves - some of the categories are tricky or even problematic. However, we shall return to this point later. By extending the categorisation issues, the basic discussions regarding the conduct of comparative studies come to the fore, what should a European report on youth transitions, youth policy and participation consider – youth policies being an element in this contextualisation.

A pair of key-concepts, used in the IARD-report, is the distinction between the image of ‘Youth as a *Resource*’ and ‘Youth as a *Problem*’, and it is important to consider which of these discourses takes the dominant position in the different countries bearing in mind there

relevance regarding a number of other youth-political indicators. In the following paragraphs we shall present first the two discourses (resource-problem) – because we assume that they are crucial for scopes of participation young people are conceded in a given social context – and then the different typological categorisations of European youth policies, developed and dealt with in the IARD-report.

4.1 The ‘resource’ and the ‘problem’ image of youth in Europe

Youth as a problem

According to this line of thinking young people are social minors, vulnerable and in danger. Young people’s development is threatened by lots of things, and thus they are in need of protection – including their own behaviour. Young people are conceived of as either potential victims of their upbringing and conditions, or as victims and potential perpetrators because of their personal traits and character. Which is in contrast to youth as active participants in the continuous construction of society, youth life and their own identities.

Typically, European countries with a long tradition for youth/child policies are committed to this line of thinking. Youth policy is both broadly and narrowly defined: broadly, as the youth concept is not clearly distinguished from the concept of children, and narrowly in the sense that concrete political initiatives preferably are targeted at certain well-defined problem-groups.

According to the IARD-report, young people are often considered to be a problem in 3 different manners:

- problems with societal integration,
- problems with participation,
- problems connected to cultural deviance and variance.

As a consequence youth policies primarily focus on integration of young people within the established societal institutions and norms.

Youth as a resource

Young people can be considered a valuable resource in several ways. According to the IARD-report a central element in this discourse is that young people are not solely valued as potential contributors to society, in their status as adults-to-be, but also in their present status as youth, whereby they contribute to society for the very reason that they are young.

Young people are conceptualised as *agents*, being both responsible for and capable of participation in the on-going construction of the reality and the future of themselves and of society. In this way the perspective of structuration (Giddens) seems implicit in this discourse. One could therefore expect to find participation as an integrated *principle* in policies derived from this thinking (see section 2.2 in this report).

The IARD-report mentions a few typical political consequences of this discourse: a general characteristic is to define youth policies *simultaneously* in a relatively narrow way (in respect to age), targeting a kind of young adults, *and* very broadly – by considering all young people. Special initiatives targeting special groups with special needs go alongside with the ideal and ambition to build enough flexibility in the general measures and policies, so that they provide conditions and possibilities for participation and development for *all* young people.

According to the IARD-study, the image of youth as a resource is dominant in those European countries in which youth policy is a relatively new invention. Within the resource-discourse a certain element of societal "expectation" exists. Young people both can and *should* contribute to the community, in a broad range of ways. This element illustratively anticipates how this resource-discourse might transform to the opposite problem-discourse, given the "right" circumstances – for example in the case that young people appear to be unwilling or unable to fulfil the societal expectations (see 'workfare policies' in section 3.2).

4.2 Models of youth policy in Europe

The typology of youth policies has to be considered as a constructed hypothesis, which is emphasised in the IARD-report (p.104). The authors acknowledge the work of Gallie and Paugam (2000), in which the European welfare regimes are classified into four models, as the best fitting typology (see also Chapters 2 and 3):

1. The social-democratic welfare model (Scandinavian countries)
2. The conservative model (the employment-centred model of the mid-European countries)
3. The liberal model (the minimal welfare states of the United Kingdom)
4. The sub-institutionalised / sub-protective model (the Mediterranean countries).

According to the IARD-report, European models of youth policy likewise can be divided into four categories corresponding to the types of welfare regimes identified by Gallie and Paugam. However, they are re-labelled according to the most important characteristics of youth policies:

1. The universalistic model
2. The protective model
3. The community-based model
4. The centralised model

1. *The universalistic*, contemporary “Scandinavian” way of constructing youth policy is a relatively new invention. It is characterised by targeting the entire youth-population. Youth is defined as adolescents and post-adolescents up to around the age of 25 years. Young Scandinavians gain independence relatively early from parental authority, and attain a status of full citizenship. Youth is not only considered a societal resource, which must be given opportunities for social and psychological development, it is also considered a value in itself. The major aims of youth policy are autonomy and independence; to support young people in living youth life. The major youth policy problem of the 1990s – youth unemployment – was an accelerator of the development of national youth policies. But since then this problem has declined considerably, however it has been replaced by the central political problem of young peoples fading interest in societal participation. In some of the Scandinavian countries (e.g. Sweden) the national responsibility of formulating youth policy is centralised in a ministry or a specialised youth sector. In others (e.g. Denmark) policies are co-ordinated among a number of relevant ministries. There is extensive co-operation between the state and the civil society in preparing and implementing youth policies.

2. *The protective*, mid-European model of youth policy has relatively long traditions. Since the inter-war period or during World War 2, young people – including children and young families – have been seen as a social group, who are to be protected, promoted and supported.

Policy target groups are both disadvantaged groups and the whole generation of youth (who can hardly be described as a “generation”, as this group includes newborn members as well as members of 25-28 years of age).

The youth-concept is “mixed”, but even though the resource- and the problem-discourse co-exist, there is a traditional tendency to think of young people as a vulnerable group and formulate policies accordingly. The main political aims are social integration and prevention of social and participatory problems. For example, in the case of Germany where youth policy – referred to as “youth assistance” – includes (and is dominated by) the whole field of youth care.

Mid-European youth policy is institutionalised to a high degree, and functions within a stable legal and administrative organisation. This seems to make it less “dynamic” than for instance the Scandinavian model. In spite of this there is a wide co-operation between the State and the civil society in initiating and implementing youth policies.

3. *The community-based* youth policy model is developed in the United Kingdom, and within a minimal welfare state system. The state has traditionally been reluctant to interfere in local youth work. During the last few years, however, there has been a trend towards more co-ordination and a strengthened national youth policy, pointing towards more co-operations between the state and civil organisations.

Youth is generally conceived as a problem, and youth policies are directed towards disadvantaged groups, aiming to prevent social problems. The focus lies on problems of social exclusion of youth, the prolonging of youth and the lack of societal participation among young people.

4. In the Mediterranean countries youth work and support has until recently been the responsibility of the family and the Church. But during the last 20 years, a national *centralised model* of youth policy has emerged. Local authorities have limited involvement, but there exists an aim to change this, as well as an ambition to have more young people participate in various organisations.

Youth is defined rather narrowly, 15 – 25/30 years of age, and the image of youth is a “mix” of the resource - and the problem-discourse. The youth policy target groups remain to be

primarily different disadvantaged groups. The main aims are to strengthen the autonomy and independence of young Mediterranean people, who tend to live a lot longer in their homes of origin today than some years ago, and who suffer from growing youth unemployment.

In *Eastern Europe* (we refer to the case of Romania) – correspondingly to the transition system – a shift from the protective model – by which the socialist governments aimed at integrating the new generation in the collective society – towards a centralised model can be stated.

4.3 Models of youth work in Europe

The IARD report identifies youth work as the most important field of youth policy existent in all countries. Apart from this, youth work is of particular interest for this report as it is assumed to be one of the contexts in which active participation of young people is most developed.

Obviously, the political praxis and the dominant discourses within the youth-field, have an impact upon the directions of youth work in the different countries. The IARD-report has taken this into consideration, and sums up the central findings in a typology which appears to be in line with those applying the concept of welfare regimes to youth transitions and youth policies:

- *Universalistic/paternalistic model*: In Scandinavian countries youth work is developed as a civic infrastructure addressing young people as citizens, i.e. universal access to youth work is central as well as participatory structures. At the same time the state has a strong interest in educational objectives (e.g. health) to be integrated in this participatory structure. The importance of peer education is one consequence of this contradictory structure.
- *Liberal/community-based model*: In the countries characterised as liberal/minimal welfare states (UK + Ireland), youth work has been developed in a surprisingly universalistic way. There is a high commitment of local authorities to provide an infrastructure of youth-clubs. The lack of national support and interest has allowed for a strong community approach to develop.
- *Conservative/corporatist model*: In countries with a conservative welfare state, we find a more corporatist structure of youth work. On the one hand there is a strong interest of the

state of providing socialisation towards the standard biography. Therefore the socio-pedagogical aspects are as important as in Scandinavian countries, but with a different focus. On the other hand this objective is delegated to voluntary actors which to a high extent are incorporated into local, regional and national administration.

- *Mediterranean/Sub-institutionalised model*: In recent years the considerable loss of (socio-cultural) relevance and influence of the Church has led to a deficit or vacuum of regulation in a number of contexts. The often little responsibility of local authorities has led to high regional differences according to local resources and political interests. Together with a newly constituted Third Sector, they are only slowly managing to fill these gaps.

According to the national report for Romania produced for the project “Youth Policy and Participation” the Romanian situation comes close to the mediterranean sub-institutionalized model which has replaced a highly corporatist model controlled by state agencies. And in the case of Romania, it is the local youth councils that are seen as the most important means to establish a democratic youth sector.

4.4 Different perspectives on and for young people’s participation

Obviously different models of youth policy contribute differently to the construction of the conditions for the citizens’ societal participation and for their life management in general. And this – of course – is also the case for the life conditions of young people. Different life strategies appear meaningful and constructive in different settings and contexts – depending on the wishes and aspirations of the individual.

It is difficult to discuss and compare issues and problems of participation across borders or social classes, without carefully considering what the participation is related to or pointing towards. This of course re-addresses the question of context. Meaningful participation is not a universal phenomenon, contrarily it relates to societal conditions and the possibilities of citizens to live and act and shape the ongoing process of structuration.

It could be interesting to study whether - or in which ways - the issue of participation differs among the various countries. As a first hypothesis the four youth policy models could be coupled with four different types of participatory challenges, to be regarded *not* as the sole challenge, but perhaps as a central or typical challenge:

- A. Within *the universalistic youth policy regime*, a future challenge is to achieve a meaningful form of participation which young people can have influence upon and therefore participate in the construction of one's own biography – across (youth-) contexts.
- B. One of the most visible challenges within *the conservative/protective youth policy regime*, appears to be to the establishment of meaningful contexts, in which young people can participate in decisions of different relevance to their own life.
- C. For young people living within the *liberal youth policy model*, a central participatory challenge is to “normalise” biographical trajectories. This might also be considered the most dominant challenge, faced by the system. To facilitate and make possible young people's change in participation context from non-formal (youth projects, -clubs etc.) to formal contexts (schools, training etc.).
- D. An important participatory challenge in those countries characterised by a *sub-institutionalised youth policy model*, is basically about allowing and providing space for young people to take part in and establish a youth life outside the supervision of the family etc.

It is important to emphasise the existence of lots of additional challenges, and of other perspectives on the problem of youth-participation. The four challenges presented above are very likely to be found in all European countries, however their importance in terms of domination could be expected to change according to welfare regimes and youth policy models.

4.5 A critical perspective on the ‘problem’-versus-‘resource’-thinking

The distinction between youth policies developed in reflection of an image of youth as a resource and policies developed in reference to a problematic image, address some interesting issues, and draw attention to important differences in the aims and focus of European countries' youth politics. In a simplified perspective, the resource-discourse seems obviously preferable, because it widens the political focus on young people. It is indeed narrow-minded and of little relevance to consider youth solely as a societal problem – typically of criminality-related nature.

However, the ambition of the problem-resource-thinking is to sophisticate the distinction, in order to make it useable as a categorisation-instrument in regard to the different European youth policies. And for this purpose it might fall short. Fundamentally, because a country's explicit devotion to an image of youth as a resource, typically must be considered as a declaration of intent. Though it out-speaks a list of aims it rarely reveals much about means, or how these intentions are to be brought into practice. Furthermore, as noted in the IARD-report, the presence of one image does not exclude the presence of an other, they are better understood as competing and supplementing each other.

And if this is the case, even within a concrete political initiative the distinction might not be useable.

It is stated that: "Typically the image of 'youth as a resource' prevails in periods of stability, economic growth and social reforms, while the image of youth 'as a problem' prevails in periods of economic crisis, of political instability, and when youth in the media are presented as 'dangerous', 'deviant', 'criminal', 'violent', etc." (IARD 2001, p. 82). But at the same time the domination of the respective discourses are related to the different countries' historical traditions for (or absence of) youth policy. The ideological orientation of the particular party in government at the time of the formulation of a specific policy is also mentioned as influential on the problem versus resource discourse. The maintenance of an image of youth as a resource within a national youth policy framework requires the fulfilment of a variety of criteria.

With regard to participation, society generally predefines an acceptable kind of youth participation according to and depending on the actual context. Young people are considered a benefit and a resource if they take part in the traditional democratic structures and attempt to follow the established rules and norms. It is illustrative that all the various attempts to (re-)engage young people in the democratic processes are characterised by rather more traditional forms. If young people are to be encouraged to engage in political activity and be able to contribute in an original, new and developmental way, new forms of democratic participation needed to be discussed.

Even in countries that appear to be dominated by the resource-discourse, young people can easily be viewed as problematic in the eyes of the system. In the IARD-report this is clearly illustrated with regard to educational policies – from which youth policies normally are

excluded but in difficult cases consultation does take place. In the case of young people interrupting their educational itineraries, changing their line of education or ‘flunking’ too many exams, youth are generally considered a problem and a potential burden for the community. Conversely, youth can be viewed as a benefit to society, when they are following standardised trajectories and preparing themselves for adult (work) life and citizen responsibilities. Therefore the image of youth (within the specific policy) can switch back and forth between the alternatives, depending on the praxis and attitudes of young people, and how this is evaluated to match the allocation of resources by the system.

These contradictions of youth as a resource discourse lead to the question: “resource for what and for whom?” – and thus to the limitations of this concept. Youth as future labour, as future (and even present) consumers, as future tax-payers, as future voters. In this way, the “image of youth as a resource “ can perhaps be criticised for harbouring and nursing a principle of *participation as an objective*, simultaneously as it is favouring the idea of *participation as a principle*. The problem is not the existence of certain conditions for where, when and how young people can be considered a resource. The problem emerges because of the blurred and ambiguous way these conditions are established and upheld. The question needs to be asked as to who has the power to formulate these conditions, and for whom are they formulated. The resource-purpose relationship is defined by adults in societal institutions and not by young people themselves, for that reason the purposes of these conditions remain external to young people’s present lives. Participation in this perspective reveals to be instrumentalised and limited.

Obviously these objections against the resource-problem-image-idea do not disqualify this line of thinking, nor was this the intention. Apart from that, particularly if youth work is considered, practitioners show a high level of biased commitment for the subjective interests of ‘their’ young people and support them in being a resource for themselves in the first place. But on the political level they might be worthwhile considering, before accepting this as a way of categorising the European countries’ different youth policies.

4.6 Youth policies and transitions to work

According to both the IARD-report and the national reports for “Youth Policy and Participation” in all countries under investigation, youth policy is not the official institutional actor as regards transitions to work nor is it considered to one of there central tasks. Yet, there is a grey zone of youth political involvement in young people’s transitions to work. In southern European countries the structural deficit of the sub-protective transition regimes have made it more likely to accept youth policy as a complementary actor, e.g. with regard to information and counselling or in terms of youth initiatives of the Third Sector to provide training or work experience for young unemployed. The reforms of labour market policies in the recent years however aim at making responsibilities and competencies in transition issues clearer and at reducing youth political influence. In Eastern Europe it seems that the employment-centred tradition and the orientation towards Northern Europe inhibit youth policies in mingling into transitions to work, however they are considered important in contributing towards building civil society. In Northern Europe (except Sweden) the official separation between youth policy, education, training and employment is undermined especially for those considered as most disadvantaged and whom the transition agencies fail to reach. These ‘exceptions’ may derive from both the over-burdening of the officially responsible actors and the feeling of responsibility of youth workers themselves. At the same time many youth workers reject to take socio-political responsibility given the unbalanced funding between youth policy and transition-related programmes. Furthermore they are cautious not to undermine the trust-based relationships with young people if ‘hard’ issues come into play.

At the same time education, training and labour market policies, which often claim to be considered as youth policies and thus ‘hi-jack’ the participatory connotations of the youth-as-a-resource and subsume it under the human-resource-approach as being their main orientation: youth as a resource for the economic development. According to the differentiation Manninen (1998) has suggested for the stratification of lifelong learning programmes, participation does not play a role for a low qualified labour force enrolled in ‘training for jobs’ while programmes for higher qualified are geared towards ‘learning for change’ and therefore include a scope for participation that is likely to increase and maintain learners motivation.

The project “Youth Policy and Participation” follows the assumption that a youth political orientation of transition policies – in the sense of a more participatory and de-centralized structure – may increase young people’s motivation and therefore be both more effective and more democratic than the actual compartmentalized approaches. However, the described weaknesses and limitations of youth policies have to be kept in mind in this regard. In this sense the European Commission’s White Paper published in 2001 calls for an increased relevance of youth and youth political principles (as participation) in all policy fields by which young people are concerned (European Commission 2001b).

5. Youth and participation: perspectives and contradictions

The project “Youth Policy and Participation” takes a ‘positive’ approach towards exceptions and innovations in national transition systems pointing in a direction similar to that of the concept of Integrated Transition Policies. In this context participation is understood as involving the individual’s influence on biographic decisions with regard to education, training and employment – including the recognition of informal learning. In this respect participation is regarded as increasing young peoples motivation to actively engage in transitions (see also Chapter 2 of this report).

Consequently, a minimal definition of participation is that it exceeds a passive understanding of simple participation in education and training or in the labour market. Participation is referred to as an active influence on the young people’s own making of individual trajectories. In this meaning of participation, issues like choice, negotiation, experimentation, informal learning and social networking become central.

The concept of participation has already been outlined an objective and a principle in the second chapter of this report where actual discourses and foundations in social theory and social policy have been introduced. In this section the concept of participation will be further discussed with regards to how it is understood and brought into use.

5.1 Participation versus influence

Participation is often considered to be a key activity for establishing a means of social integration in terms of democratic citizenship. Regarding youth associations it seems that there are vast differences in the respective traditions among European countries. In the Mediterranean countries, there is a small but growing number of youth in youth organisations. In Central and Northern Europe, the numbers of members of organisations and associations are higher but stagnant, in some countries participation rates are even declining. This poses a challenge for youth policies as on to how to make young people actively participate.

The IARD-report states that : *“Young people nowadays are more reluctant to bind themselves to organised communities, they move in “free space” between various youth scenes and institutions and they are no longer permanently organised” (IARD part 1 p. 15).*

Regarding the formats of organisation among young people, it seems as if the involvement in formal organisations is declining. At the same time however another serious tendency is that the social networks, which in earlier times have helped young people to solve problems are disappearing or at least undergoing serious changes. Young people are more and more often “on their own” trying to find their way. This is another aspect to which the concept of individualisation refers to (Beck 1992, IARD 2001, Bauman 2001).

More flexible efforts and new initiatives

Low political participation rates in voting, membership of political parties, youth organisations or associations and lack of involvement in decision-making bodies is seen as a major youth problem, except in Mediterranean countries where participation rates are increasing. This situation creates new demands on youth work and social policy regarding young people’s participation and involvement. Some would argue, that programmes for youth have to be more flexible and short-term in order to meet, what is regarded as quickly changing youth cultures and interests. This perspective is referred to in the IARD-report which notes that all Western European countries do emphasise that national, regional and local youth councils as the major source of political participation and source of influence on youth. Youth councils, are the traditional channels for the exchange of information between politicians, authorities and youth. However, this traditional model of participation has shown its limitations in several ways. Young people involved in the councils might only represent a minority or they represent a section of the youth population that do not truly reflect youth as a whole. There exist a number of critical points regarding the ongoing efforts made to follow the traditional way of thinking, which are all most exclusively carried out in Southern European countries (see also section 2.2).

Currently, some Central European and Scandinavian countries are exploring new ways of institutionalising local city councils, regional youth parliaments or even national youth parliaments. In some countries these youth parliaments are given limited decision-making authority and a budget. In other countries ad-hoc co-operative bodies or workshops are included so they can act as a forum for the exchange of ideas on youth policy (IARD 2001).

Changing perspectives on participation

Discussing the participation of young people in society has to take into consideration how the participatory actions are exerted. To participate can both be done with or without actual (or limited) influence or even with or without the acknowledgement of being considered as influential by the individual themselves.. Participation as merely taking part or being invited to attend, does not necessarily include actual influence.

One part of this discussion considers the question of whether young people are involved in societal matters as either citizens or members of society (taking decisions and responsibility) or as consumers. Youth is often regarded as taking part in a consumer-like way, either as a result of the structural conditions given by people in power or as a specific kind of lack of interest in the basic ideas and premises of the organisations etc. in which the young people "participate". Consumer-like behaviour covers both that people might act pragmatically as users of organisations/institutions/association's and that they only take an interest in specific issues, but not in the more ideological thinking or grounds on which the activities are based.

Despite the efforts carried out in a number of European countries to raise the proportion of young people participating in political matters, in organisational life etc. (youth parliaments, workshops and commissions, forums of children and young people, campaigns targeting young people, the inclusion of young people in public debates) the question remains, whether the actual involvement or rather the lack of involvement as identified is taken seriously enough as a way of "participating" by the young people in question.

Some points which indicate concrete opinions among young people could be high-lighted by using some statistical references from the IARD-report (IARD 2001, I , pp. 1-17):

- Membership in political associations or trade unions involves a very low percentage of youth (except in Scandinavian countries; in Denmark the high numbers of organised youth in trade unions yet has to be seen in connection to the imperative stemming from the labour market traditionally "forcing" the labour force to join the union as soon as entering the labour market).

- “Discussion of political matters with friends” is a frequent occurrence only for a minority of young people.
- More than 25% of young people “don’t know” or refuse to reveal their position on the political scale (e.g. self-placement on the left-right political spectrum).
- The National parliament is by no means viewed as the most trust worthy national institution among youth.

In essence it could be argued, that the message is clear. The traditional way of thinking of social (political) participation does not fit the new generations. The fragmentation of life in general and the increasing demands on young people regarding formal and informal competencies/qualifications does not leave room for traditional behaviour in political and organisational matters. Individual lives increasingly run across the directions of organizations and institutions.

Whether young people are participating or not might be a matter of where the focus is set. Participating might be looked upon as an active involvement. Young People as such are generally very active, but they might be seen as active participators in other ways and from other positions than the traditional ones. As society changes, the active involvement among young people is changing as well and the actual involvement in single issue matters or in “non-political” (from a traditional perspective on politics) in organisational ways might be seen as a response to developments within society.

At the same time the ambition and the wish of state and other authorities to re-establish a political participation among young people, as it once was (and still is in some countries) might obstruct acknowledging the actual methods of participation by youth. It might be that young people are being very focussed and engaged in making their own trajectories through everyday life, taking responsibility for their individual skills and qualifications, choosing other forms of participation in order to succeed regarding both education, training, employment and social life. Following this, political participation could, from a youth perspective be looked upon as being most efficient or fulfilling if it either immediately “pays off” or at least bears the promise of being expedient. Given the prevailing societal conditions where young people have to be capable of prioritising individual pathways, traditional involvement in political organisational life might be considered as not being worthwhile.

It would appear therefore that is important to find ways of stimulating and encouraging political interest and engagement among young people as well as trying to understand the nature of young people's political interest's and behaviour. The challenge is how and in what form this can best be achieved.

5.2 Youth as agents or clients? The compartmentalisation and fragmentation of participation

Participation obviously has a variety of meanings according to different social arena and policy sectors. Regarding youth transitions in individualised and democratic societies, participation should include choices or at least options to actually compare subjective wishes, individual resources, abilities and actual opportunities: time and space for orientation. Participation in this respect can mean opportunities to change ideas without being punished by having to go back to “zero”, but rather that acquired experiences are recognised. Looking at ways and schemes in which opportunities for participation are handled societally regarding youth, it seems that the participation rates of young people being unemployed does not really matter, at least not as an active participation as a principle of transition policies. In this context it is referred to in terms of increased participation of young people in education and training and of later participation in the labour market. Social and civic participation are promoted in sectors including youth associations or public youth work, but separated from the transition system. In this respect it seems appropriate to question whether there might the idea of participation is adapted according to the needs of different arenas and sectors in society.

In contrast, if youth work and especially offers for youth in difficult situations – either personally, socially or in education and employment – are taken into consideration we find another picture. In a variety of social and cultural institutions, programmes and counselling settings (projects etc.) youth workers are trying to act in accordance with the concept of empowerment, that is to say, in order to help young people who are disadvantaged or ‘in trouble’ the objective is to empower young people by providing activities that will improve their personal development; their self-esteem and confidence, a better understanding of things, more social skills. This concept of empowerment stems from the idea, that in order to cope with things, you need a feeling of being in power or having power to do something, that points in the direction wanted. As referred to already in section 2.3 this feeling of having power and being in power has two dimensions: individual agency and abilities as well as

structural opportunities. In contrast to other societal subsystems youth work provides (albeit limited) spaces which young people can actively shape – and thus feel empowered. For youth workers it is clear that motivation for participation depends on the conditions in which young peoples own subjective relevance's can be put into practice by individual agency. However, as engagement in youth work is voluntary youth workers are in a certain ways are forced to learn this lesson.

Accordingly, one of the key concepts stressed by youth and social workers and other professionals working with youth is motivation (closely related to identity, self-esteem, self-confidence) and a lot of effort is done in order to motivate young people to act in a way, regarded as being beneficial for themselves, the institution or organisation involved and/or society in general.

Despite differences with regards to concepts and perspectives among developmental psychological and social psychological theories there is a basic concept of motivation to which most approaches refer. It states that individual motivation depends at least on two aspects: the relevance of the goal of action for the individual concerned and the probability to achieve this goal by their own intervention. One can even go further and say that intrinsic motivation requires that a goal is subjectively relevant whilst extrinsic motivation emerges more indirectly, e.g. for fear of negative consequences (cf. Heckhausen 1990; Osterkamp-Holzkamp 1989).

Social and educational work still includes and deals with motivational work which, however, and this is especially the case with young people, it often takes a form close to persuasion or explanation given on how different societal systems work as a way of getting young people to realise (or even talk them into) what to do and how to do it – which some times even works. But one could point out limitations regarding this way of dealing with motivational work.

- In some respects, both young people and youth workers are merely guessing or trying to imagine how things should or ought to be – but due to the constant changes that take place this is hard forecast what they may be. Even though young individuals are doing the “right thing” being trained, educated and so on, more general conditions might block the way forward. The young person is still competing with other young people for a limited number of educational and job-possibilities. Gender, race, social background, and even

physical looks etc. might limit possibilities as well as unpredictable factors as the change in attitudes and demands of the labour market might shift.

- When motivation is based on self-esteem, good experiences, a ‘taste’ of being successful in some activities – this can be hard to transfer to other and quite different settings. Once young people step out of a social/cultural project and into a more formal setting – the many ways of approaching challenges might change dramatically leaving the newcomer just as confused or as frustrated as when they embarked on the project, programme, or education route. Personal and social skills are not transferable per se, but can to a large extent depend on the actual contextual setting in which they were developed.

Youth workers and the settings dealing with participation and integration of youth are facing huge challenges, as they are trying to bridge both qualifications, competencies and wishes among young people and the formal demands of political and educational systems as well as the demands from labour market. The means within youth work in general through the form of talks, counselling, cultural or social activities, training-programmes etc. leave youth workers with poor or uncertain possibilities of doing this in a satisfactory way (Bader 1987; Koch & Jensen 1999; Rose 1996).

One of the strongest elements of being motivated, as mentioned before, is that the individual has the impression of making a difference, that his or her abilities, wishes and actual action does matter – that he or she is able to attain something by making an effort. In this respect young people in late modernity are not just being at risk, they are at the same time forced to risk something to get something. One might say, that it is crucial that young people are willing to risk something to participate, in order to make a difference or succeed in their striving.




In contrast, the same principle of willingness to risk in order to learn and develop – does not show, looking at different societal sub-systems in the educational, the employment or the political systems. Paradoxically, these systems are more or less identified as being rigid, trying to “play safe” and not taking any chances. They seem quite willing to set the standards and merely to try to discipline and control the ones willing to participate in their system.

5.3 Active participation in transitions to work? A European typology

The assessment of programmes against youth unemployment in Chapter 3 and the above reflections on the implications of active participation suggest that young people in general and those with low cultural and social capital in particular, have only restricted possibilities to influence their transitions to work. At the same time the distinction between active versus passive participation and between participation as an objective (later) and participation as a principle (now) and the identification of different priorities in national transition policies allows a comparative differentiation of this picture.

In figure 8 the scheme on dimensions of participation is applied to different transition regimes:

Figure 8: Participation in different transition regimes

	Objective	Principle
Passive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub-protective Transition Regimes – still in process (e.g. Italy) • Employment-centred Transition Regimes – achieved (e.g. Germany) • Liberal Transition Regimes (e.g. UK) (participation reduced to labour market) 	
Active		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universalised Transition Regimes (e.g. Denmark) 

In the sub-protective transition regimes of Southern Europe and increasingly also in Eastern Europe policies are still in process of aiming at increasing (formal) participation in education and training in order to ensure young people’s later participation through gainful employment. In the employment-centred transition regimes this is more or less achieved as a considerable percentage of young people are enrolled in vocational training. To a certain extent this includes also principles of participation yet in a formal way as apprentices profit from the rights for worker’s participation and from social protection. The liberal transition regimes reduce participation mainly to labour market integration. In this they claim for individual activity and responsibility which is increasingly called for in the context of the discourse on ‘rights and responsibilities’ set into practice by workfare programmes as the New Deal in Britain. Finally, the universalised transition regimes may be considered as promoting young

people's active participation as a principle of transition policies as they focus on individual development and intrinsic motivation. Yet, also the Scandinavian activation policies include compulsory elements and possibilities for sanctioning which might undermine participatory elements at least inasmuch only certain forms and directions of participation are accepted.

This very broad typology has a more heuristic than empirical value. On the one hand it is too abstract to consider all the differences and similarities between national transition systems. On the other hand it can only refer to a rather broad average direction of transition systems in which probably programmes or projects of all possible types may be found, yet some being dominant and others rather the exception. The scheme may serve as a guideline for single policy evaluations as well as for the development of new policies.

5.4 The conceptualisation of youth within a participatory perspective

Already in Chapter 3 we have introduced the perspective that transition policies are built on specific concepts of youth. With regard to understanding participation it seems necessary to return to the conceptions of youth as they play a crucial role in discourses of participation as well as for the democratisation of society. In this section we will focus on how institutions in general try to define and delimit youth as a social category.

Throughout both theoretical youth research and political/practical work there is a stunning lack of consensus in how to understand youth and which people we are to identify as being young people. In a European context this confusion on what youth is and who "they" are is similarly overwhelming. A number of ways have been and are used to define and to delimit youth. Youth can be understood as a matter of a variety of things. According to a broad understanding 'youth' is applied to individuals that are in the process of becoming an adult member of society, i.e. when he/she has finished school attendance, possesses a job, has left the family of origin, is creating a new family and possibly has children (cf. IARD 2001 II, p-25). If this delimitation is taken seriously, people in former times very quickly became adults. Today however, men and women are in much more extended periods of time occupied educationally, they enter the labour market later on, they stay longer at their parents and have their first possible child at a more mature age. In that respect it is very difficult to determine with certainty the individual life span during which a man or a woman can be considered as young.

Youth is in other words both decreasing and increasing. Children are increasingly better educated, mature intellectually and educationally at lower ages and, at the same time, people are held as being young in a prolonged period of time, still qualifying, planning to get their own place to live and make families of their own at much later time.

In the IARD report based on a research programme involving 18 European countries, it has been pragmatically decided to set the limits at 15-24 years – according to the median age of the first job in *some* European countries (Germany, Italy, Sweden and United Kingdom) and the lowest legal age at which starting to work is allowed in EU-countries. In the IARD-report it is noted, that this range of age is either widened or reduced in the analysis, because of the differences in criteria of classification used in official data resources (IARD 2001 II, p. 25).

Not only the official classifications are inconsistent regarding the range of age. Also the different criteria to define youth have to be seen as inconsistent and contradictory throughout a European context. Despite of being biologically and intellectually adults, a considerable percentage of “young” men and women do not have a qualification or a job, a home or a family of their own, or even the economic means to live their own (independent) lives reaching the age of 30.

Majorities and minorities; marginalized youth

Even though the picture of youth drawn theoretically and in societal life is blurred and inconsistent, the urge to make some kind of decision on what youth is seems dominant. In a European context one way of dealing with the difficulties in delimiting youth is to look at the national statistics available. This is what was done in the IARD-report. It is stated that: “Our attempt has been to account for both possible communalities and specificities between countries and variations in these conditions. In order to give a sound methodological basis to our comparisons, we have worked out a series of quantitative indicators of demographic, social, economic and cultural aspects of youth condition in the fifteen countries currently belonging to the EU (plus Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein).” (IARD 2001, II p. 25)

Even though the IARD-report reflects upon and mentions a number of reservations regarding definitions of youth and their conditions, the attempt to make comparative analyses on this subject raises a number of questions:

- Which are the criteria for deciding whether an individual should be regarded as young, (maturity, biological/intellectual, education, employment, living conditions, economy, “independence”, integration, age etc. etc.)?
- Which, on the other hand are the criteria for being considered as *not* young, adult or a responsible citizen?
- Which are the limits for being one or the other?
- Who are to decide?
- What is the use of it? Or how are we going to implement or make use of these concepts?

The questions could go further and it could be argued, both that it is necessary to understand the living conditions and actions done by the few and the many, the minority and the majority in, order to understand what the similarities and the differences are and what they mean.

In this respect it would be necessary to understand marginalised youth (as well as the young “trendsetters”) compared to youth in general and vice versa, the disadvantaged from the advantaged etc. In a similar way it would make sense to understand youth in the light of non-youth/adulthood.

Methodologically this would imply, that not just quantitative measures, but qualitative studies as well, have to be drawn upon, in order to get a more comprehensive understanding of the conceptions and the potential consequences of applying these. As important as the statistics might be to get an overview, the qualitative study of the exceptions from the majority turns out to be highly relevant and even crucial for a better understanding.

The marginalisation of people can only be understood in a comparison to the not-marginalised, whether young people are identified as marginalised who are unemployed, unskilled, having psychosocial problems, behaving in extraordinary ways etc. or simply are identified as being “young”.

5.5 Youth and participation in the context of inter-generational relationships

The project of “Youth policy and participation” starts from the assumption that transitions between youth and adulthood are affected by a process of de-standardisation. Transitions not only take longer, but also have become reversible. Transitions in different areas (family, lifestyles, partnership, education/work) have been fragmented but are still in a European perspective interlinked in the individual biography and, just as important, the self-concept of young men and women are increasingly ambiguous with regard to being young or adults. In

as much as transitions are individualised, meaning that decisions have to be taken individually, yet limited by unequal resources and opportunities, subjectivity plays a greater role. Young people have to cope with reconciling their subjectivity and other aspects of their lived with their transition to work.

Young people are changing positions back and forth from being clients or agents depending on which societal sub-system they are trying to participate in. Trying to train, guide, appeal for involvement or even control or force people into participating does not seem to solve the problem of decreasing participation. The individualisation of biographies and the flexibilisation of labour markets have led to a situation in which either transitions can no longer be planned for nor secure outcomes be predicted and guaranteed in terms of both social and economic positions and satisfactory life perspectives. However, as far as its reflexivity with regard to young people's transitions is concerned the risk society reveals to be unbalanced: on the one hand individuals are increasingly made self-responsible for their success or failure; on the other hand they are denied making the choice of which risks they prefer to take. A more democratic form of the risk society therefore calls for another, a broader and a more principal perspective on participation.

In order to get these new perspectives to acknowledge the actual behaviour of young people seriously and to risk the certainty/control within the systems of the ones already in power might have to be considered in detail. The question is whether or not the willingness to permit young people in general to be active agents in these sub-systems is present and what the consequences of this might be.

The IARD-report also asks for major trends as regards youth conditions and respective policies. One concern regards the “contract between generations” in the context of the prolongation (or even de-standardization) of youth. This contract can be understood as a way of social reproduction process in which the adult generation (in power) rely upon and tries to support and develop the younger generation in a way facilitating – in time – to take over societal responsibilities and take care of them, when the former generations grow old and become dependent on family and societal support.

Concerns on the ongoing “social reproduction process” refer to two trends. Firstly, demographic developments in European countries show that the actual numbers of young people are either stable or decreasing. In most countries however, the ratios of youth to

elderly is decreasing and will continue to do so within the next decade. This might imply increasing economic burdens on the younger generations in order to keep up the financial security for the elder ones. The second trend, as noted earlier, refers to the prolonging of youth before the coming generations enter the labour market, as a result of education, training and experimenting etc. (IARD 2001, III, p. 93). This second trend raises the question as to how quickly youth has to be integrated into the labour market, and which strategies are favourable. Policies involving education and employment are major instruments in dealing with this.

In a number of countries discussions are currently underway as to whether youth policy should be aimed at developing youth by “helping young people to be young” or whether it should be aimed at counteracting the prolonging of youth by helping young people become established in different areas of the adult world. With reference to the IARD-report the debate is concerned with whether the goal of the youth policies is to develop youth or minimize it. (IARD 2001 III, p. 94)

Youth in alternative perspective

The situation in a European context regarding youth, participation and development of society can be put in perspective. The youth category and transition processes, the way in which policies are developed and the way in which young people are acting according to this – all change over time as well as in the different national and regional contextual settings. To fully understand the concept of youth and its implications, it is therefore necessary to examine the actual contextual settings in a much more detailed way. Nevertheless, some points can be made on the use of this concept and the risks attached to it (cf. IARD 2001, II pp. 32-37).

Youth is often used, as something which seems unequivocal, a conceptualisation including a mix of different people, in different societal positions and with different conditions for living. Yet, people are identified as youth by the ascription of certain common traits or features and these make them different from other people who have other traits or features. As a consequence of these traits or features, a kind of “typical personality” emerges which is referred too as the personality of youth. In reality this concept is applied as a broad generalisation in terms of the ‘typical personality’ of a specific group of people.

This thinking in “personalities” is both dangerous and problematic, as it tends to exclude or short-circuit the societal structures and relations, reducing these to be a kind of over-individualized personality-characteristics. The danger is that it leads to a societal division of people – quite similar to the divisions of people into different gender, classes and races. If youth is understood like this – as a means of dividing people within society, then it deals primarily with societal relations, that young people are defined in relation to other people – just like women are in relation to men, blacks in relation to whites etc. Obviously neither of them can be understood in terms of characteristics of group-personalities but as determinations of relations. All such relations (gender, class, race and “generation”) are centred in power. What then appears to be at stake is a way of handling the division of power/powerlessness or privileges or, in other words a way of dividing people and their access to possibilities in society.

There might be a boundary for being young, but these boundaries are changing. What is left, except the tool for power, is the generational reproduction e.g. the moving of generations or the access of generations to influence and power in society. Power is defined and attached to a systematic difference in the access to societal possibilities. It is a definition of relations and this is what can be regulated in sub-units of people such as young/adult women/men etc.

The crucial thing however, is that youth has to take over society, has to keep society going in order to secure the ageing generations. Whether young people are willing or not, they must take charge in society otherwise society will come to an end, which naturally is not in the interest of the “ruling generations”. The ones in power want their power to be handed over to somebody and administered in such a way that they can approve. The solution, as indicated above, is the division of people into youth and adults.

The purpose of this, of course, is not to say that youth necessarily has to dissolve, but that the traditional ways of identifying and defining young people are changing from society to society and over time. Returning to the comparison to other means of societal regulation as gender, class and race, it is possible to point out both differences and similarities among these.

In terms of gender and race there are obviously visible physical differences between men/women and between people of different ethnic origins. These differences are not applicable to the categories of class and generations, as youth no longer are limited by

physical appearance. In all four kinds of categorizing people, individuals are often ascribed by specific personality-characteristics which look alike. Women, people with darker skin, people from a traditional working class and young people are in a broader sense depicted as “especially exotic, mysterious, emotional, non-rational, uncivilised, wild” etc. All four groups are referred to, as “emotionalists” who only to a certain degree have developed the “superior” sense of formal logic. The ideal type remaining seems to be the white (Western European) socially secured male, aged approximately 30-60 years of age, who as by a coincidence, could make a characterisation of a group of people, which holds most power and privileges in society.

It is not actually very important whether there is some difference between one part and the other. The crucial thing is, to which meanings or values these differences are ascribed. In all four instances of separation, the ascribed meanings mean that the groups of people underlined, in different ways and in different subsystems and areas are being regulated, limited, restricted or even deprived of societal influence. They can all be seen as vulnerable in particular towards the change of society.

Finally, to return to what most importantly separates the question of generations from the other groupings mentioned, as gender, class and race. As the delimitation and categorisation of youth is as ambiguous as it is, youth is a category which can be ascribed or taken away situationally. By this it is meant that it is possible to describe people as being young in one situation, but not in another. People are not young or adult per se but they can be identified and treated like one or the other depending on the actual situation, relation and contextual setting in which they are taking part.

The project “Youth Policy and Participation” is concerned with increasing young people’s motivation with regard to their transitions to work. A general assumption is that spaces for active participation – understood in biographic terms of choice, of individually tailored and self-determined learning processes, of recognized life-styles and valued cultural practices – is a necessary prerequisite for this. In order to achieve such qualities of empowerment transition systems have to be developed in a way that young people feel considered as equal citizens. In other words: the division of power between the generations needs re-balancing and new forms of trust need to be developed: trust in the abilities and orientations of young people, the acceptance that adults – especially those in the gate-keeping institutions – have to show as being trust-worthy from the perspective of young people. Given the challenge of increasing

uncertainty of socio-economic changes as well as of individual biographies trust in and sharing of power with the young generation might be an investment in the future that pays off better than the defence of formalized forms of participation, of constructing individual biographies.

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Annex

Synopsis of National Reports “Youth Transitions, Youth Policy and Participation”

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Youth Policy and Participation. Synoptic Overview over National Reports on Youth Transitions, Youth Policy and Participation

	Structures of the Transition System	Concepts and Institutions of Youth Policy	Concepts and Meanings of Participation
Denmark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease of youth unemployment since 1990s due to economic recovery, labour market flexibilisation and shift to education • Education system is comprehensive and flexible; diversification of options between vocational training and school education. • Immigrant youth as problem group because less committed to individualised education. • Youth should neither be employed nor unemployed but in education; activation/workfare policy as compulsion to choose an individual education pathway. • Objectives: “Education for all”, motivation, individual development, flexibility. • Central role of counselling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education as the most important aspect of youth oriented policy. • Youth organisations are mainly connected to specific socio-cultural milieux; decreasing commitment of young people to continuous membership and organisations goals. • Youth clubs are mostly public; as funding depends on numbers of users, competition between youth club and commercial activities and amongst youth clubs; increasing project structure due to individualised demands of young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation as a central aspect of all youth oriented policies in terms of facilitation of choice-based individual development (e.g. free youth education). • Participation as a necessary link between objective of inflexible individuals and flexible (education) structures • Counselling in education and especially for the unemployed aims at motivation and individual decision-making. • Participatory elements traditionally central to youth work and youth clubs. • Participation with regard to political influence on local level shifting from councils to more project-oriented approaches.
Netherlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease of youth unemployment since 1990s (due to demography and education); yet higher than other age groups. • Shift from vocational to general secondary education -> polarisation between lowest and highest levels. • Policies in secondary education: dissuading detours, introduction of study profiles, unification of lower levels into pre-vocational education, new methods to encourage lifelong learning, re-structuring of vocational education and unification of qualification structure. • Introduction of B.A./M.A. model at university • Increasing number of pupils and students having part-time and flexible jobs • Introduction of all-inclusive activation policies: youth has to be either in school or job (<i>Act on the Mobilisation of Jobseekers</i>; WIW). • Expansion of child care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shift in responsibilities from national to local authorities (more autonomy in distribution of funding, in priorities and delivery) • ‘Chain’ approach in dealing with education and unemployment • Levelling out disadvantages through specific educational measures (e.g. extra funding); often problem approach; prevention of marginalisation • Renewed responsibility of public youth centres and youth work towards social-pedagogic affairs (often used to be focussed on emancipation, cultural tasks) • No integrative approach by authorities; often one-sided towards political participation • (Political) participation policy dominated by specific, higher-class milieus • Youth information very important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No coherent definition, includes all kinds of types (political, social, consumptive, etc.) • At the same time emphasis on participation and integration through work and education • More and more emphasis on holistic counselling, interlinking of institutions (social affairs, education department, department of justice, housing, etc.) • Extra attention for ethnic minorities: improving social integration to maintain social cohesion • Official point of view: stimulating autonomy of choice and offering opportunities (paradox with narrowing-down of options for dropouts)

Germany (W)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combination of a highly selective school system and a strongly standardised system of vocational training. • Youth unemployment rate similar to other age groups but has increased due to a decrease of apprenticeship training • Segmentation according to school qualifications, gender and ethnicity increases risks of continuous exclusion. • Policies aim at maintaining the 'dual system' or placing young people classified as 'disadvantaged' in compensatory (partly pre-vocational) training schemes ("vocational youth assistance") which often are stigmatised and de-motivating. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth policy is conceptualised as "youth assistance". • Responsibilities mainly on local level, delivery is organised subsidiarily. • Main fields are educational assistance and care, youth work and social youth work. • Local authorities are obliged to carry out youth policy planning • Only recently increasing engagement in youth transitions which tends to be slightly more oriented towards individual needs than in vocational youth assistance • Professional standards influenced by social pedagogy; most important principle "life-world orientation" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important concept in youth policy (esp. in national youth reports, the Children and Youth Assistance Act as well as in "life-world orientation"). • Debates about participation mostly refer to youth policy planning • In practice, esp. in youth and community work • In youth transitions participation plays a minor role (either as normative objective: young people have to be trained in order to find a job so that they are able to participate), individualised assessment rather rhetoric • Only for target groups "not to be reached" by employment service participatory approaches are applied.
Germany (E)	Based on similar structures, concepts, policies and meanings the situation in East Germany is marked by some additional features:		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional transformation not accompanied by cultural transformation → failure in addressing persisting problems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - rural-urban and gender differences - globalised economy vs. regional development lacking economic foundation - neglect of past traditions, regional network structures and their potential - strict labour market orientation of transition structures • Decline of ('dual') apprenticeship places due to lack of prospering SME's → compensation via <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a large number of state-financed non-company-based vocational training lacking prestige and recognition - schemes of "vocational youth assistance" for the '(labour) market disadvantaged' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-reunification institutions heavily influenced by pure (commercial or non-profit) education establishments • Concept of 'life-world orientation' demanded and proclaimed but less so practically realised • Re-trained social-pedagogic staff in youth assistance (still) lacks competences of life-world-orientation (e.g. negotiation) preferring 'clear' instruction methods. • Schemes of vocational youth assistance in the East are no (stigmatised) 'niches' but reach right into the middle of society → wider responsibility in regional contexts and prospective actors for social development; → larger target groups in the schemes because of economic problems (less stigmatization) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subjective perspective: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (historic) mistrust of mobilising or activating participation approaches - rural youth commute long distances thus lacking individual resources to actively participate in community issues • Normative perspective: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - participation embedded in discourse on competences and network development (formal labour market requirements plus social and cultural resources combined with regional development processes) - unlock and activate potentials (new learning cultures)

<p>Great Britain</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considerable decrease of (youth) unemployment in 1990s due to economic restructuring, expansion of education and training and high policy turnover • Young (white) males affected more by unemployment and low (school) attainment • Yet, labour market disadvantages of young women and ethnic minorities prevail • Policies aim at improving and diversifying options of education and training (education and training rate under EU average) • Increasing compulsory elements: New Deal links social security to work experience or education and training; yet group of Status Zer0 who opt out of the system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the national level youth issues are rather fragmented; new processes of regionalisation • Most youth policies still are governed by a problem approach • At the centre of previous youth services: youth clubs and youth centres (widely spread provision) • New government strategy (Connexions) aims at building local networks for “ladders out of social exclusion“ by flexible curricula, high quality education, financial support (for being in education), outreach support and counselling (criticism: increase of control) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social citizenship has shifted from (social) “rights“ to active citizenship (involvement) which is promoted by Education for Citizenship (compulsory part of school curricula); danger that the aspects of rights (e.g. economic independence) is erased. • Political participation: voting and membership in political parties in drastic decline; yet situative political engagement • Youth councils increase: on the local level (recruited from youth clubs and associations) as young people’s “voice“, on the national level (elected) a.o. provide? a feedback from young people to Connexions strategy.
<p>Ireland</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apart from the academic route there are vocational routes into the workforce (school-based programmes, company-based apprenticeships and traineeships. • Short post-leaving certificate courses are gaining importance with the rising demand for labour from the prospering Irish economy. • Community Employment and Community Training Workshops are one of the training opportunities for young people with difficulties in entering the labour market. • Strong correlation between individual level of secondary education and the labour market situation; prevention of early school leaving is one major issue of transition related policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ireland’s social sector features - due to its historical development - a high proportion of voluntary and church-based charitable organisations, although the role of the state in financing youth and community services is increasing. • The official definition of youth work is a mixture of general support to young people’s personal and social development (organised as an informal, educational, leisure-time activity) and a strong emphasis on its aim to help them avoid risky and anti-social behaviour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primarily, participation is understood as enrolment in education and training. • A second interpretation of participation lies in the official aims of youth work as an agency to facilitate young people’s active citizenship • Another concept of participation is at the base of one particular policy: Under the Local Development Programme, local partnerships between community organisations and statutory agencies are funded in order to facilitate a high degree of participation of local community members in the planning and provision of a number of community-related services.

Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slight decrease of (youth) unemployment but still high rates in the South especially for young females. • Recent efforts to re-structure transition system as regards extension of schooling, integration of vocational training, accreditation of competencies and development of employment service and counselling (education reforms being blocked by new government). • Employment and work experience through promotion of enterprise creation, social co-operatives and socially useful work. Apart from that, deregulation of labour market. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly fragmented structure: national responsibility divided between ministries, regional and local responsibilities. • Before 1980s youth oriented policies mainly oriented towards adjusting socialisation processes of young people at risk. • (Local) youth policy since 1980ies (progetti giovani) oriented towards young peoples' needs in terms of providing opportunities of personal and social development • Main elements of local youth policies: youth centres, youth information, labour market policies and prevention of marginalisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discourses of participation in terms of empowerment and active citizenship in the contexts of local youth policies, community psychology and urban re-generation • Increasing attempts to increase political participation through local youth councils • Development of representation through associations on local, regional and national level. • Policy discourses on social and adolescents' rights (e.g. National youth plan, however blocked in the parliament -> trend to instrumentalise 'youth participation' against social security claims of the older ones).
Portugal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth unemployment higher than for other age groups but affecting all educational levels • Modernisation of strategies of job search. • Prolongation of education careers (increase of compulsory education and programmes against dropping out), lowest education rate in Europe • Low exchange value of qualifications. • High level of child labour (mainly rural), policies largely fail. • Higher unemployment of those with high qualifications and social resources; • Precarious underemployment of those with lower qualifications and less social resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most programmes addressing young people's labour market integration and/or vocational training. • In especially deprived areas programmes of criminal prevention organise more comprehensive support in which coordination between police, schools, training and employment schemes, social workers, drug counsellors is achieved (Programa Escolas). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In policy discourses participation as personal, scholar and professional abilities to resist to risk trajectories. • In leisure-related youth policies (youth work) also non-formal youth initiatives are supported. • As element of 'Programa Escolas' urban social and cultural mediators are trained (recognition of 'sub'cultures which have to be mediated / negotiated with dominant culture)

Romania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Context of socio-economic transformation (privatisation). • Highest risks of unemployment and poverty (low wages) for young people, especially females (often inactive) and in rural areas. • Shift towards education leads to a gap between higher qualifications and available jobs. • Diversification and liberalisation of education system and adaption to labour market needs. • Introduction of active labour market policies (information, counselling, training, temporary occupations, incentives for employers). • Due to low (but existing) social assistance young people depend largely on the family. • Individualisation of success and failure. • Instrumental work attitudes (security). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No official definition but government programme operationalised in the National Action Plan for Youth (NAPY). • NAPY depends on partnership between state and NGOs. • Most national youth policies aim at education and training, employment and prevention of social exclusion, especially the need of information and counselling is stressed; • Yet aspects of non-formal education and participation in the civil society are mentioned in the NAPY. • Youth policies are aimed to be dynamic, flexible, global and local, research based and resource oriented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although frequently referred to - mainly in quantitative terms - in education policy discourses, participation appears as a key concept of youth policy. • Due to lack of complex research on youth participation and due to the manifest risks of social exclusion participation is interpreted mainly with regard to be involved in either education and training or employment. • However, participation through civil society's structures is given an important role in both streamlining and implementing youth policies. • As participation in secondary superior education (high schools, professional) has fallen since 1989 programmes to prevent early school leaving and to re-integrate young people into education are most important.
Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest rate of youth unemployment in Europe (especially young women) but decreased while activity rate has also decreased. • Young people tend to stay in education and depend on the family. • Shift of problem perspective from unemployment to precarious employment (short-term contracts). • Fundamental reform of education system leading to broader access to higher education and revalidation of vocational training (still decoupled from the labour market). • Aim of labour market policies: more regular work contracts (tax incentives for employers). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth policy is rather fragmented (changing responsibilities of national ministries). • Responsibilities also on regional level but local level without competencies and resources. • Youth policies are designed through 'youth plans' which are carried out by statutory institutions or voluntary associations; objective of 'integral plans'. • Most important issues: employment and training, housing, counselling, associationism. • Problem that youth policies rhetorically aim at autonomy but are not backed by welfare policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With regard to education and employment the youth policy objective is autonomy whilst social participation restricted to associations. • Youth councils on the local level rather with advisory. • Participation in terms of the National Youth Council is restricted to representation through associations and organisations (also only advisory).