

PARTISPACE

SPACES AND STYLES OF PARTICIPATION

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

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Local Constellations of Youth Participation in Comparative Perspective

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1. Executive Summary

This report focuses on how youth participation is contextualised differently in different cities, how it is addressed and supported in different ways by local youth policies, and how this is reflected by different forms of formal youth participation.

As regards the context, it has revealed that only socioeconomic factors, national welfare states and local youth policies, their infrastructure and responsiveness, together make a difference. At the same time there is evidence that discourses and mechanisms of formal youth participation play a role in the shift towards activating welfare states.

In the comparative analysis of formal settings of youth participation (youth and student councils, a home council in residential care, extracurricular activities of citizenship education and formal youth information centres) five patterns have been elaborated that differ according to mandate and organisation, resources and positioning between adults and youth: recognition and addressing, assigning a role, providing without promoting, lead the process from above and leaving them alone without power. Analysis has revealed the explicit and implicit functions these play for local youth policies and within urban contexts and the internal and external power relationships involved. In all the settings, young people have to position themselves between the world of adults and the world of young people. The clearer initiated and institutionalised by adults, the more recognised and institutionalised the settings, the more young people seem inclined, tempted or under pressure to develop an adult habitus. Apparently, formal youth participation is related with the formation of an adult citizenship habitus. At the same time, young people do not simply adapt to the existing norms and rules and internalise the inbuilt habitus but in their process of appropriation negotiate, modify and re-signify it.

The analysis of biographies of young people engaged in these settings reveals a huge diversity. Yet, young people were primarily searching for belonging and recognition; for different reasons they found these in youth councils, extra-curricular activities or youth information centres. Obviously, the powerful recognition connected to formal settings helped these particular young people in fulfilling their biographical needs while they had less problems in compromising with the adult habitus these settings implied and required.

Recommendations for policy and practice concerned with fostering (formal) youth participation

- *Reflexivity* of both organisations and professionals regarding access and exclusion.
- *Responsiveness* youth policy that can be negotiated, appropriated or rejected by young people.
- *Recognising informal, non-organised or non-institutionalised participation.*
- *Recognising young people's dilemmas* of positioning between adults and youth culture.
- *Youth work infrastructure* linking continuity and reliability with 'breathing' institutions.
- *Financial investment* for a diversified youth work infrastructure.
- *Support democratic and democracy learning without pedagogisation.*

2. Introduction

This report focuses on the relationships between cities, local youth policies and the inner workings of formal settings of youth participation in the eight studied cities of the Partispace project: Bologna (Italy), Eskişehir (Turkey), Frankfurt (Germany), Gothenburg (Sweden), Manchester (UK), Plovdiv (Bulgaria), Rennes (France), Zurich (Switzerland). By formal youth participation we refer to institutionalised, organised and adult-led settings of political decision-making, social or civic engagement explicitly referred to as participation like youth or student councils.

This report has several aims: First, we want to identify dimensions according to which youth participation in different cities, nation states and welfare regimes varies. Second, we want to understand how local youth policies make a difference in facilitating youth participation. Third, we want to analyse formal settings of youth participation. These can on the one hand be interpreted as the most direct expression of youth policies in facilitating youth participation: on the other hand both PARTISPACE and other research contexts suggest that such forms of participation are neither relevant nor attractive for a majority of youth across different settings. Against this backdrop, we want to understand the role of such settings for policy makers, for those young people who still get involved and for the urban contexts in which they are embedded. One may expect that formal participation serves to legitimise administrative policy making as democratic, to educate young people for institutionalised forms of participation as ‘real’ and ‘right’ participation while at the same time it also contributes to promoting a culture of self-responsibility in line with principles of the activating welfare state.

The limited research on youth participation existing so far has assessed young people’s attitudes and activities according to forms of participation which are formally recognized as participation and classified them correspondingly as participation or not. At the same time, there is hardly any research on what is actually going on in such forms of participation. This report starts from the assumption that a comparative analysis of the relationships between formal settings of participation and the local youth policies (and national welfare states) in which they are embedded is a necessary contribution to better understand the phenomenon of youth participation. It questions the dominance and self-evidence with which formalized participation is being equated with participation as such (thereby excluding other forms) and at the same time analyses the local political, institutional and discursive contextualization of these settings. This is even more important as the phenomenon of youth participation is constituted by discourses in which descriptions, analyses, normative expectations and ideological ascriptions are interwoven.

Thus the report centres around three main research questions: first, what are key dimensions and variations of local constellations of youth policy and youth participation; second, how do formal settings of youth participation function; and third, what is the role of such settings in the local contexts. The analysis will contribute to understanding how youth participation is being negotiated, facilitated and recognized (or not) in European cities.

Our analysis draws on data gathered during the PARTISPACE project. First, *contextual information* on national youth policy contexts and discourses on youth and youth participation has been collected and analysed (Andersson et al., 2016), national contexts have been related to European discourses on youth participation (Becquet et al. 2016; Kovacheva et al., 2016).

The core of the research were *local studies* in one major city per country consisting of two phases (see Batsleer et al., 2017). The first phase was a *mapping process* in which 20 expert interviews and 12 group discussions as well as city walks with young people were carried out in each city to provide insight into the functioning of local youth policies and local discourses on youth and youth participation. Sampling was organized in a way ensuring a broad coverage of different perspectives *on* youth by experts with different functions and representing different institutions as well as *of* youth who were recruited in different school types and levels as well as diverse out of school contexts. The second phase consisted in six *in-depth case studies* per city involving ethnographic field work (mainly participant observation), group discussions and biographical interviews with two young persons per case. The sampling of these cases was a result of the mapping while guiding criteria were a reflection of social categories such as age groups, gender, educational level and social milieus as well as a coverage of formal, non-formal and informal settings. The latter was used as a heuristic distinction to make sure that not only those settings formally recognized as participation were analysed. Already during the mapping phase, it proved to be too narrow and was differentiated in terms of regular versus episodic activities, open or closed groups, issues of general versus particular interest, organized versus spontaneous forms. All observations have been documented in extensive field notes, all interviews and group discussions have been audio recorded and fully transcribed. Selected data (ten data sets per city) have been translated into English for in-depth comparative analysis.

As a further step, 18 *participatory action research projects* have been carried out with selected groups in the eight cities in which young people and researchers engaged in a mutual learning process on what it means being active in public space (Percy-Smith et al., 2018).

This report draws mainly on the reports on national youth policies and discourses, on the local case study reports, on selected translated expert interviews and group discussions of the mapping process as well as on field notes, group discussions and biographical interviews carried out in the framework of in-depth case studies of formal settings of youth participation. Finally, also findings of action research projects with young people from formal participation settings.

The report consists of six chapters including this introduction. The 2nd chapter provides a review of existing research on youth participation with a specific focus on formal, adult-led forms of participation. In Chapter 3, we elaborate local situations of youth policy and youth participation starting with analysing the different city contexts in terms of socio-economic factors, discourses on youth and particular characteristics. Further, structures, actors and topics of local youth policies are described and framed by the way in which youth is being addressed by national welfare systems. The chapter also includes the dimensions of matches and mismatches between youth policies and young people's lives, cultural expressions and practices in public space. It concludes by outlining different local constellations of youth policy and youth participation. Chapter 4 is concerned with the analysis of formal youth participation. It starts with identifying and distinguishing main organisational structures. A key question is how these settings are positioned and position themselves between the worlds of adults and young people. This extends to the ways in which internally the agendas are being set or negotiated between adults and young people. Finally, selected biographies of young people in these settings have been analysed in order to better understand how these young people presented themselves as involved in formal participation considering the low relevance other young people ascribe to such settings and practice. Chapter 5 draws the findings of the empirical chapters together. It

undertakes a comparative analysis of cases in relation to local constellations which is framed by relating these constellations to the national welfare states in which they are embedded. Against this backdrop, we analyse different configurations of formal participation in relation to local youth policies asking what maintaining and reproducing such settings makes possible in the wider relation between the cities and their youth. This is concluded by elaborating power relationships inherent to formal youth participation. Finally, Chapter 6 relates the findings of this analysis to the overall research question of PARTISPACE where and how young people do participate and in what way this analysis contributes to the understanding of youth participation. It also reflects how policy and practice can profit from this analysis in facilitating youth participation.

3. State of the art

In the following, we will focus on reviewing the scientific literature in relation to local youth policies and to policies aimed at fostering youth participation. It needs to be said that there is little empirical research but a vast array of literature somewhere between programmatic discourse and analytical reflection. The review starts from the international discourse on youth policy followed by research findings on young people's political and civic participation and the distinction between adult-led and youth-led forms of participation.

2.1. Youth policy and the international scene

As the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) gained political momentum, forms of advocacy for children and young people began to be discussed as means to ascertain participation rights. One such means is the implementation of youth parliaments and youth councils (Matthews, 2001), student councils (Walther, 2012a), or the 'Structured Dialogue' between youth organisations, member states and Commission at EU level (EYF, 2012). Other perspectives include the degree to which young people feel able to co-decide and have a say in institutions regulating their lives: schools, youth welfare, health and housing services, vocational training and employment schemes (Barnes et al., 2007; Clarke, 2007; Ray & Pohl, 2007). These trends need to be examined critically as in the course of activating welfare and delegitimising social rights such forms also take legitimacy functions (cf. Birzea et al., 2004; Walther et al., 2006; Becquet, 2012; Walther 2012a). This can be also related to the concept of "positive youth development" emphasising young people's capacities while reducing youth work infrastructure (cf. Brendto & Larson, 2005; Nolas, 2013; GHK, 2013).

Beyond the local level which is framed by regional and/or national policy, youth participation is embedded in the wider context of late modern European societies and the place (and space) they provide for young people (Williamson, 2002; Jones, 2010; Chisholm et al., 2011; Loncle et al., 2012; Furlong, 2013). Within this context, there is a general shift from a government to a *governance* model with decentralised decision making processes, and an increase of actors involved across different levels (public authorities, public and private service providers, NGOs as well as the beneficiaries and users of services) (cf. Jessop, 1999; Rhodes, 1997; Martelli, 2007). In fact, the strong reference of the Commission's White Paper on Youth (2001) to youth participation reflected the limited competence of the EU in youth policies by way of compensating with a more procedural than substantial approach (participation as governance

principle refers to *how* youth policy is done and not *what* youth policy should do or actually does; cf. Becquet et al., 2017). Although youth policies have become highly fragmented, decentralized and devolved, implying a large number of public actors, they tend to be organized in a ‘silo’ manner whereas youth researchers promote “integrated youth policies” (cf. López Blasco et al., 2003; Siurala, 2005; Wallace & Bendit, 2009; Planas et al., 2014).

At the same time, in the framework of activating welfare states the discourse of youth participation coincides with a continuum of youth policies from collective and positive perceptions of young people towards individualising and stigmatising perspectives (Mac Donald, 1997; Lopez Blasco et al. 2003; Wacquant, 2004; Becquet & Bidart, 2013; Castel & Duvoux, 2013; Loncle, 2013). It also relates to the continuum between ‘soft’ youth policies allowing for more participation, being largely administrated locally while disposing of limited (and further decreasing) funding (e.g. youth work) and ‘hard’ youth policies organised nationally, strongly standardised with larger funding for being closer to the central issues of social integration such as education or work (Walther et al., 2006). However, recently boundaries between soft and hard policies have been more and more blurred coinciding with a shift from a discourse of youth as a problem towards youth as a resource (see 3.1). Yet, this dualism can be criticized for being two sides of the same coin : while some young people are addressed as a resource, others that do not fit into this category easily become the “problem”. In fact, participation serves for legitimization of activation policies (cf. Garraud, 2004; Loncle, 2010; Walther, 2012a; Guilloux et al., 2014).

Despite the focus on implementation at local level and European discourses, the persisting frameworks of *nation states* must not be neglected in analysing youth policy and youth participation. Important policy regulations of education or training, employment or welfare structuring young people’s lives are regulated at nation state level in most countries (see 3.2).

2.2. Young people’s participation: between civic and political engagement

Since the 1990s, there is consensus among scholars that orientations and practices of youth participation are changing (cf. Hoikkala, 2009). While there is no clear evidence of a general decline in voting among young people, participation in European elections largely reflects national voting patterns across age groups (Spannring et al., 2008; Eurobarometer, 2013). Other research suggests that young people tend to engage more in concrete on-off actions than in formal mechanisms and collective expressions requiring membership (cf. Kovacheva, 2000; Muxel, 2001; De Castro, 2008; Hooghe & Dassonneville, 2013; Benedicto, 2013; Diamanti, 2013; Eurofound, 2014). These changes are ascribed to individualisation in modern societies, to a cultural shift to post-materialistic values (Inglehart 1990), while the increasing de-standardisation of transitions in the life course has contributed to a suspension of a full citizenship status for many young adults (cf. Spannring et al., 2008; Loncle et al., 2012). It is also argued that engagement at national or transnational level depends on experiences of influence and control at local level (Jamieson & Grundy, 2005; Spannring et al., 2008).

Although the prevalent idea about youth participation seems to be one that emphasises a global decline of youth civic and political engagement, expressed by a growing apathy, a loss of interest in civic and political affairs, an avoidance of electoral and other democratic responsibility, and little investment in community wellbeing (Bermudez, 2012; Macedo, Alex-Assensoh & Barry, 2005; Stoker, 2006), recent studies have questioned this picture (e.g.

Sherrod, Torney-Purta & Constance, 2010; Watson, Hollister, Stroud & Babcock, 2011). It is argued that young people are not apathetic about politics; rather, they have been developing their own views and engaging in a variety of ways that, although not situated within a frame of traditional and institutionalised forms of politics, evince a high level of civic and political engagement (Bennet, 2007; Dalton, 2009). As mentioned by Bermudez (2012, p. 534), “rather than a landscape of generalised apathy, what the literature presents is apathy towards formal political institutions”. Dalton (2009) characterizes this change by using the distinction between “duty citizens” and “engaged citizens”. “Duty citizens” are associated with traditional, hierarchical and highly formalised forms of politics, “engaged citizens” refers towards an increasing number of young people who see and develop their activities within a frame of nonelectoral forms of politics (Gaiser et al., 2009, distinguish conventional and non-conventional engagement). While it is true that young people have become more apathetic towards formal, electoral, party politics, it is also true that this absence paved the way for the emergence of alternative forms of civic and political engagement that need to be considered. Examples of this engagement are the propensity that young people participate in protest politics and express their opinions online more than the general population (Sloam, 2014); they are more likely to sign petitions, join boycotts, and participate in demonstrations; they are also more likely to develop local volunteerism, ethical consumption, and support for issues and causes (environment, human rights) through the development of grassroots activities, community involvement, horizontal and networked organisation and online activism (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Spannring et al., 2008; Bennet, 2007). Overall, there seems to be a shift from overarching collective interests towards a more individualised form of politics reflecting the changing life experiences of young people towards personally meaningful lifestyles (Bermudez, 2012; Furlong, 2009; Marsh et al, 2007). A comparative study between Germany, the UK and the US found that, “young people over the course of the past few decades have become more defined by diverse lifestyles, identities, and values and this is reflected by repertoires of civic and political engagement that are issue based and take place in arenas that facilitate horizontal forms of participation” (Sloam 2014, p. 680).

In this regard, Bermudez (2012) identifies a difference between *political participation* and *civic engagement*: “While the word *political* has come to mean affairs of the state, the business of movement or actions in the electoral or partisan arena, the term *civic* has a broader meaning associated with being a member of the polity, community or civil society” (p. 538). The term ‘civic’ refers to public engagement around issues of common concern outside formal politics and which seems to characterise most young people’s participation.

However, as a negative consequence of this turn towards non-institutionalised forms of politics Sloam (2014) points out the “increased social-educational inequalities inherent in these alternative forms of participation” (p. 680). Those young people who develop alternative ways of participating tend to be highly educated and politically literate (Bovens & Wille, 2008; Flanagan & Levine, 2010; Levinson, 2010). Education seems to be the most influential factor in issues of inequality: the lower their education level, the less young people are likely to get engaged (cf. Spannring et al., 2008). Education tends to be related with social class, migration or ethnic minority positions – in cases of refugees and asylum seekers it intersects with fragmented residence and citizenship status (cf. Lagrange & Senovilla, 2001). In policy discourses, this is ascribed to a lack of information and competence. Instead, qualitative studies

have shown that success in education goes along with feeling familiar and self-efficacious in formal and public situations across different socialisation contexts (cf. Stevens et al., 2003; Walther, 2012b; Lüküslü, 2013; Guilloux et al., 2014; Schwanenflügel, 2015; Cuconato et al., 2018).

Beyond political and civic participation, also young people's use of public institutions such as school, youth work, public care, social security, health and housing services etc. is referred to in terms of participation as a practice connecting the personal with the public. The question in this regard however, is to what extent such institutions are organised in a participatory way: to what extent do young people have rights and options of choice in how to use these services and to what extent are young people involved in the steering of such institutions? A paradigmatic issue in this regard is the paradox of participation and learning: on the one hand participation programmes are developed in which young people shall make experiences of participation, on the other hand, scopes and possibilities of participation in learning contexts such as school are limited to sociocultural activities without influence on curricula, assessment and classroom and school management (cf. Becquet, 2012; Walther 2012b). Recently, young people are being involved increasingly in schemes of user evaluation (cf. Barnes et al., 2007; Clarke, 2007; Loncle, 2009). On the one hand, it is necessary to have a critical look where 'giving young people a say' serves only as token for legitimation and where, on the other hand, they are also involved in "politics of needs interpretation" (Fraser, 1990). which leads to and perhaps enables the relation between participation and social security, between recognition and distribution, or: between the welfare state and civil society. The rise of the participation and "active citizenship" discourse coincides with the emergence of the activating welfare state or the social investment state especially visible in conceptualisations of a so-called 'Third Way' between market and state (Giddens, 1998; Morel et al., 2011). Here, participation is equated with increasing self-responsibility and less social rights (see chapter 5). Other authors argue that only universal and unconditioned social rights like a basic income can provide individuals with the autonomy and power of active citizens (cf. van der Veen & Groot, 2000).

2.3. Adult-led and youth-led participation

'Youth' is a social construct of modern industrial societies, which are centred around spheres dominated by adults such as work and production (Gordon, 2007; Lesko, 1996) and thus related to a generational power relationship. Bourdieu (1993: 95) states that "talking about 'the young' as a social unit, constituted group, with common interests, relating these interests to a biologically defined age, is in itself an obvious manipulation". It is not surprising that most activities designed to promote youth participation follow an adult institutionalised model (e.g. youth and student councils, community-based youth organisations, schools, after schools programmes, issue-based advocacy groups, etc.; cf. Gordon & Taft, 2011; Yates & Youniss, 1998).

The shift from electoral politics towards alternative forms of participation outlined above points to the issue of education. According to Sloam (2014), non-electoral forms of participation tend to be heavily structured by education. Young people tend to be taught an array of pro-democracy concepts, skills and attitudes, through the participation in adult-led programmes and projects (Bermudez, 2012). However, they feel a contradiction between what they are being taught on democratic participation and institutions which do not encourage them to exert these

skills. “Something in the emerging construct of civic competence must account for the crucial capacity to navigate the pervasive incongruence between the philosophical principles and political discourses of democracy and the failed practices and promises of democratic systems” (p. 540).

Within these adult-led spaces young people enjoy limited autonomy and their political socialisation basically remains under the control of adults (youth workers, local government, etc.; Geddes & Rust, 2000). As a result, policy makers but also representatives of youth or civil society organisations tend to reserve the concept of participation for officially recognised and formalised actions and issues – even if these prove to be not relevant for young people (cf. Smith et al., 2005; Kovacheva, 2000; Walther, 2012a). “A great deal of research and policy continues to focus on how adult-run institutions such as schools, community organisations, governments, and even the private sector can “promote” civic engagement in youth” (Gordon & Taft, 2011, p. 1500). Very little is known about the ways in which youth themselves are actively involved in their own political socialisation. One of the few studies in this respect has been conducted by Pfaff (2009) who has analysed the development of political orientations in relation to music preferences and youth cultural scenes. Instead, there is a vast array of writings documenting adult-led approaches to youth engagement: from support through tailored training and personalised feedback with the purpose of developing skills, competences and identities of young people (Kirshner, 2008; Pearce & Larson, 2006; Coté & Schwartz, 2002), to the fostering of a sense of sociopolitical control by encouraging young people to participate in “collective actions oriented to influencing social environments” (Martinez et al, 2017). The conventional logic behind youth participation is that young people’s retreat from formal politics is interpreted as a sign of apathy and that the solution to this is controlling young people’s political socialisation according to formal political processes (Delli Carpini, 2000; Henn, Weinstein & Wring, 2002; Thomson et al, 2004; Youniss et al, 2002; Gordon & Taft, 2011). There is an emphasis on empowering those who “are currently disinterested, and the inclusion into the social, economic and political mainstream of those currently marginalised” (Geddes & Rust, 2000, p. 44). Informal and youth-led participation tends to be valorised not in itself, but as vehicle for socialisation into more “ideal” practices of voting and formal politics and within prescribed roles of normative engagement (Gordon & Taft, 2011). “Many sociologists take for granted that adolescents are non-political beings, and the naturalised assumption that adolescents are always “developing” and are citizens-in-the-making but not yet capable of political decision-making largely goes unquestioned or unchallenged” (Gordon, 2007, p. 635).

Youth participation is often truncated in institutionalised spaces and efforts to involve youth in civic or political development do not always give youth real opportunities for full participation “because these well-meaning adults see what they are doing as ‘socializing youth for the future’, rather than actually engaging youth in activism that matters in the present” (ibid., p. 1511). Young people have to prepare “for the real thing”, but are not recognised as political actors yet. As a result, these models of civic engagement do not seem to accord any real political power to youth in the present (Youniss et al, 2002; Zedin et al, 2015). They create a moratorium where adolescents are trained and fit into conventional politics. This is particularly evident in student government (student councils or unions etc.), where activities follow “a model of civic engagement designed by adults to ‘train’ students for future participation while estranging them from real political power in the present” (Gordon & Taft, 2011, p. 1512).

Despite their increasing variety (Geddes, 2002; Richards et al., 2009; Loncle et al., 2012), formal forms of participation are often despised for their incapacity to address all young people. As mentioned by Youniss et al (2002, p. 126) “political involvement that is coerced by adults is unlikely to provide good preparation for constructive adult civic participation”. They are denounced for their tokenism as “dinnerware” of democracy (Loncle & Rouyer, 2004), for their focus on information (or even manipulation) and their inability to share decision-making with young people (cf. Hart, 1992; Loncle & Muniglia, 2008). Raby (2014) highlights how young people’s participation initiatives resonate with a neoliberal economic and political context that privileges western individualism; that is mostly informed by middle-class values; and that ultimately fosters young people’s subjugation through self-governance.

In face of the constraints involved in adult-led youth participation, studies have been showing that to be fruitful, youth organisations need to actively engage young participants in collaborative decision-making processes, to give voice to their needs and demands, and to promote their initiative and agency. Researchers talk about the importance of establishing a logic of true collaboration when adults interact with young people within an institutional frame. The notion of “active participation” is set forward to signify activities where “youth organisations engage participants in decision making by (a) including them in the determination of organisational goals and purposes and (b) providing roles of leadership and responsibility in projects and activities” (Martinez et al., 2017, p. 971). The freedom to make decisions, while experiencing trust and power sharing from adults is also indicative of a meaningful participatory experience; as well as the establishment of a culture not focused on youth’s troubles but concerned with establishing a common goal and a shared outcome. The multinational study carried out by Zeldin et al. (2017, p. 870) concludes that youth are more likely to feel empowered and connected when they consider themselves to be partners with adults in community organisations. Andersson (2017, p. 1352) suggests changing the relation between adults and young people from a relation based on “professionalism”, where young people are a category to be taken care of by adults, to a relation, where adults are not enablers of the voice of youth, but potential partners in problem solving and decision making in a given situation.

These enterprises are possible through youth-led participation, where political socialisation is something that youth do for themselves. Within school-like environments, according to Gordon and Taft (2011), such an approach avoids the pitfalls of student governments “as a model of civic engagement designed by adults to “train” students for future participation while estranging them from real political power in the present” (p. 1512). For the youngsters of their study, youth activism is not just “cute” or about training youth for the future, but it is a practice that matters. They see their political participation not in terms of being trained into an existing (adult) model but rather in creating their own politics, their own spaces of action, their own campaigns, their own engagements (p. 1515). The study concludes that “youth activists value peer-based, youth-led political organisations and adult allies who explicitly recognize ageism to be a legitimate oppression, one that works in concert with other systems of oppression” (1521); and suggests that by privileging more normative forms of civic engagement, many politicians, youth workers and scholars implicitly prioritise adults as societal subjects. They advocate that in recognising youth political activism, a shift is possible away from conceptualising youth only in terms of their future political subjectivity and toward examining young people’s political subjectivity at the present (p. 1522). There seems to be the need for problematising the ways in which adultism

and generational differences complicate attempts to engage youth in politics; re-thinking the simplistic top-down model approach of adult-led political socialisation that is often promoted as the solution to the problem of youth political engagement; taking peer-based, youth-led political socialisation and alternative models of generational alliance more seriously (p. 1524).

The difference between adult-led and youth-led participation is not addressed adequately by quantitative scales in terms of more or less participation inherent models of ‘ladders’ of participation (Arnstein, 1969; Hart, 1992). These models may be helpful in criticizing tokenistic, adult-led approaches but reproduce a simplistic and essentialist idea of participation (cf. Andersson, 2017). In fact, there is a lack of research exploring practices both within organisations that actively promote youth participation (Wong et al., 2010) as well as in unorganized spaces. In particular, knowledge is needed on the meaning of the issues for the young people, their effectiveness in terms of power and their compatibility with identities and lifestyles.

3. Cities, youth policies and young people - local constellations of youth participation

In this chapter we aim at modelling local constellations of youth participation in the eight cities involved in the PARTISPACE project with regard to structures, forms, issues and actors of youth participation. The term local constellations is potentially misleading as it may be associated with comprehensive images of cities. It reflects the difficulty of building comparative typologies of policies in an international perspective while a local perspective makes it much more difficult to reduce the view to a few functionally equivalent indicators. Yet, comparison helps elaborating particular traits of local contexts which are here referred to as local constellations (cf. Mingione & Oberti, 2003) The local case studies on the findings of which this report is based have revealed that the phenomenon of youth participation is far too complex to be grasped in terms of comprehensive constellations but rather fragmented, even in a single city (cf. Batsleer et al., 2017). Therefore this chapter needs to be read as a rather tentative approach of elaborating traits of the relationship between cities and young people. The chapter starts with elaborating socioeconomic, sociodemographic and sociocultural aspects of the particular urban contexts. The second section describes and analyses structures of local youth policies and their mechanisms of youth participation and contextualises them with regard to wider welfare regimes. The third section focuses on matches and mismatches between youth policies and young people’s lives and activities. The final section aims at tentatively modelling relationships between cities, youth policies and youth participation in the eight cities.

3.1 Urban contexts of youth participation

In order to analyse the participation of young people, we focus on the level of the “city” and will first introduce the different urban contexts, that is the relevant socioeconomic, sociodemographic and sociocultural aspects and their potential effects on young people’s activities in urban public spaces. In terms of *demography*, despite certain differences, the eight cities are comparable in terms of dimension and relevance in the respective country. All are major cities and regional centres without being the capital of the respective countries and have a population below one million inhabitants. The smallest city, Rennes, has about 200,000

inhabitants, the biggest one, Eskişehir, about 750,000, differences that go along with varying socio-economic, political and cultural importance in the national contexts: Zurich is the biggest city and economic centre of the country, Eskişehir is only a middle-sized city compared to big Turkish metropolises such as Istanbul and Ankara. The cities are attributed with different labels such as university cities (e.g. Rennes, Bologna, or Eskişehir), industrial cities (Manchester or Gothenburg), or hubs of global finance industries (Zurich or Frankfurt). The cities seem also to differ with regard to the share of 15-29 year olds in relation to the overall population. Manchester and Eskişehir apparently have higher shares of young people than Bologna or Plovdiv.

Table 1: Demographic and socio-economic indicators of youth conditions in the eight cities

	15-29 year olds as % of population ¹	15-24 year olds in education/training	youth unemployment rate (15-24 year olds)	Regional economic performance in BIP per head		Poverty rate	
						total	15-29 year olds
	2015	2015	2015	2011	compared to national rate	2015	2015
EU 28	17.43%	62.3	20.4	25.100		23,8	29,2
Plovdiv	16.84%	52.3	22.8	4.300	82.69%	41,3	41,3
Frankfurt	18.80%	67.7	7.0	80.800	253.29%	20,0	24,9
Rennes	19.70%	64.4	18.7	29.200	95.11%	17,7	22,3
Bologna	12.67%	65.1	29.4	37.500	144.23%	28,7	36,9
Gothenburg	19.53%	59.7	18.7	39.200	96.08%	18,6	28,3
Manchester	30.69%	57.1	15.8	24.200	85.82%	23,5	28,8
Zurich	17.33%	73.9	5.7	80.000	125.00%	18,2	16,6
Eskişehir	24.04%	63.3*	15.6	9.800	130.67%	41,3	41,2
<i>Regional level of data²</i>	<i>NUTS 2</i>	<i>NUTS 1</i>	<i>NUTS 2</i>	<i>NUTS 2</i>		<i>NUTS 0</i>	

*national level; source: Eurostat database.

As table 1 reveals, the cities represent also different *economic* contexts both in international and intranational comparison. Plovdiv is the poorest city of the sample with the GDP per head being also below the national average, Frankfurt is the richest city with a GDP per head that is two and a half times higher than the national average. With regard to social conditions *youth unemployment* rates differ between 5.7 % in Zurich and 29.4 % in Bologna. The rate of 15-24 year olds in *education or training* spreads from 52% in Plovdiv to 74% in Zurich. Finally, *poverty* is highest in Bulgaria and Turkey with 41% and lowest in Switzerland with 18% in total and 17% for 15-29 year olds. In Germany, France, Italy, Sweden and the UK rates are between 20 and 30% however, the rates for young people are 5 to 8 % higher.

Clustering cities according to these indicators provides the following picture. While differing in percentage of young people in the population and GDP per head, Gothenburg and Manchester share being ‘poorer’ than the national average and have similar rates of youth unemployment,

¹ Demographic differences are less clear as these figures suggest as the share of population metropolitan areas counted as city population differs as that one of young people depending on residential status of university students coming from outside the city (Manchester 31% - UK 19%, Bologna 12% - Italy 15%; see ec.europa.eu/eurostat).

² NUTS 0 = national level, NUTS 1 = major regions; NUTS 2 = medium size regions and metropolitan areas with more than 1,000,000 inhabitants; NUTS 3 = municipality level

young people in education and poverty rate among 15-29 year olds. Zurich and Frankfurt share being rich cities with low youth unemployment and a similar share of young people but differ in terms of involvement in education and training (higher in Zurich) and poverty (higher in Germany). Bologna, Eskişehir and Rennes have a similar share of young people in education and training. Youth unemployment is below EU average in Rennes and Eskişehir but higher in Bologna. The share of young people is low in Bologna, medium in Rennes and high in Eskişehir. Bologna and Eskişehir are richer than the national average while poverty rates differ significantly. The situation in Plovdiv seems particular inasmuch as GDP per head is lowest among the cities and also below national average. Further, fewer young people are in education and training while youth unemployment and poverty are high.

Socioeconomic, sociodemographic and sociocultural structures are reflected by different divisions within the cities in terms of consumption and social exclusion as well as between students and local inhabitants, divisions which of course overlap. The cities are *divided cities* in terms of social inequalities and social exclusion, albeit to a different degree and with different effects on access to cultural capital. Especially in Gothenburg, Frankfurt and Manchester, it is noticeable that the differentiation among different groups of young people is closely linked to the different living conditions and the segregation of living places. In Manchester “it is very difficult for locally born and raised Mancunians to find their place and become productive and creative among the student population ... coming into the city all the time” (NR³ Manchester, p. 16). The last eight years have brought an increase in homelessness, also among young people which coincides with issues of segregation. The distinction between young people in privileged living conditions and those in disadvantaged areas is mentioned in Gothenburg as it is in Frankfurt: “Young people from socially disadvantaged backgrounds are overrepresented in specific districts of the periphery and – even those aiming at social mobility – feel much more at ease in their neighbourhoods, which they only leave if they have to (for education) and tend to return to as quickly as possible” (NR Frankfurt, p. 90). The key factor of segregation in Frankfurt is housing: “Despite a high average standard of life, the city is highly segregated (...). This is also reflected by a sociocultural and socioeconomic divide between the city centre and suburban districts” (ibid., p. 15). In Gothenburg “it seems almost impossible for the experts not to talk about groups perceived as 'cut-off' from, or being in 'disadvantage' in relation to the conventional society (spatially, economically, culturally)” (NR Gothenburg, p. 22). This division “materialises the idea of centre and periphery, creating geographical enclaves in which young people with different socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds live their lives” (ibid., p. 26).

In addition to this, in university cities young people are divided into natives and foreigners not born in the city. Foreigners include young people who temporarily live and study in the city as well as young people with a migration history. In Bologna experts identified at least three groups: “native young people, university students coming from other Italian cities ... and migrants” (NR Bologna, p. 7) contributing to a “tribalization of the space” (ibid., p. 15). In the other cities, such social differences – although existing – are not emphasised to the same degree. Especially in Zurich divisions are not as visible. Instead, the image of “a well-planned and regulated city” (NR Zurich, p. 15), a tourist destination, prevails. As regards young people, they appear to be too diverse or individualized to specify particular groups of young people. Here,

³ NR stands for National Case Study Report, full references are given in the reference list.

the individualization process seems to have advanced so far that social differentiation among young people themselves is often about individual interests or of small scenes or groups. This tendency relates with the emphasis on being “different from everyone else” (NR Zurich, p. 16) which seems to characterize youth in Zurich. Young people in Zurich mutually identify each other based on what they are doing in and where they spend their free time. While of course also here social space affects daily activities and personal identification, young people refer to their ‘tribes’ rather than feeling positioned socially in a divided city.

In Eskişehir, experts emphasize the role and influence of the family: “Even the young people with political views opposing those of their parents cannot ignore the importance of their parents” (NR Eskişehir, p. 68). Young people who come to Eskişehir for studying are more able to escape the control of the family than those still living with their parents. Apart from this, two groups of young people can be distinguished: “Young people coming from less developed, conservative towns” and “those coming from rather developed and more liberal towns” (NR Eskişehir, p. 19). For the former, the city of Eskişehir opens up many new possibilities, which are also seen critically with regard to the opportunities of leisure and recreation. For the latter, the city has an inexpensive yet limited offer compared to larger Turkish cities.

Economic factors also influence the way young people use the city public space. In Zurich, youth apparently move freely throughout the city regardless of social background: “The youth know which possibilities exist in which districts. It thus seems relatively easy for them to move about the city with confidence” (NR Zurich, p. 16). However, the use of public space is limited by an increasing privatization and commercialization: “a considerable number of offers and/or locations require commercial consumption, wherefore money represents a barrier to many youth and young adults” (ibid, p. 20). Also in Bologna, Manchester and Frankfurt young people experience being unwanted in the city centre because there are “few spaces where young people can gather without having to spend money” (NR Frankfurt, p. 84). As a result, young people who do not want to or cannot act as consumers are increasingly excluded from commercialized urban areas. Against this background, experts call for “free spaces”, in which young people can simply be and shape them according to their own wishes.

Three of the studied cities – Eskişehir, Rennes and Bologna – are explicitly labelled *university* or *student cities* because of the important role played by universities and students in the economic, social, cultural, political and civic life of the city. In addition to the opportunities of education, the young people appreciate these cities for their high quality of life while the cities benefit from the students’ presence, consumption and initiatives. In Bologna, however, “the relationship between students and the city assumes the configuration of a forced cohabitation” (NR Bologna, p. 15). And while in Eskişehir and Rennes the living conditions are described as study-friendly, there are limited future prospects for the students, “mostly because of the lack of job opportunities” (NR Eskişehir, p.18). As a result, a significant part of the young people who live in these cities during their studies tend to abandon the city afterwards for their ‘adult lives’. The relationship between young people and these cities is therefore characterised as transitory. For example, Eskişehir is characterised as “city as campus” but also a “transit city” (NR Eskişehir, p. 18) due to constant transits from Eskişehir to Istanbul or other big cities. It is also possible to underline the existence of a tension between the “locals” and the students. In Rennes and Bologna, where the student population is “a structural feature of the city” (NR Bologna, p. 15), especially the city centres attract young people due to their numerous

consumption, festivity and cultural offerings. This however creates displeasure among the remaining population. In Rennes, for example, one consequence is that “young people from disadvantaged areas consider the city as a students’ place, designed first of all for students” (NR Rennes, p. 28). Thus, the division between the students and young people from disadvantaged areas seems also to express itself in terms of space: “the city centre versus the disadvantaged areas” (ibid., p. 26). Although there are youth centres also in so-called disadvantaged areas, they seem struggling in reaching young people which reproduces the division between “classical youth centres versus the other spaces; young people who use public structures versus young people who are 'in' the public space; young people who stay in their areas and young people who are mobile” (ibid.).

In Bologna, the accumulation of leisure-related events and offers in the city centre and in the university quarter increasingly annoy the local population, especially older people, as well as the people living in the periphery. Young people, on the other hand, experience a restriction of freely accessible public areas and a lack of premises for their own activities. Practices such as squatting and occupations refer to the history of the communist “red city”, in which “young people appear to be the authors, managers and promoters of initiatives” (NR Bologna, p. 17). Often these activities result in conflicts with the authorities in the form of protests, riots and boycotts. During the period of research, a social centre was violently evicted by the public authorities which unsettled massive protests among the population. Also in Rennes the search for suitable spaces for self-organised activities has led to a strong alternative network emerged from squats, occupation of buildings and alternative bars (NR Rennes, p. 31-32).

What are the dominant representations and *discourses* of young people in the eight cities? Andersson et al. (2016) and Becquet et al. (2016) refer to three main representations of youth that have evolved from the interplay of traditional and modern, national and European discourses. The first refers to young people as a precious and necessary “*resource*” for their country’s development. This discourse addresses young people as a key element in institutional innovation, democratic renewal and economic growth. Within this discourse, we identified a certain mystification of young people’s participation, often seen as being imbued with the mission of struggling against apathy, corruption, and the desertification of values characterising the adult world. As a contrast, there is the representation of young people as a “*problem*” or even a “*threat*”. This discourse suggests that youth represents a difficult phase of the individual life course as well as a problematic segment in the society: problematic for themselves (e.g. self-harm through drug and alcohol abuse) and/or dangerous for those around them (e.g. anti-social behaviours such as vandalism and aggression). In the first interpretation, young people are understood as carrying deficits which have to be compensated, thus justifying the need for protection in areas such as education, health, sexuality, market, internet, etc. Also the second image of youth as a dangerous category reflects a strong deficit model justifying control and repression and leading to polarisation between threat and respectability. Some young people are ‘active citizens in becoming’ while others are problematic bodies outside the ‘norm’. A third discursive image refers to young people as “*vulnerable*” or “*victims*”, which is a variation of the youth as a problem discourse. This discourse constructs young people as subject to disintegrative social, political and economic developments like unemployment, student fees, and precariousness.

These three representations are present in all eight cities and often they appear side by side causing a somehow confusing and ambivalent effect. While acknowledging young people's "positive" and "emancipatory" potential also the importance of fitting in and adapting young people to pre-established modes of social behavior and political action can be highlighted. As a result, different governmental and professional machineries are set in motion to guarantee that children and youngsters will become what is expected from them – well-integrated contributors to society and to the labour market. For example, in Manchester the pressure to succeed and integrate ('resource') has generated discourses on mental health problems ('vulnerability') or revolt (epitomising the 2011 Manchester riots; NR Manchester, p. 18). In Plovdiv, the harsh economic reality in Bulgaria is interpreted as the main challenge that forces young people to focus on individual projects for survival, rather than working together for the common good (NR Plovdiv, p. 20). However, the picture includes also a youth that is growing more and more distrustful of public institutions due to the opaque criteria for awarding grants. In Rennes, focus lies on the tension between the two dominant groups, the students and the young people from disadvantaged areas expressed in a "competition of the legitimacy between the two groups for their access to public funding and resources" (NR Rennes, p.25). Disappointment dominates the image of young people in Bologna as the national austerity policy is "penalizing the component of the young people more than the rest of the population" (NR Bologna, p. 14). This is particularly evident in the increase of unemployment among young people, which is causing attitudes of resistance and resignation among young people. In Eskişehir, simultaneous images of youth as both a resource and a threat reflect the trend of political polarisation between traditional authoritarianism and modern liberalism. In the end, family is referred to as the most "important institution in the lives of young people" (NR Eskişehir, p.68) from which they often cannot escape until they gain financial independence.

But also the discourse of youth as a "resource" creates pressure on young people "to perform, be it in school, at work or in their recreational activities" (NR Zurich, p. 19). In Frankfurt "everybody is extremely ambitious to achieve a higher level of education" (NR Frankfurt, p. 17) and even leisure can take a compulsory character – a "nicer type of stressful" (ibid., p. 20). The Gothenburg report (p. 22) adds the issue of self-identity: "Present-oriented learning is about enriching the self, creating a competent identity for the future (the self as project), which is in line with the ideals and demands of the changing and demanding knowledge society".

The discourse of young people as a threat provides a justification for the creation of spaces and activities that keep young people occupied in "meaningful activities" also characterises the efforts of young people to create their own spaces due to the lack of public resources available, or due to a discontentment with the ones available. For instance, in Gothenburg and Zurich, there is a dense infrastructure of spaces as well as sometimes competing offers and services. In other cities, there are no such infrastructures (e.g. Plovdiv or Eskişehir). There, young people cannot rely on an institutionalised offer of spaces but create their own spaces. As a result, activities and engagements in groups are, inter alia, often only temporary or episodic. In the Plovdiv report, this is summarised as follows: "the lack of special buildings for youth activities such as youth centres is a significant barrier to participation" (NR Plovdiv, p. 20). This is more likely to cause conflict in cities in which the young people perceive a massive decline in public spaces and public services (as in Bologna and Rennes). In these cities, the search for spaces usually implies struggle with local authorities to re-conquer opportunities that have eroded

since the recent economic crisis. In Rennes, there are “increasing tensions between young people and the municipality that is afraid of new squats or alternative places” (NR Rennes, p. 32). Young people who have been fighting for informal spaces constantly fear they may lose them again.

In sum, the cities are structured by factors like overall and individual wealth versus precariousness, access to the labour market as much as to education or training, the size of the city as well as the share of young people in the population relationships, and last not least the way in which young people are seen and addressed by policy makers and institutional actors. This creates specific contexts for different constellations of youth participation.

3.2 Local youth policies: a comparative overview

After an overview of social characteristics of the cities, we will briefly describe the structures, scales, rationales and actor relationships of youth policies in the eight cities. At European level, a cross-sectional understanding of youth policy is distinguished from specialised services like youth work, youth information and youth participation (Williamson, 2002). In the following, focus lies on the latter, first, contextualising them within wider welfare regimes, second, outlining structures, themes and actors and finally highlighting key trends.

PARTISPACE involves countries from different *welfare regimes*, that is different ways of organising social security and social services between state, market, families and individuals (Esping-Andersen, 1990). The model of welfare regimes as such does not include a youth perspective. Therefore, a model of transition regimes has been developed with regard to young people’s transitions from school to work (Walther, 2006). It has been applied to youth policy (IARD, 2001) and youth participation (Walther 2012a) providing the following picture:

In the *universalistic* regime for which *Sweden* is representative, the welfare state allows for a maximum of de-commodification. Youth policies are inspired by a youth-as-a-resource approach and focus on empowerment and comprehensive individual development through broad and individualized access to resources and services (see Andersson et al., 2016, p. 35). The national level provides a legal and economic framework but enables a strong role of local governments and collaboration between state and civil society. Youth policies cover a diversity of issues and participation is seen as a value and element of citizenship implemented at all levels. Yet, during the last decades the universalistic regime has been severely challenged by global neo-liberalistic approaches reflected by a trend towards privatisation of public services, a new emphasis on individual choices and responsibilities, and also in growing socio-economic divisions between different regions, within cities and between different groups.

The *liberal* regime (UK and especially England) traditionally has laid much more focus on individual responsibility and independence while the state should intervene as little as possible. This was and is reflected by an image of youth as a problem giving priority to the prevention of unemployment and social control. Youth policy is split between territorial levels, the responsibility for the different sectors of youth policy is loosely coordinated and falls on a variety of departments. In the 1980’s, financial cut-backs have led to a marginalization of interventions in this field while in the 1990s both social inclusion, particularly through employment, and surveillance were re-emphasised. Recently, participation has been promoted but in a way that expresses a further shift in responsibility from the state to the citizens.

The *conservative or employment-centred* regime characterises welfare states operating in a corporatist way and addressing different social categories in selective ways which also applies to young people. Differentiation is needed between centralised and federal systems. In *Germany* youth is addressed by a comprehensive national legal framework which however is implemented at local level while school is regulated by federal states. The dominant concept is not youth policy but youth welfare including both compensatory measures like residential care and social inclusion of so-called “disadvantaged youth” as well as youth work for all young people. According to the principle of “subsidiarity”, responsibility for provision lies with so-called ‘free’ welfare agencies and youth associations. The national Child and Youth Welfare Act includes rights of participation which however are contradicted by a dominant rationale of protection (youth as vulnerable) and by increasing trends of marketisation and managerialism. *Switzerland* is even more decentralised: municipalities take precedence over cantons, which in turn take precedence over the state. This leads to great territorial diversity and multiple actors negotiating influence and responsibilities. In *France*, the traditional centralised system has undergone processes of decentralisation increasing the influence of local authorities. The latter have been developing own youth policies which, typical for corporatist systems, are characterized by complex relationships between public and civil society actors like associations. Yet, youth policies are concentrated on few areas like unemployment. Due to the economic crisis and austerity policies interventions in this field have declined.

Also *under-institutionalised* or *sub-protective* welfare regimes are cases of centralised public policies. Here, the condition of youth is characterised by a lack of institutionalised structures, dependency on private networks (especially the family) and increasing relevance of civil society actors. In *Italy*, recent laws and policy plans have aimed at recognising youth as a social category beyond problem or resource but have not been complemented by substantial policy programmes. As a consequence, youth policies are not structured or integrated, old structures and low budgets persist and the family still plays the role “social buffer”.

Turkey and *Bulgaria* have not yet been included in welfare regime typologies as ongoing dynamics of transformation make clustering difficult. Both are centralised systems, youth policy is regulated by state departments but under-financed and suffering from a scarce interest at institutional and societal level. Structures are strongly influenced by the recent European integration process conditioning financial resources with institution building and professional training. While this has been a centralised top-down process in Bulgaria, in Turkey the implementation of youth work has led to conflicts between local municipalities and national ministries, decentralisation is limited and youth citizenship largely denied (Yilmaz 2017).

In what follows we will have a closer look at the local structures of youth policies in the eight cities having in mind that, that not only when it comes to youth policies, links between national and local levels tend to be weak. Mingione and Oberti (2003) therefore refer to local welfare systems (cf. Loncle et al., 2012b). The description starts with those cities that appear well-equipped in terms of youth policy institutions, projects and actors.

Gothenburg is a city with an institutionalised and proactive public sector allowing for a large and developed infrastructure for young people (NR Gothenburg, p.70). The City of Gothenburg implements the national youth policy, ten district councils are responsible for community services. However, there is also a central administrative unit that coordinates youth services beyond the city districts. Overall, there are 33 youth clubs in the city, most of them addressing

all young people in the area, and around 30 outreach youth workers. Apart from this also non-governmental organisations provide youth work services. A stable structure for youth participation is the City Formal Youth Representation built on a system of youth representations in the city districts (see Chapter 4). It disposes of a budget to which young people can apply for own projects and activities. Apart from these formal structures, there is a huge variety of possibilities of participation for young people facilitated by a diversity of institutions, associations and activities. All schools and youth clubs have their own student or user councils.

Also in *Manchester* there are many formal and non-formal offers and services for young people. However, coordination has been shifted from a municipal youth department to a charitable trust depending increasingly on private funding. This reflects the liberal welfare state under conditions of neoliberalisation in which, emphasis has been increasingly laid on projects targeted to disadvantaged youth at risk of social exclusion. The availability of youth service has been reduced significantly during the years of austerity and most of the provisions are currently guaranteed through the voluntary sector with new forms of youth-led social enterprises, often with an anti-gang or anti-radicalisation focus. Following the 2011 riots, youth participation has been re-established with the Manchester Formal Youth Representation as its most important institutionalised expression (see Chapter 4). Its official role is influencing the city policy around youth-related issues. Apart from this, there are school councils and youth forums, student unions in university, and youth sections of political parties and religious organisations. About 120 non-formal actors and youth clubs (scouts, church youth clubs and medium size voluntary organisations) are assembled in Voluntary Youth Manchester (VYM).

In *Frankfurt* the local youth welfare office is responsible for implementing youth services from residential care to open youth work according to the national Child and Youth Welfare Act. Many experts are unfamiliar with the term ‘youth policy’ (in contrast to youth ‘welfare’). Although prescribed by law, there has been no participatory youth welfare planning in recent years due to a lack of funds for innovation. Recently, public attention has prioritised childhood over young people who are reduced to their role as students or apprentices. Nevertheless, Frankfurt is well equipped with 130 organisations of open youth work addressing all kinds of young people. Recently however, youth work has been more concerned with supporting young people with regard to school and transitions risking to shift from a participatory space towards selective prevention for ‘disadvantaged youth’. Correspondingly, the mandate of the only city-wide representative body, the Youth and Student Representation, is limited to school-related issues (see also 4.1). Open youth work is distinguished from associative youth work run by associations for specific groups and milieus. Youth associations are represented by Frankfurt Youth Council, which is not a direct representation of young people but an umbrella organisation and cooperation platform of youth associations representing them in the local youth welfare committee.

In *Zurich*, youth policy and youth participation still are discussed in the light of youth protests in the 1960s and 1980s. Since then, an expanded infrastructure for youth and comprehensive youth policy have emerged. Institutionally, youth services are provided by two city departments in collaboration with cantonal and private organisations: The Department of Social Affairs provides counselling, residential care or guardianship, access to basic welfare benefits, it coordinates programmes of work integration, child-care, housing and shelter, addiction and drugs as well as services like profession orientation, career counselling and assistance in job

search and finally is also responsible for social and cultural programmes. The Department of School and Sport includes the Office of Sport and the School Health Services and offers professional transition and integration programmes as well as extracurricular music instruction. With regard to youth work, the city aims at providing free spaces and youth centres enabling for self-initiative and self-organization of young people which are coordinated by Open Youth Work Zurich (OJA). Apart from this, youth work is also carried out by associations and churches while the canton of Zurich has also established a Formal Youth Representation.

Compared to the cities presented so far, in Rennes, Bologna, Plovdiv and Eskişehir formal structures addressing and allowing the participation of young people seem less developed. In some cases (Bologna and Rennes), this lack is compensated by a large presence of associations or informal groups. In other cases (Plovdiv and Eskişehir), the space for autonomous forms of involvement is limited by a pervasive presence of the State.

Rennes has a developed offer for young people, but investment in youth policies is lower than in other French cities and there is only a small specialized department. Most activities are delegated to associations that receive public funding from the City, the Metropolitan Area, the Region or the State. A group of associations is connected to the extensive student-life of the city, others belong to the system of community services such as the Houses of Youth and Culture, and a third group consists of youth movements like the Scouts, Young Christian Workers and informal organizations. There are also public bodies concerned with youth employment, specialized prevention services, street education and various kinds of mediation. Over the years, the City has invested in organising spaces and activities, yet without significantly improving youth participation. The Youth Mission of Rennes aims at fostering cross-sectoral actions and a Regional Centre for Youth Information has been installed to support youth work and young people's initiatives (see Chapter 4). Obviously, governance is highly fragmented since different local authorities are responsible and decision making processes are unclear. Further, quality and accessibility of services is suffering from a decline of public funding. Competition between old and new actors adds to a growing distance between service providers and young people.

Also *Bologna* is a city characterised by a responsive approach towards (and with) young people, especially in terms of policies for citizenship and participation, education and culture. Other areas covered by local policies in collaboration with regional and provincial bodies are employment, welfare and health. This approach is embedded in a traditional left-wing local political culture which in the 1970s and 1980s was famous for reconciling liberalism and solidarity. Typically, youth-led or youth-oriented initiatives implemented by private actors, such as social and cultural associations, cooperatives, foundations, sport clubs receive public support. Yet, neither formal structures of representation and participation nor – except for the local youth information centre – a stable infrastructure of youth work have been established. Schools are the most wide-spread institutional actors in the promotion of youth engagement. On the one hand, they organise educational activities for active citizenship and socio-political inclusion; on the other hand, students are represented in school councils. The youth branches of political parties and trade unions guarantee traditional forms of engagement.

Constellations of local youth policies in Plovdiv and Eskişehir probably diverge most from the other cities. In both cities there are few institutional or associative structures addressing young people. Yet, in recent years, youth policy has received growing attention leading to a

simultaneity of modern and traditional assets. In *Plovdiv*, the main instrument is a Youth Plan from 2015 developed in accordance with the national youth policy and the EU Strategy 'Europe 2020'. The Youth Plan covers different areas, even though most resources are allocated to place young people in jobs, young people in rural areas being the second important theme. Encouraging participation in education is missing and the development of youth volunteering is promoted with a small fraction of the budget. The elaboration of youth policy remains superficial due to a lack of institutional infrastructure and concrete policy measures, youth organizations still lack long-term support and are financed only in the form of individual or short-term projects. Key actors are the Commission on Youth Activities and Sport of the City Council and a Youth Forum for Partnership that organises events. Other actors are the educational authorities, the Commission on Employment, the Job Centre, cultural organizations and youth associations, each following their own policy objectives. Generally, youth policies and youth participation appear instable with little municipal funding and there is considerable distrust regarding the fairness of distribution. Only recently, the municipality has opened a new youth centre, which however has not yet been accepted by young people and the youth sector.

In *Eskişehir*, youth policies and youth work have also developed only recently, introducing new competition between institutions and political tensions among social groups. The actors and structures of youth policy are national Ministries of Youth and Sport, Education, Family and Social Policies as well as their local representatives and implementation units, municipalities at local level, and civil society organisations and university clubs. Since the Turkish administrative structure is very centralized, youth policies are mainly elaborated by the national government who also controls the policy development and implementation at municipality level. There is also a limited experience of youth councils or other forms of formal youth participation. Even where they exist, young people are skeptical and rather perceive them as youth branches of political parties. Youth work has been developing in the framework of the Turkish EU candidacy process, but has also become an object of competition between different political actors. In *Eskişehir*, this is reflected by two newly established youth centres: one connected to the national Ministry of Youth and Sports (conservative party) and one run by the municipality (socialdemocratic party). Both address primarily university and high school students. In these constellations, social inequalities are reproduced inasmuch as youth policy tends to neglect young people from disadvantaged social contexts.

This overview reveals some *commonalities*. One is the marginal valorisation of youth participation *per se* reflected by limited funding or by instrumentalisation to legitimise an existing social order. Another recursive trait is the ever increasing predominance of the so-called 'hard' areas of youth policy (education, training and employment) compared with the 'soft' areas of youth work and participatory activities, which are also increasingly being developed within a labour and market oriented model (cf. Loncle et al., 2012). However, obviously, there are also clear *differences* between the cities. First, the level of institutionalisation of youth policies in general and mechanisms of youth participation in particular differs. In Gothenburg, Frankfurt and to a smaller extent in Zurich, Manchester and Rennes, youth policies are coordinated by specialised departments and implemented either directly or in collaboration with a robust sector of private or non-profit organisations. In these cities, more or less established formal structures of youth participation exist, even if in Frankfurt this is limited to school issues and in Zurich it is established at cantonal level. In Rennes and

Bologna, the lack of national legislation has inhibited the emergence of a robust youth work infrastructure. The same accounts for Plovdiv and Eskişehir belonging to societies undergoing transformation, yet in different directions and dynamics, while youth policies are influenced by EU funding.

This overview reveals that cities with a more institutionalised youth policy are associated with different welfare or youth transition regimes and that the welfare and transition regime model cannot be applied one-to-one to youth policy and youth participation at local level.

3.3 Matches and mismatches between local youth policies and young people

To what extent are local youth policies in line with the life conditions, the needs and demands of the young people in the cities? This question cannot be answered in a comprehensive way. Therefore, in the following we will highlight some lines of correspondence and discrepancy.

There is little information regarding youth policies *matching* young people's needs and interests for several reasons: First, the focus of PARTISPACE lies on exploring different settings, experiences and practices of youth participation rather than providing representative pictures of coverage, use and satisfaction with youth policies. Second, where youth work programmes and provisions are visited by young people on a voluntary basis this can be interpreted as a sign that they meet young people's needs and interests at least partially. While not all actual participants may be satisfied with their involvement, there many statements of young people referring to youth centres as their "second family" or their "second home" (see Batsleer et al., 2017). Third, we have evidence that those young people actively involved in formal settings of youth participation benefit in terms of personal development, skills and competence development or even occupational careers (see Chapter 4.5). The main reason for scarce information on matches, however, is that our qualitative data confirm survey findings according to which a majority of young people do not experience public youth policies as relevant for their lives. In this respect, the secondary analysis of European Social Survey data carried out in PARTISPACE reveals significant differences. In Sweden and Switzerland, young people display higher levels of trust in formal institutions, while rates of civic and social participation are lowest in Bulgaria. These values do not only express higher satisfaction with public policies but also correlate with better economic life conditions (see Kovacheva et al., 2016).

In contrast, *mismatches* have been reported on many levels: the effectiveness of policies, the tension of youth participation between 'real' power and tokenistic involvement, the paternalism and pedagogisation in addressing young people as future citizens who need to be educated to participate, the discrepancy between issues addressed by youth policies and the issues relevant for young people, the contradictory role of school in youth participation, and finally political protest as a reaction to both specific forms of youth policy or their lack.

As regards the limited *effectiveness* and *coverage* of youth policies (see also 3.2), experts criticised the *underfunding* and *understaffing* of youth services and youth work while most young people criticised a lack of spaces to spend their leisure time. Hierarchical top-down structures are perceived as a challenge, and criticism is expressed towards "one-time events" (cf. NR Gothenburg, p. 28): "*Burn a car, get a job ... It's a classic thing ... or if there are shootings, then you throw money on the problem, until it goes away. As soon it is gone, no money. For youth influence and participation much more long-term work is needed*"

(Gothenburg, EI youth worker)⁴. Despite this quote, criticism was less accentuated in Sweden and Switzerland.

Another general criticism referred to the *tokenistic character* of youth or student councils. A youth worker from Bologna explains: “*Over the last few years, we have observed an increasing use of the word participation ... but we have rarely noticed real participatory decision-making processes ... without pre-defined dynamics and outcomes*”. A Manchester expert states: “*Participation ... is been about ticking boxes*” instead of dialogue. Interestingly, in Frankfurt this critique is raised by representatives of local authorities and directed to work providers: „*Nobody says, we have problems with participation ... as long as the only form of control is ticking boxes to get further funding.*” Young people do not criticise but express their distance through non-participation, ignorance or through assessing such mechanisms as “*meaningless*” or “*false*” as in Plovdiv (NR Plovdiv, p. 21). At the same time, they are critical of the limited power of such forms: “*The school council is to keep the traditions of the school as the teachers see them*” (Plovdiv, GD high school). In Gothenburg, members of the Formal Youth Representation admit being a “*lapdog of politics*”. In some cases, distance includes distinction where ‘normal’ students say about student representatives: “*They don’t care for anything. They think, they are special because they are student representatives*” (Frankfurt, GD middle school).

This discrepancy is reinforced by the *moral impetus* by which adults endow youth participation: “*By participation we mean an individual’s voluntary and active contribution to a collective process, that she or he experiences as important and meaningful to herself and others*” (Gothenburg, EI youth worker). The combination of attributes in this quote implicitly reflects expectations by excluding other activities – categorised as enforced, passive, individualised or extrinsically motivated. A media activist from Bologna links this to the distance between institutions and young people: “*Participation can be sold and bought, the linkage is temporary*”. This critique refers to a *paternalistic* approach reflected by conditions of prior learning and training connected to formal youth participation articulated especially among experts in Rennes and Frankfurt: “*In any case students have the right to get involved, also here in school ... formal rights can be claimed – but in the right tone*” (Frankfurt, EI teacher). A youth worker specifies: “*If you burn for an idea that is quite realistic I don’t think it is difficult to find institutional or professional partners who will support you*” (Frankfurt, EI welfare agency). Even those who aim at empowering young people like a social worker concerned with young people’s mental health seem trapped in the dilemma of pedagogisation and downplay power issues: “*Young people can’t always make decisions in the outside world but can make decisions within themselves, within their own mindset*” (Manchester, EI social worker).

Behind such paternalistic pedagogisation we find *deficit-oriented images of young people* in terms of knowledge, competence and attitude. According to experts in Eskişehir young people need “*to be saved, protected, oriented, emancipated, and empowered*” while young people express ambivalent feelings of being “*held back*” and “*not having the proper means*” (NR Eskişehir, p. 19). Deficit orientation applies especially to young people in conditions of social disadvantage whom many youth and social workers ascribe attitudes “*between overestimation and ‘I am completely unable’, always in between*” (Frankfurt, EI social worker) for which in

⁴ In quotations from transcripts EI stands for expert interviews, BI for biographical interviews, GD for group discussions, CW for city walks and FN for Field note.

most cases parents are blamed. Paternalism creates a subtle mismatch where professionals/adults perceive themselves as generously offering spaces for participation which then are not used by the young people. Such disappointed expectations of gratefulness reflect the situation of youth workers who depend on recognition by their addressees to compensate for the low status of their profession like this director of a Frankfurt youth centre: *“I don’t know what they want. They have criticised everything. Yet, they have come ... But when they called us ‘sons of bitches’ they got a one month ban ... And they are so difficult to motivate although the centre offers so many opportunities.”* In a group discussion youth workers from Gothenburg agreed that social disadvantage cannot be a simple excuse: *“They don’t understand that participation comes from yourself as well ... It’s about always doing the best you can with the prerequisites you have”*. However, deficit orientation is not only found in experts’ accounts, also among young people engaged in civic and social participation ascribe other young people passivity and consumer-oriented attitudes: *“those who are going well and others who are going wrong, who are still hanging around”* (NR Rennes, p. 28; cf. NR Plovdiv, p. 29).

Of course, *precarious life conditions* narrow public spaces down to coping with everyday life. Here, the dissensus within what counts as participation and what is important in young people’s life worlds and everyday lives is reinforced by the neglect of existential needs. For example, in Manchester, many experts and young people referred to conditions of homelessness, mental health problems, and poverty. In a group discussion, youth workers characterised their work by *“trying to do a difficult dance”* and *“making sure things don’t explode”* (NR Manchester, p. 15). A social worker in residential care (Frankfurt) stated that ‘her’ girls *„have too many urgent and pressing issues. Everything else is too far away. It’s not disinterest, rather, ‘I have to care for myself first, my small life before I fight for somebody else or women’s rights’”*.

The mismatch between institutions’ and young people’s perspectives on participation is best illustrated with regard to the role of school and of practices like ‘hanging out’ and ‘chilling’. *School* has taken more and more of young people’s time and is experienced as an increasing pressure. Even if most young people try to find a balanced attitude towards ‘their’ school, many experts express concerns: *“I don’t experience the lives of young people as easy going ... all are under pressure to achieve ... ‘I have to rush to get the school certificate, rush to get the degree and then somehow into working life’”* (Frankfurt, EI youth worker 3). Yet, nobody questions the importance of school for decent life chances and for learning to participate: *„First they need to achieve their educational aims and should not fall by the wayside, then they have to dispose of some basic discussion culture, to know where they can do something”* (Frankfurt, EI teacher). In fact, citizenship education is part of the curriculum in all countries, yet participation in school is limited. In Bologna with its lack of youth work infrastructure, schools are the main institutional context of young people’s citizenship education but *“schools do not play any role in promoting student participation”* (Bologna, EI youth worker). In Gothenburg, too, there is criticism, even if the formulation reveals a different normality of expectations: *“Children should be citizens in school. It is their school ... school needs to be organised in a way that children’s’ experiences, thoughts, choices and all of that become an integral part of the work done at school... And that, according to me, is participation”* (Gothenburg, EI youth worker).

A complementary arena of discrepancy with regard to youth participation is the silent or absent debate on the relevance and irrelevance of practices of *hanging out* or *chilling* in the public. While most adults (and formally engaged young people) associate such practices with ‘doing

nothing', for many young people these activities are crucial in compensating for increasing school pressure. However, the function of hanging out goes beyond relaxing but is a key element of identity work: *"Each group has their own life style. Us for example, we are always hanging out together. If somebody else would be joining us for a day, it would be something special for him, the way we are together and so on ... That is Zurich, man!"* (Zurich, GD). Hanging out or chilling in most cases is associated with 'sitting': *"Everybody has their own chill places ... In front of my house we had a wooden bench ... There we chilled, that was simply our meeting point, 'hey, come out to the bench'"* (Frankfurt, CW girls). Such practices in the public can be referred to as *everyday life participation* and boundaries towards civic or political participation are fluent. The following account of a group of young men in a disadvantaged district reminds of the riots in French banlieus in 2005 and youngsters claiming being French citizens (cf. Lagrange & Oberti, 2005): *"We would like to have more influence in our neighbourhood because we are a part of it, for example if benches that are used by young people who chill outside are simply dismantled ..., this means interfering with a territory of young people that is used 24 hours a day"* (Frankfurt, GD youth centre 3).

Obviously, differentiation of issues of participation goes along with *spatial* differentiation and segregation which has been addressed in terms of 'divided cities' (see section 3.1). Most obvious is the division between centre and periphery. For many young people living peripheries, city centres tend to be ambivalent spaces. In Frankfurt, they refer to the centre as transit zone on their way to school or work with little qualities as it tends to be either institutionalised (most public institutions are located in city centres) or commercialised. Many young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods feel alienated and intimidated from the centre and refrain from using youth facilities there: *"Many f***ed up and never leave the neighbourhood"* (Frankfurt, GD youth centre 3). At the same time, segregation is ethnicised and racialized. In Gothenburg, young people state in a group discussion: *"you belong to a suburb, and that is where you are"* while experts are concerned that in the suburbs only few young people consider themselves as Swedish *"and those are young people who live and in some cases are born in Sweden ... If you don't feel yourself in relation to where you are, then we have an uphill in front of us."* (Gothenburg, EI youth worker). In Manchester, both 'white' and 'black' young people refer to racialized coding of districts: *"What was seen as a 'safe' area by young people who lived there, was projected as 'dangerous' by those who did not ... They saw [area X] as a no go area where there is a threat of harassment ... ('quite intimidating, male Arab dominated') and that [area Y] is 'very black orientated'."* (NR Manchester, p. 18). The same applies to young Muslims: *"Since the Paris attacks some of them had experienced incidents of abuse or their headscarves being pulled and were now choosing to arrive by car"* (ibid.). In 'student cities' like Rennes, centres are dominated by the campus and for student life, in Eskişehir the whole city is being referred to as campus (NR Eskişehir, p. 18), while disadvantaged youth remain in the outskirts. In contrast, in Bologna, *"students experience the same problems like the inhabitants: the problem of decay, unsafety and crime. They have a generic wish for 'gentrification' ... a sort of controlled 'movida', but this is not accepted by the non-student population"* (Bologna, EI student association). This struggle is being instrumentalised by right-wing groups asking for more rigid social control: *"The city center is systematically avoided by many young people, who are scared of being bothered or robbed by immigrants or drug-users ... Many activities of youth participation in Bologna have exceeded*

the limit of legality and should be stigmatized rather than promoted” (Bologna, EI right-wing group).

What is experienced as *safe* or *unsafe space* depends on various lines of difference and boundaries between inside and outside. While many young people feel unsafe ‘in’ school, job centres, welfare offices or youth councils, they feel safe ‘in’ what they experience as ‘their’ place: *“Here (the project) and here Manchester: not the small town or place I come from, not school, college or university: not out as trans anywhere. This place is my community ... we choose our own families and make our own communities.”* (Manchester, GD LGBT). At the same time, some spaces are *cool places* (Skelton & Valentine, 1997) depending on lifestyles and styles of hanging out and chilling. In Rennes, the bars of the student district for many young people are (more) important (than youth centres) as resources for their identity work of “fitting in and sticking out” (cf. Miles 2000). In cities with a diversified youth work infrastructure (Frankfurt or Gothenburg) and even in Eskişehir, youth centres differentiate according to scenes. Yet, non-users claim that *“[youth centres] are just for those who need them”* (Frankfurt, GD grammar school). As a general rule, formal settings of youth participation tend to be seen as ‘uncool’ and in contradiction with their identities by most young people.

A last aspect of mismatch considers *political protest* which was rarely referred to as participation by experts. This discrepancy is noteworthy in Frankfurt which has been a hotspot of 1968 in Germany and still hosts a large left-wing scene and where older youth workers long for the times when they were young and visited self-managed youth centres (NR Frankfurt, p. 16, 22). In Zurich current youth policy emerged from protest movements in the 1960s and 1980s (NR Zurich, p. 15): *“Youth were once conformist, then they turned rebellious ... Until the first decade of the new millennium – courted by the state and overwhelmed by the great variety of leisure activities – they became completely upstanding and obedient. Nowadays young people are again looking for more autonomous spaces”* (ibid., p. 20). Eskişehir is one of the cities outside Istanbul where the Gezi protest movement had a significant impact. To some extent this may have supported the development of youth work in the city (NR Eskişehir, p. 17). The only case where political protest has been mentioned (at least by some experts) as a form of youth participation is Bologna: *“Bologna has never been deaf to claims of its younger population. Since the 1970s, the most politicized groups of young people have occupied buildings ... Local institutions have generally opted for a dialogical solution ... even when carried out through non-democratic actions”* (Bologna, EI left-wing party). As a result, squats turned into self-managed ‘centri sociali’ (social centres) answering to (not only) young people’s needs for social services and spaces. However, this dialogue has not lead to social infrastructure, *“it hardly emerges a local system of youth policies, with an adequate coordination and a shared vision”* (Bologna, EI policy maker). Nowadays, *“local institutions (university and municipality) are moving towards a more repressive approach.”* (Bologna, EI left-wing party). The initiatives react by institutionalisation to gain stability: *“It is fundamental to structure participation with rules and instruments, avoiding ‘shortcuts’ such as permanent ‘assemblearismo’ [‘assembly-calling’], in which decisions are taken by organized minority groups.”* (Bologna, EI local policy maker).

In sum, the following mismatches between youth policies and young people with regard to participation have been found: *first*, youth policies only partially cover the diversity of conditions, needs and styles of young people; *second*, this reproduces and increases inequalities

in terms of segregation and underrepresentation of socially disadvantaged groups; *third*, formal youth participation is criticised as tokenistic ‘box ticking’ by experts and as irrelevant by most young people; *fourth*, school as the main arena of growing up seems to produce limited opportunities of autonomous participation despite of citizenship education on the curriculum; *fifth*, hanging out and chilling, preferred and most frequent activity of young people in the public is constantly neglected by adults, institution representatives and by the ‘really engaged’ young people although boundaries between everyday life participation and civic, political or social participation are blurred; *sixth*, this reveals the pedagogisation and paternalism inherent to youth participation; *fifth seventh*, political protest tends to be neglected as a form of youth protest except where it contributes to compensating for the lack of social infrastructure.

3.4 Local constellations of youth, youth policy and youth participation

Comparative analysis in PARTISPACE is rather cross-city than cross-national. Both nation state welfare regime typologies and local socio-economic and socio-demographic indicators are relevant influential factors but do not determine the ways in which local youth policies evolve, act and meet young people’s needs and expectations. Apart from this, the contexts of the eight cities have not been subject to representative sampling. Due to the interest in understanding the HOW of youth participation, a qualitative and ethnographic approach has been applied. This means that cross-city comparison is based only partly on shared scales and indicators while context-specific issues and perspectives have been taken into consideration. This limits the possibilities of elaborating a sound typology of city and local youth policy contexts. Nevertheless, comparison allowed for identifying typical traits of each context which we refer to as local constellations of youth policy. While comparative analysis will be taken up in Chapter 5, the images developed here result from relating main dimensions elaborated in this chapter: socio-economic resources, youth policy making, and the discrepancies between institutions and young people’s life worlds which emerge from critique and counter initiatives (see table 1):

- *Socio-economic resources* structure the living conditions and thereby the everyday lives of young people and thus the issues relevant for them. Our sample includes cities with low, medium and high level of economic wealth, in absolute as well as in relation to their national average. In the recent economic crisis, some cities have been affected more than others. This is reflected by different degrees of poverty, unemployment and participation in education. Socio-economic resources however do not only affect young people’s lives but also the policies addressing them. Rich cities can spend more money on young people than poor ones. However, the economic perspective has its limits where available resources are distributed and spent in different ways both between different policy areas as well as with regard to different issues and principles of youth policy.
- *Youth policy structures* at national level are, among others, influenced by principles and actor relationships of the welfare state providing social security, social services and redistributing incomes. Apart from that, the relationship between national, regional and local levels is organised differently in terms of centralised, decentralised and federal governance. However, analysis reveals that there is no direct line between national welfare and local youth policy. At *local level*, we have seen that in some cities youth policies are organised by a specialised department whereas in others different actors are involved. Differences exist also regarding budget and competencies of specialised services. Some

cities have an infrastructure of youth work which covers the city and is accessible for all young people while in others fixed term projects prevail. Cross-cutting these are differences in the responsiveness of youth policy structures with regard to the diversity and the dynamics of young people's needs and interests. Last but not least, in some but not all cities there are explicit mechanism of co-decision-making of young people.

Discrepancies and counter initiatives is a less clear indicator as the relevant data have been collected in specific moments while reflecting dynamic and contingent processes. Nevertheless, there were specific representations and practices of young people which appeared as typical for the respective contexts: the level of effectiveness of policies, the function of formal youth participation between 'real' sharing power and tokenistic involvement, the paternalism and pedagogisation by which young people are addressed as future citizens who

Table 2: Overview over socio-economic indicators, structures of national and local youth policy as well as relevant critique and counter-initiatives at local level

	Bologna	Eskişehir	Frankfurt	Gothenburg	Manchester	Plovdiv	Rennes	Zurich
<i>Socio-economic factors</i>								
Economy (GDP)	Medium	medium	Rich	Medium	medium	poor	medium	rich
Poverty (15-29)	High	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	Low
Youth (15-24) unemployment	High	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	Low
<i>City contexts</i>								
Youth discourse	youth as a resource	Problem/resource	youth as a resource	youth as a resource	problem/resource	youth as a resource	problem/resource	youth as a resource
Student city	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Divided city	Students / others	Students / others	Centre / Periphery	Centre / Periphery	Centre / Periphery	Not accentuated	Students / others	Not accentuated
<i>Youth policy structures</i>								
Welfare regime	under-institutionalised	transformation	Conservative	universalistic	liberal	transformation	conservative	Conservative
General governance	Centralised, active municipalities	centralised	Federal	Centralised, strong municipalities	Centralised, active council	Centralised	Centralised, trend of decentralisation	Federal
Department youth policy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes with strong role of districts	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Competencies local youth policy	Limited	Limited	Significant but stagnant	Significant	Significant but dramatic cuts	Limited	Limited	Significant
Local youth policy governance	dialogue but no infrastructure	Related to political parties, training, students as target	projects, no representation, shift towards children and school	responsiveness, localised, representation	problem-orientation, campaigns	institutionalised	policised, associationism, institutionalised	Responsiveness
Youth work	responsive but no infrastructure	Newly emerging, politicised	Infrastructure, instrumentalised for school	Infrastructure	From infrastructure to social policy	Newly emerging, (politicised)	Fragmented due to associationism	Infrastructure
Youth council	No	No	Yes (but school-related)	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes (but cantonal)
<i>Discrepancies and counter initiatives</i>								
Trust/distrust	Distrust	Distrust	Distrust	Trust	Distrust	Distrust	Depends on milieu	Trust
Political protest	Relevant and partly recognised	Relevant but not recognised	Relevant but not recognised	Not relevant	Not relevant	Not relevant	Relevant but not recognised	Not relevant today but in the past
Paternalism	rather high	high	rather high	reflexive	rather high	rather high	high	Reflexive
Specific issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - political counter-culture - struggle for the city centre - three youth populations - defending spaces - reminiscence of the past 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - politicisation - new youth work - Europe - participation for careers - transit city 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - school-life balance - youth marginalised - Chilling - adults' latent disappointment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - segregation - democracy - young people as citizens - adults' latent disappointment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - homelessness - mental health - diversity - safe spaces - precariousness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - business, entrepreneurship - contested consumerism - Europe - new youth work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - associationism - institutionalism - link participation/ education/ professionalisation - excessive student life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - clean and safe city - Past riots inspire youth policy - competent youth

need to be educated to participate, the discrepancy between issues addressed by youth policies and the issues relevant for young people which becomes especially relevant with regard to the role of school in youth participation as well as with regard to the places in which participation is being institutionalised, and finally with regard to political protest as both a reaction to specific forms of youth policy (or their lack).

Data regarding these three dimensions have been aggregated and condensed in a way that ‘labels’ for the eight cities have been produced that emphasize what distinguishes the respective local constellation from the others in the sample:

- Gothenburg – *Young people as co-citizens in a segregated city*: a responsive youth policy which is organised in a decentralised way with mechanisms of youth representation at all levels, i.e. young people are addressed as co-citizens, democracy is a big concern in youth policies, lower emphasis on informal participation and counter culture compared to other cities which may be interpreted as an effect of colonisation through responsive youth policy. The degree of young people’s trust towards public institutions seems to be more accentuated than in other cities which however is undermined and weakened by spatial and ethnic segregation as the biggest problem in the city.
- Manchester – *‘Don’t hate, educate’ – unless you are struggling with surviving*: strong emphasis on precarious living conditions, high awareness and problematisation of diversity and multiculturalism, youth policy has experienced dramatic cuts and developed from an infrastructure to target measures addressing social problems, youth participation is strongly characterised by organising campaigns (multiculturalism, education etc.), within an adult-led, highly pedagogised frame, young people display distrust towards institutions except for those (non-formal ones) they know.
- Frankfurt – *Youth between schooling and chilling, no mandate for youth policy?* City structured by enormous wealth and segregation, youth and youth policy are marginalised compared to childhood and educational policies, cynical justification, youth and welfare organisations aim at educating young people for ‘right’ participation, young people react to school pressure with insisting on ‘chilling’ as main practice, youth policies, high levels of distrust towards formal institutions, political protest is not recognised as participation.
- Zurich – *Young people using a clean and safe city in a competent way*: city is very rich and appears clean and safe, youth policy is motivated to prevent riots and protest like in the past (1980s) and reacts in a responsive way to changing needs, most young people display trust but also reserve towards institutions, formal participation on cantonal level but also a professional standard in working with young people.
- Bologna – *The myth of the ‘fat and red’ (rich and progressive): Young people fed with legends of revolution but without rights and resources?* Stratified political scene, traditional left-wing responsive youth policy but no infrastructure (sub-protective welfare regime), student city divided between three youth populations (local, students from outside, migrants) with dynamic and competing youth cultures, multiple informal actors and initiatives with a trend towards institutionalisation and defending their spaces.
- Eskişehir – *Importing youth policy for ‘transit youth’ between modernity and tradition*: youth policy and youth work are new fields connected to the EU influence, in general there

is an authoritarian climate which is mitigated in Eskişehir due to its character as student city and a social-democratic city government, the youth sector is torn between major political sectors (conservative and socialdemocratic) but apparently accepted and used by (student) youth, as a student city everything has transitory character, consumerism is important while non-students seem invisible.

- Plovdiv - *Do young people need youth policies for entrepreneurship apart from consumer infrastructure?* Youth policy and youth work are new fields under the EU influence with polished youth plans at national level but absent infrastructure at local level. Main expectation and virtue ascribed to young people is entrepreneurship while everyday life participation occurs in bars, squares and parks divided by scenes. There seem to be little trust and low expectations of young people towards the state. They seem torn between highly individualised education and employment careers and everyday life consumerism.
- Rennes – *First associate and institutionalise, then claim your rights:* first of all it is a student city leaving the disadvantaged behind if not excluding them from the city centre, the youth sector is structured by associationism and institutionalism while authorities provide resources and rules, i.e. political actors are more important than public administration. Except for some flagship initiatives or institutions, the youth work infrastructure seems limited while youth (or student) culture develops around a large bar and pub infrastructure.

4. Comparing cases of formal youth participation

The following chapter focuses on the analysis of formal settings of youth participation in the eight cities as these can be seen as a more direct expression of local youth policies. The interest behind this chapter is twofold: One aim is to better understand how these settings function, especially if one considers that the majority of young people either do not know or do not ascribe them any relevance for their lives (Batsleer et al., 2017; cf. Matthews, 2001). Second, deeper knowledge may help understanding the function of formal participation in the constellation of the relationships between cities, youth policies and young people (see chapter 5.1).

The chapter starts with a description of the organisational structure and processes, mandates, resources and roles of the nine cases of formal youth participation under analysis allowing for a clustering of cases. Next, the position and positioning of these settings between adults and young people is analysed while the fourth section focuses on the issues dealt with and the processes of setting or negotiating the agenda between adults and young people. A further section focuses on the biographies of the young people involved to understand what involvement in formal participation means to them – in contrast to the majority of their peers.

4.1 Organisation, roles and mandates

Although all settings analysed in this chapter share a formal structure, their mandates and organisational structures differ. We start by briefly portraying the cases:

- *Formal Youth Representation Gothenburg (YCG)* is a municipal structure for young people's co-decision-making, consultation and initiatives. It is based on district councils and members are elected by young people (aged 12-17) in the districts. A core group (board)

and a president prepare activities and decisions for the general assembly meeting five times a year. It manages a budget and is assisted by a full-time youth worker.

- *Formal Youth Representation Manchester (YCM)* is also a municipal structure with elected members. Apart from the local city council there are close linkages to youth representation bodies at regional and national level. Most of the activities are structured around campaigns, for which they have a budget and are assisted by a youth worker.
- *Youth and Student Representation Frankfurt (YSR)* is a citywide body at municipal level representing young people’s views in school related matters (campaigns but also consultation regarding school policy and management). The general assembly composed of two delegates per school meets 2-3 times a year and elects a board and a president who prepare the activities and are assisted by thematic committees.
- *Student Council Plovdiv (Public Higher Education Institution, SCP)* is the official student representation body in the biggest higher education institution in the city. It is organised around a board with a president and an assembly elected by the students. Equipped with a budget it provides services to students and represents student views in the institution.
- *Student Council Zurich (Private Grammar School, SCZ)* is the representation body of a private grammar school. Class representatives elect a president. The council organises social and cultural events and participates in the school conference but does not have a vote.

Table 3: Overview of different clusters of formal youth participation

Institution Mandate	Municipality	School/University	Region / State
Youth councils	Gothenburg Formal Youth Representation (YRG)		
	Manchester Formal Youth Representation (YRM)		
	Frankfurt Youth and Student Representation (YSR)		
Student councils		Student Council Zurich (SCZ) ⁵	
		Student Council Plovdiv (SCP)	
Residential care home council	Residential care home council Frankfurt (HCF) ⁶		
Youth information centres	Youth Information Centre Rennes (YICR)		Youth Information Centre Rennes (YICR)
			Youth Information Centre Eskişehir (YICE)
Extra-curricular activities		Anti-Corruption Group Bologna (ACB)	

⁵ SCZ has been clustered as extra-curricular activity in the comparative case study report (Batsleer et al. 2017) for its limitation to organising social activities and pressure to participate while we focus on its representative function.

⁶ Regulated by national law, funded by municipality, provided by youth welfare agencies (NGOs)

- *Care Home Council Frankfurt* (Residential Care, *HCF*) is the representation body of the residents of a care home (only males, 14 to 18 years old). The council is expected to discuss issues of everyday life in the home. It includes the director, a professional counsellor and two resident delegates elected by the two groups in which young people live together.
- *Extracurricular Anti-Corruption Group* (High School Bologna, *ACB*) is an activity of citizenship education in a high school that students can choose to fulfil their educational programme for a given number of hours per year. This group is exceptional as it is self-organised by student while connected to other anti-corruption groups outside schools at national level. The group aims at raising awareness for issues of corruption, (il)legality and citizenship. It was selected due to the lack of representation bodies at municipal level.
- *Youth and Information Centre Rennes* (*YICR*) is a mixture between a local youth centre and a regional agency for youth policy. Young people can use the premises for own activities while youth workers provide support to external groups. Legally, it is an association of associations. Recently, young people have been included in the managerial board.
- *Youth and Information Centre Eskişehir* (*YICE*) is a local youth centre funded and implemented by the national Ministry for Youth and Sports. It has been sampled as formal because programme and staff are elected by the ministry in accordance to central youth policy guidelines and because activities include rather formal education like language classes. Some young people make careers from visitors to youth workers.

The analysed settings can be clustered as follows: *youth councils* representing young people at city level, *student councils* representing young people in educational institutions, *care home councils* representing young people in residential care, *extra-curricular school activities* providing young people citizenship education, and *youth information centres* organising youth work activities (see table 1). Thus, these settings are not fully functional equivalents. These differences do not make comparative analysis impossible but the range of generalisation will be different with regard to different aspects and dimensions taken into account.

In the following, we look at the cases with regard to mandates and institutional frameworks, organisational structures and roles, recruitment and legitimation, resources and procedures.

Mandates differ according to the institutional settings. Youth councils are located at the municipality level and provide young people a possibility of representation in relation with local authorities and operating similar to established institutions of representative democracy. They are consulted in policy decisions concerning young people as well as invited to make own proposals while an underlying aim is preparing them people for roles of active citizenship. This applies especially for formal youth representations in Gothenburg (*YRG*) and Manchester (*YRM*). The mandate of Youth and Student Representation (*YSR*) in Frankfurt is similar but limited to school-related issues. Others are located in formal education like the *student councils* in Plovdiv (*SCP*) and Zurich (*SCZ*): *SCP* in a large institution of higher education where they provide services and have a say in the overall institutional governance bodies, *SCZ* in a small institution of secondary education where competencies are limited to organise social and cultural activities. The Anti-Corruption Group in Bologna (*ACB*) is also based in high school, not as a representation but as an extra-curricular activity in citizenship education. The Home

Care Council in Frankfurt (HCF), similar to SCZ, represents the young people in the institution but competencies are limited to social activities while main rules of everyday life are beyond influence. The youth information centres in Rennes (YICR) and Eskişehir (YICE) are mixtures of youth centres and corporatist institutions aimed at developing youth policy: YICR is an association of associations funded by the city and the region, and YICE is a body of the national ministry.

In terms of *recruitment* and *legitimation*, members of councils like YRG and YRM are elected by all young people in the city. In YSR, students in secondary and high schools elect school representatives who form the general assembly. In the student and care home councils delegates are elected by subunits like faculties, classes or resident groups. In the extra-curricular activities participants are recruited in their roles as students while they may choose among different activities. Finally, in youth information centres recruitment and involvement occurs not in a standardised way. Becoming a young member of the board (Rennes) or a professional youth worker (Eskişehir) results from being invited in combination of imposing oneself. Where councils are based on elections, only a minority of young people tend to vote.⁷

Organisation structures and roles are the most complex of these dimensions inasmuch as it includes the distinction between different roles of the young people involved, their relationship with adults, and the other differences such as gendered roles. Formally or informally, in most cases one can distinguish between *core group* and *other members* or participants with less responsibility and influence. In the cases of Gothenburg, Frankfurt, Plovdiv and Zurich these core groups are formally organised as elected boards. In Frankfurt YSR, the Executive Board consists of one spokesperson, two vice-spokespersons and five technical officers which coordinate thematic committees which is similar to YRG. In Bologna the ACB the core group is an informal group of older students. In the youth information centres, the core group are either those young functionaries that make it into the board (Rennes) or those young people who become youth workers (Eskisehir) which in both cases implies selection and being separated structurally from the users. In the home council Frankfurt the council is dominated by adult staff.

Organisation and recruitment are structured by *social inequality*: Eight out of nine settings address young people in general but there is evidence that mainly young people with higher educational qualifications and from privileged social backgrounds are involved even though in Manchester case they also come from historically working class schools and neighbourhoods. Especially, the young people in the core groups are characterised by educational ambitions. The settings connected to educational institutions as well as the youth information centre in Eskisehir reflect selective access to (private) grammar schools or to higher education while in the youth information centres either associative (Rennes) or political (Eskişehir) affiliation functions as filter. The inner circle of ACB in Bologna share similar political and intellectual attitudes and come from families with high cultural and social capital. In contrast, young people in residential care are generally labelled as disadvantaged. Thus, HCF involves disadvantaged youth but the mandate is limited by the institutional constellation of disadvantage.

⁷ Accessible information on election turnovers were 23% for Formal Youth Representation in Gothenburg 2017, estimations for last elections of faculty representatives in Plovdiv were about 10%. Only elections for class representatives tend to involve more young people.

This leads to the next organisational element, the *role of adults* in the settings. Anti corruption group Bologna (ACB) and student council Plovdiv (SCP) are the only cases where adults are not co-present. In the Bologna group, adults supervise and control the group, directly in school and more indirectly through the national anti-corruption network. In Plovdiv, the young people move in an adult structure and at the interfaces with general institutions whereby they have to adapt to the rules and procedures of adults. In all other settings, adults are at least co-present. The youth councils have youth workers, in the high school it is teachers and in the care home council, the asymmetry is even more obvious as the management is involved directly. Also in Rennes and Eskişehir, main positions are held by adults while there are no youth-specific bodies. Relationships are either patriarchal and authoritarian (Eskisehir) or at least hierarchical (Rennes). While differences along core/periphery and youth/adult are largely organised, the *gendered division of roles* reflects a male overrepresentation or a dominance of the male members: in YSR, there is “an inner circle of male members running most of the show” (NR Frankfurt, p. 46), SCP has a male president to whom the others refer as “our leader” while he talks about the board members as “my people” or “my team”, and in ACB the older students organising the group activities are all male.

Finally, we come to *processes and resources*. In councils in Gothenburg, Frankfurt and Plovdiv the sessions of the general assembly are organized like a “real’ parliament session” (NR Frankfurt, p. 46) which happens to be “highly formalized and agenda driven” (NR Gothenburg, p. 31). In Manchester, sessions are organized in round tables prepared by the core groups in meetings which tend to be more frequent and much more informal. In the care home, resident groups meet weekly (compulsory) and collect issues which are then discussed in the monthly home council session. ACB Bologna has to do 25 hours per school year and sessions are very “scholastic” (NR Bologna, p. 50) with lots of information given about corruption and little room for discussion. The size of settings differs between two group delegates in the care home council and around 100 members in YSR Frankfurt. One indicator for the power of these settings is the resources they dispose of. While in Rennes some young people are co-responsible for the budget of the YICR, a rather huge organisation, they do so not in their role as young person but as a board member. Youth councils command an own budget of 15,000 (Frankfurt) and 30,000 Euro (Gothenburg) which also reflects the relevance of socio-economic factors and welfare states’ investment in young people (see Chapter 3).

4.2 Positioning of formal participation between adults and their peers

We have qualified formal settings of youth participation as adult-led, which means that adults have institutionalised the settings and have made most of the rules (see also 4.3). Expectations and rules by adults are also materialised by the physical spaces assigned to. In many cases, the places are settled close to adults’ institutions such as youth council offices being located in city council’s buildings or even the town hall. The office of SCP in the university is next to the Rector’s office, whereas anti-corruption group takes place within the school. Similarly, YICE’s building in Eskişehir is being financed and “owned” by the Ministry of Youth and Sport while YIRE has been assigned a huge and modern building in Rennes by local and regional authorities. These settings reflect institutional efforts of providing possibilities and spaces of involvement and influence, but do not necessarily provide possibilities for autonomous spaces, constructing own positions and roles or adapting existing ones to own needs. Young people are

invited into an adult (physical) space, positioned in the world of adults and thus subject to an adult habitus by which these spaces are invested (Bourdieu 1990).

Given the scepticism of many young people towards such participation mechanisms it is interesting to analyse how the young people engaged in these settings are positioned and position themselves between different age groups. To what extent they simply undergo or modify the incorporation of an adult habitus? In fact, our ethnographic research reveals how young people are situated in a difficult ‘in-between position forcing them to choose either the side of their peers or of the adults. However, once they choose their sides this choice comes with its costs: either losing the adults’ world’s recognition and the support and power coming with it, or being alienated and de-legitimised from their peers and from youth culture. Young people in these settings constantly need to find ways of playing this ‘double’ role, sometimes aligning more to the side of adults and sometimes more to the side of their peers.

Young people in student and youth councils are expected – by the adults and/or the institutional mandate – to play an intermediary role between adults and young people: “You are the ones who represent the young people of Manchester” (FN, YRM), “You own this city” (FN, YSR). Apparently, young people within the inner core of these councils have chosen to situate themselves more close to the adults’ world and enjoy the more advantageous position with regard to recognition and resources. For example, YRG’s structure is decided by the Gothenburg city council and its activities are reported to a working group of elected politicians with supervising responsibility. Similarly, YSR in Frankfurt has a powerful position within the city administration, board members are invited to take part in certain formal committees, and have access to senior members of the city administration. However, *“recognition by adults sometimes comes at the prize of the formal limits of their mandate and having to exclude some issues and limit the cooperation with groups that are less recognized, like youth organisations of political parties or left-wing groups.”* (NR Frankfurt, p. 50). One former member states: *“I would assume that 70, 80% [of young people] do not even know the YSR, or only by name. And that’s the problem: how to reach out to all young people in the city”* (BI Giorgio, YSR).

There are several situations revealing that and how incorporating the adult habitus is connected with practices of distinction (Bourdieu, 1984) within the groups of young people as well as towards youth outside the settings. In Bologna, young people in the inner core of ACB indeed play the role of “adults” and have a close relationship with the headmaster *“seems to be result of an ‘educational deal’, which deeply ties and unites the political ways of thinking of both the anti-mafia group and the school”* (BI Cristina, ACB). This produces a distance between “them” and the “other” group members. In Plovdiv, we find evidence of the ambivalence between problematising the distance and actively distancing oneself from the other students. While one participant in a group discussion states: *“Perhaps the difficulties come from the students being unaware of the council’s activity”* (Plovdiv, GD SCP), another one points out: *“The majority of students is “chalgari” [people listening to ‘chalga’ music]. They want to go to a club, to get drunk, and go back home with somebody else.”* (BI Rada, SCP).

For the care home council (HCF), even though a mechanism for dialogue between young residents and the management exists, our ethnographic study reveals a lack of communication. Simon, who was a group delegate for some time, explains how certain professionals, who make the rules, do not always want to negotiate them: *“I was group delegate for some time ... I could thematise immediately everything with the justification that I am group delegate. I started*

completely unnecessary discussions, because I was group delegate ... but it was too much with all those meetings for the position of group delegate, it was too much of my leisure time. But I still discuss with the professionals whatever I dislike, but not all professionals like to discuss” (BI Simon, HCF). Although group representatives in residential care are expected to play an intermediary role between the management and their peers, unlike student and youth councils, they situate themselves more closely to their peers. The report highlights the distinction between formal participation on a ‘frontstage’ and informal participation taking place ‘backstage’ by young people neglecting rules tolerated by staff (NR Frankfurt, pp. 56).

In Eskisehir, it is the youth workers (in their 20s and referring to themselves as “youth leaders”) who are seen as those participating while users are not expected to get involved as there is no such intermediary decision-making body. Youth workers clearly distance themselves from the young people using the centre, also with regard to their dress code: *“We are dressed casual but still good ... I won’t wear a ragged jeans or having long hairs”* (FN, YICE).

Also in Rennes, young people in the governance bodies (the inner core) of YICR, distinguish themselves from “ordinary” young people: *“Their dress, their language, their hobbies actually distinguish them from many young people”* (NR Rennes, p. 35). The young president (25 years) even justifies excluding young people from the board and staff: *“I don’t care if there are young people ... a youth expertise ... does not mean anything.”* He positions himself beyond age: *“It depends on how we define youth, least I am not old, but I am reassuring ... I am right in the middle of the institutional huts of the associative world.”* (BI, Thibault, YICR).

Obviously, young people in formal participation interpret, evaluate and cope with their position between adults and youth in different ways. Nevertheless, these settings also offer them a sense of belonging and possibilities of spending time with people (like themselves). They form a peer culture which makes these settings “fun”, “enjoyable” and “youthful” for themselves. Paula, from YSR in Frankfurt, tells that new members of the executive board are invited to go on a introductory weekend retreat and thanks to this event, she made friends with the board members. This sense of belonging and feeling like a family constitute an important factor that ties them to and enables them to stay in these settings (cf. Batsleer et al., 2017, pp. 168-170). This formation of a specific peer culture in turn, may go along with distancing from other young people and underline a distinction compared to “ordinary other young people”. Peter (BI, YRG) notes that: *“It is great fun to go to the sessions on Mondays and Wednesdays ... because there are people who care about politics in my own age, who are fun discussing with. It gives many rewarding conversations ... dialogues, we have that pretty often.”*

The analysis reveals that young people in formal participation are positioned in what is referred to as an intermediary situation between adult and youth which however implies adopting and adapting to – or more exceptional: rejecting – adult rules and expectations. However, they also actively position themselves and distinguish themselves from others. Thereby they incorporate and/or modify the adult habitus inbuilt in the spaces in which they move and act.

4.3 Topics and agenda settings: the selection and the process of construction

This section takes the positioning between adult and youth further and explores what topics are discussed and what activities are organized in the formal contexts of participation. We also reflect on the effective role of the young people in terms of rights and duties, opportunities and

constraints: to what extent do they actively contribute to the agenda setting, how much this process is negotiated between adults and young people; how distant young people perceive themselves and their action from the objectives and priorities of the official agenda; and how (whether) the institutional functions of the settings account for the type of reaction of the young people (adaptation, resistance, appropriation or “personalization” of the setting).

In the youth councils, procedures appear to be similar inasmuch as the agenda setting is strictly formalized and mostly revolves around activities aimed at advocating and representing young people’s interests in the city governance structures. For example, YSR in Frankfurt is a statutory member of the city council’s public transportation committee and of a committee planning a new secondary school. According to such functions as well as through regular events like a yearly student congress, the agenda is filled ‘automatically’ from outside focusing on school issues rather than with own initiatives of the executive board or thematic committees (NR Frankfurt p. 45). Similarly, the agenda setting of YRM is dominated by introducing young people into and adapting them to civic and political roles. Partly, topics are pre-defined by representation structures at regional or national level. A core group of young people within the council organizes elections and meetings, maintains links with the city council and organizes activities pertaining to national campaigns (NR Manchester p. 10). In Gothenburg, YRG members address issues they identify as important for young people in local social life, such as the access to public transportation, quality of school food, and leisure time (NR Gothenburg, p. 27).

The agenda and activities of student councils strictly derive from the statute function which in turn are governed by school/university education. In Plovdiv, SCP has the official goal of protecting the common rights and interests (intellectual, social, cultural, sportive, creative, etc.) of all students (NR Plovdiv, p. 31). In Zurich however, the student committee discusses the issues that affect the student body and processes them in consultation with the classes, headmaster and teaching staff. The committee promotes the involvement of students, which generally means to participate in co- and self-organization of extracurricular activities such as the annual school festival. Also in ACB in Bologna, the agenda is shaped by the mission that structures the extra-curricular activities: social rules and responsibility within (and beyond) the school system in general, the promotion of an anti-corruption culture in particular.

Compared with the youth and student councils, the agenda of the two youth information centres is much more dominated by administrative processes, in Eskisehir (YICE) by the national and political system, in Rennes (YICR) by the associative system which in turn depends on the local and regional administration. Thus, the agenda setting partly takes place outside the organisations themselves while being processed inside by bodies which are defined by function and not by age groups. Also the agenda and activities of the care home council (HCF) are particular and concentrated on the normal functioning of the structure. In weekly group sessions the group delegates collect issues, requests or complaints related to everyday life and present them once a month in the council meeting chaired by the director while also a counsellor attends. It was noted that most of young people’s wishes were documented and then rejected: *“We observed ... that the wishes of the young people were communicated, documented by the care home counsellor and most of the time rejected by the care home manager justified by ‘structural reasons’.”* (FN, HCF). Especially, matters of existential importance for the young

residents like the use of WIFI and visits of girlfriends appeared to be beyond negotiation in the home council.

This description of the topics and activities implemented in or through the formal contexts of participation questions the role of the young people in the whole process: who takes the crucial decision concerning the setting of the agenda – adults or young people? Which proposals are more likely to be accepted? Are the young people active or passive in terms of duties and rights, assumption of responsibility, but also power and influence on the decision-making process? Do they agree or are they divided? A first general remark is that in all the formal settings observed, a good deal of the themes to be discussed as well as of the activities to be planned were predefined by regulations, rules and routine tasks with a high presence of bureaucracy. YSR in Frankfurt, thanks to its statutory form, enjoys a relatively recognised position in the city administration reflected by membership in committees, easy access to civil servants and the ability to mobilize pupils and students on certain issues (NR Frankfurt, p. 49). What inhibits the young people of the core group from coming up with own initiatives is the complex procedures. They are busy with administrative issues and although they feel that this routine should be learned because it might be useful in their future careers and lives, they criticise the fact that they are not able at all to change or even negotiate the bureaucratic functioning: *“My experience was that YSR was mainly busy with administrative stuff”* (BI Giorgio, YSR).

In many of the studied cases, young people seem to have space to express their positions but the frame is externally regulated and does not seem to allow the emergence of autonomous initiatives. While in the care home young people use the ‘backstage’ to undermine regulations of issues that are really important for them, in youth councils they appear to perform democracy on the ‘frontstage’ while adults define and regulate their scope of action from the backstage. For example, the structure of YRG is decided by the Gothenburg City Council. It has a budget, can pose questions, offer suggestions and express opinions but without any decision-making power. Furthermore, activities are reported to a working group of elected politicians with supervising responsibility. Although, young people assess their involvement and experience in formal participation as relevant learning about politics, they see and criticise the tokenism behind it: *“The YRG is a kind of ‘lapdog of politics’, a box that politicians can cross and say now we have created something and done something for young people”* (FN, YRG)

Another problem that young people in councils have to come to terms with is their limited capacity of representing the whole of youth. YSR in Frankfurt aspires to be the council of all pupils and students of the city. In concrete, the election of the Board acts as a filter. A social bias in the composition of its members leads to an over-representation of students from the more prestigious secondary schools (higher grades of Gymnasium) both in the general assembly and, as a consequence, among board members (vocational schools are rarely represented). In Manchester the possibilities of the youth representation members to develop their own topics and forms of negotiation are low. The groups of young people that participate in activities very often follow a discussion agenda that is defined by regional or national representation bodies and structured ahead by the youth worker. Most activities take place in the town hall where also “adults’ politics” is done and the process of participation in formal context is controlled and interrupted when diverging directions come to be undertaken. Everything seems to be very schematised, with timelines and specific topics to be addressed. Although the discussion is made by young people, the entire structure is determined by the adults who elaborate a set of

specific rules that groups have to follow (NR Manchester, p. 28). The sessions observed gave the impression of being been made by adults who do not trust in the potential of young people. This is a good example of the pedagogisation of youth, where everything is framed externally. For example, young people are supposed to achieve a common agreement on racism and discrimination. As result of these procedures, there is not really a “discussion”. Rather, different previously delineated topics are covered without a great deal of enthusiasm.

In Frankfurt, the care home council is a platform for planning and discussion of procedures, wishes and needs but it seems not to run correctly. David, a resident, tells that co-determination of topics is not easy to realise: *“Then the professionals ask ‘do you have topics?’ and this is quite the only possibility for co-determination (BI David, HCF).”* For example, when searching for a place for a group vacation, the residents suggested Spain whereas the professionals insisted on Switzerland or Denmark for financial reasons. A feeling prevails of being unable to having one’s voice heard or to make make a difference, under the overwhelming effect of normalization imposed by the institutional rules: *“Here are rules who limit the young people and there are always discussions about the rules, how to change them and to find compromises, one can say this is a compressed political system” (BI Simon, HCF).*

The explicit and implicit control over youth activities emerges also in student councils. In Zurich, students in SCZ have the feeling they can only make small contributions (NR Zurich, p. 25). In the classroom and in the committee, they are confronted with a parent-headmaster-teacher triad, which regulates all the concerns of school life. In the central areas of this system, the students have few chances to assert their interests, even if they are involved in activities. The committee can introduce proposals into the school management and has a right to be heard at the teacher's meeting. However, they are not entitled to vote. In the committee, the teacher has the faculty to interfere when the discussions do not seem to correspond to the tasks and topics of the school committee. Students are not allowed to discuss problems of single students (they have to concern the entire student collective) or to talk about teachers. This is justified with the aim to prevent “negative dynamics” in the student committee.

In the case of ACB, Bologna, the significance of participation is similar. Despite the civic content, being part of the group for many participants does not mean more than fulfilling a duty. The students are “obliged” to participate in extracurricular activities and assume a responsibility under the promise of being influential in building an anti-corruption attitude. As in the Zurich SCZ case, this expectation does not appear correct from the point of view of the young people. Although they have to do a lot of work, they realize their influence is very limited. The lack (or loss) of motivation produces the unintended result of a division of the group. On one side, there are the “older” students, in charge of developing themes and organizing the meetings. This core group interprets its participation as a social objective and a collective commitment against the system of corruption. On the other side, the group of “new entries” includes passive attendants who only participate for gathering 25 hours of extracurricular activities. This asymmetry reflects the school organization as a whole: one group of students are engaged and interested in politics and culture, and those who are primarily interested in leisure (NR Bologna, p.48-50ff).

Obviously, the prevalent control by adults also comes with conflicts both with adults and among young people. In the most structured institutional settings, struggles revolve around authority and different interpretation of boundaries and prerogatives. In Frankfurt, within YSR the tension concentrates on the organization of activities. A former member discusses the internal

dynamics of the executive board and recalls a discussion about whether YSR should support a student initiative for refugees: *“It was turned down [by the president] because those groups were not so serious, they were not responsible and if we put our logo, it might fall back upon us and we might no longer be able to make such nice projects [ironical] with the city council. For me this was not satisfying”* (BI Giorgio, YSR). In other cases, tension between the adult consultant and board members arises on the mandate and how it should be interpreted. The following extract from a field note of a board meeting reveals how the adult consultant intends to help with background preparation and management but is perceived as interfering and control while his role in the sessions should be that of an observer:

“At the end of the agenda, the president introduces an extra topic: he has been invited to a district committee meeting concerning the annual ritual of ‘school is out-drinking’... Two board members react annoyed, this tradition happened only once a year... The adult consultant intervenes. According to him, it was a mistake going there and even organizing another event ... The president moans, he will do it anyway, the other two members agree and say, in the end they are the YSR ... The president reports, strange ideas had been raised in this discussion like obliging students from the lower year to clean up the park the next day or even making them pay. The consultant tries to intervene once more. He wants to prevent YSR from doing a political mistake but he does not succeed, the meeting will take place.” (FN, YSR)

While this is an example that adults aim at controlling the board members but finally have to give up, a more explicit and successful intervention has been documented in the field notes with regard to one of the YRM events in Manchester. The first session of the event consisted of a presentation organized by four male youngsters, around a quiz. However, they were not alone; the whole activity was supervised by an adult youth worker, making sure that everything was according to the plan. Adults supervise, take pictures, act in precise moments where things go out of plan, and young people are the performers of this show. An example of a hidden conflict in the Manchester case comes from a critical episode observed, when some naked pictures were found on a website designed to promote a sense of youth participation. Instead of encouraging an open reflection, any discussion was turned down. So it is not surprising that participants' representations of official politics are strongly negative.

In SCZ, two symbolic claims have become matter of dispute in the student committee: the ban of mobile phones from the school ground and the discussion on acceptable examination schedules (whether having more than one exam on a given day). The fight against these proposals derived from the attempt of the school management to impose changes of the internal organization of activities which could have led to an increasing pressure on young people's free time and well-being. This is an example of effective action, since the committee had success in inhibiting the teachers and headmaster to realise the changes (NR Zurich, pp. 24-25).

In cities without settings of formal youth representation at municipality level, conflicts assume a broader dimension inasmuch as they question the relationships between different segments of society. The importance attributed to youth issues is an argument of contrast in Rennes. Volunteers and leaders of the YICR express their feeling of not being heard by adults. They blame the municipality for failing to recognise their capacities, failing to involve them in decision-making processes, or expecting them to fit to adults' expectations. However, institutional decisions also lead to conflict among young people, for example the mechanism of legitimization of funding which brings old associations into competition with new groups,

students competing with disadvantaged young people for access to limited public funding or spaces, or about evaluation and reporting methods. In Eskisehir, the problem seems to derive from the strict control of the authorities over the activities of YICE. Young people are considered not yet fully capable of engaging in activities on their own, so they receive limited trust and engagement. The official context of participation is dominated by external politicization. Indeed, the internal divisions and the external constraints make the chances of transformation uncertain and narrow the possibilities of visibility in the public sphere.

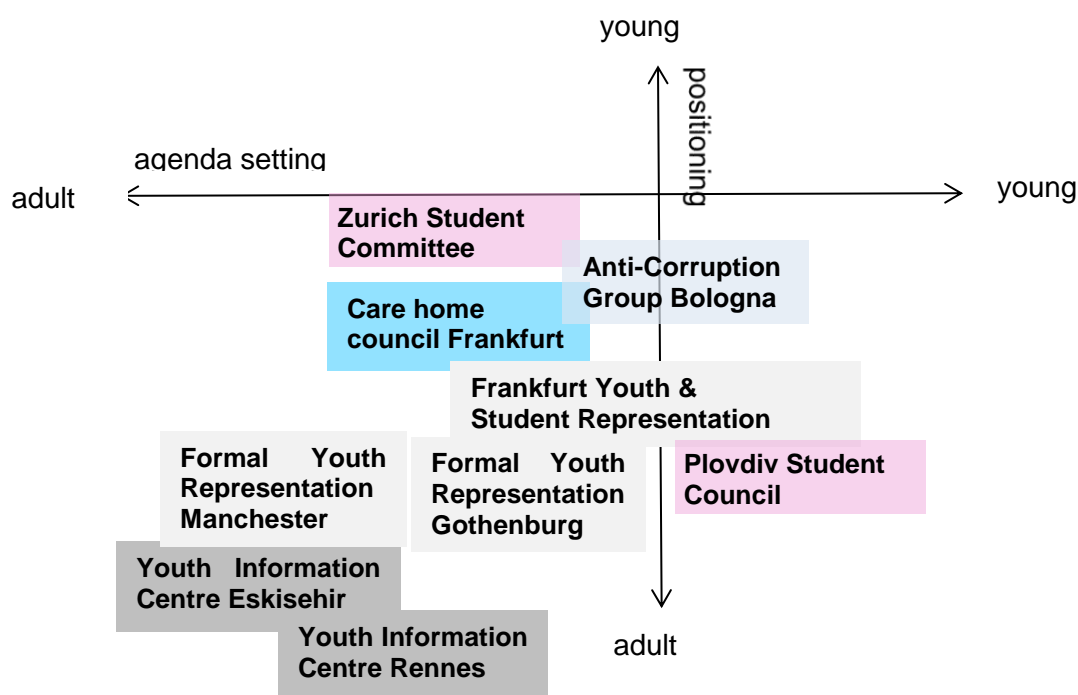
This focus on the process of agenda-setting provides a very complex description of young people's strategies. Roles, dynamics, relationships within the formal contexts of participation strongly vary. Young people have the "option" of either acting as an "adult" and thus accepting to enter into conflict with "other" young people in order to win the recognition of adults. They completely approve the adult agenda. Others keep a distance and show a minimum engagement, a passive or conformist attitude functional to fulfil a certain demand or to continue using the space with friends (see table 2 in appendix). Some play a double role acting sometimes like adults and sometimes in a youthful way and accepting that it is not always possible to change the roles that are already set but choosing to raise a voice and gain a (small) space for themselves in these settings. Where in contrast, the organization is rigid, "necessary conformist" behaviour might become the prevalent attitude. Of course, there are also those who try to act like a young person and not to comply with an adult habitus. In these cases, the efforts are concentrated in enlarging or reinterpreting the formal roles, endorsing other representations or movements or re-setting their own agenda through the inclusion of initiatives promoted by local groups. The challenge to adapt the institutionalized setting to their purposes, or to propose alternative solutions often collide with the opposition of the formal institutions. In these cases, the official mission to promote autonomous experiences of participation among young people is not fulfilled and it is not surprising that this leads to institutional and political detachment.

Additional insight into the dynamics of positioning and agenda setting between adults and youth has been generated in the course of participatory action research projects (). While one of these projects was carried out by members of Manchester Formal Youth Representation, a case also analysed in this report, another one was conducted by a Cantonal Formal Youth representation in Zurich which has been only indirectly made reference to. In these action research projects, it could be observed that in these projects – although initiated by adults (the researchers) there was a different positioning involved. The experience with "other" adults gave young people additional space to do things differently and to reflect their processes within their own settings. For example, members of the Manchester Formal Youth Representation turned this experience to widen their space and realize how predefined their "normal" processes are (ibid., p.34-38). Similarly, in Zurich, members of the Cantonal Formal Youth Representation aiming to become a regional youth parliament were concerned with the passivity of the majority of the members and thus their legitimacy as representation of young people (ibid., p. 42-44). Not surprising in Eskişehir both researchers and youth workers did not even consider doing an action research project since that would have required a formal permission from the Ministry in Ankara and would have been very difficult in the existent bureaucratic system and political atmosphere.

If we summarise and compare, we see that there are differences between as well as within different types of formal settings. Not surprisingly, figure 1 on the positioning between young people and adults and on the processes of agenda setting shows all cases in the adult oriented

field due to the sampling of formal settings (informal cases might have been in the opposite field). Yet there are slight differences. We see that the two youth information centres in Rennes (YICR) and Eskisehir (YICE) are clearly adult-oriented on both dimensions as they focus on providing and developing youth work rather than being settings of co-decision-making of young people. This allows differentiating the definition of formal participation inasmuch as these settings are rather initiated by adults than adult-led. The ‘lead’ is subject to sharing, negotiation or struggle between young people and adults as well as among young people.

Figure 1: formal participation settings according to proximity and influence of adults



Young people are included in the management or the delivery if they take on adult roles. In youth councils, this is less accentuated but there are also variations between a more manipulative agenda setting in Manchester and more conflicting negotiation in Frankfurt. Similarly, in the home council young people bring in own issues and negotiate, yet without sufficient power to influence the outcomes. In the student councils in Zurich and Plovdiv, young people are more involved in the agenda setting, yet in clearly defined (and limited) scopes. In Bologna, due to the absence of adults, the positioning of ACB is more youth-oriented with young people coordinating the agenda, yet the framework is initiated and supervised by adults.

In conclusion, our ethnographic research demonstrates that even though formal settings create a certain habitus, structure the activities and the attitudes of young people as discussed by structural approaches in social science and sociology of youth, there are also constant compromises and tactics applied by young people to react and modifying this habitus. This can be clearly found in the next section, where (individual) opportunities and (contextual) constraints are examined looking at their combination into biographical paths of involvement.

4.4 Biographical constellations of involvement in formal youth participation

In this section, selected biographies of young people involved in formal participation are analysed to find out what makes it subjectively interesting and relevant to get and stay involved considering that for most young people they seem not to be attractive at all.

Eight fully transcribed and translated in-depth interviews have been analysed: Amanda (YRG), Amos (YRM), Selin (YICE), Léa and Thibault (YICR), Paula (YSR), Rada (CSP), and Simon (HCF). Not all of them are narrative biographical interviews in a strict sense but mixtures between biographical and expert interviews in which interviewers and respondents discuss the young person's involvement instead of having them told their life story. Nevertheless all those interviews have been subjected to a biographical analysis applying a mixture of grounded theory and biographical case reconstruction (Rosenthal 2004) in which the told and the lived life story are related to each other to elaborate biographical constellations, in this case constellations of participation biographies (cf. Schwanenflügel 2015). Apart from this, we draw on summaries of ten biographical interviews with young people formal settings of youth participation which however are not accessible in a translated form (Abraham YRM, Anna and Martin SCZ, Cristina and Giovanna ACB, Emil SCP, Francis YICR, Giorgio YSR, Peter YCG, Hakan, YICE; see also Batsleer et al., 2017).⁸ First, we present the eight biographies analysed in-depth according to how they present themselves and how they relate their involvement in formal participation with regard to their lives. Second, we elaborate key dimensions of their participation biographies (see for a similar approach Cuconato et al., 2018).

Clusters of biographies of involvement in formal participation settings

Turning experiences of injustice into a mission

These participation biographies are characterised by experiences of injustice in childhood or early youth which have (been) turned into personal political missions; also because competent parents helped in reflecting on and coping with them. Their background is ambiguously structured by migration and racism but also high levels of education and occupation. The narratives are characterised both by the search for and experiences of self-efficacy, they express feelings of being someone special and include 'big thinking' between juvenile dreams of omnipotence and adult language while peer relationships seem secondary.⁹ Apart from Amanda and Amos, also Abraham (Manchester) fits into this cluster.

Amanda (Gothenburg) is almost 17, her parents migrated from Ethiopia and Eritrea in the 1990s from the civil war between these nations. They are both well-educated and have good jobs. They divorced when Amanda was two and the father seems to have disengaged with her. She experienced being 'othered' for her skin and hair in kindergarten. In a critical moment, she identifies and consequently refers to this as bullying and racism which is then acknowledged and stopped by her mother and teachers. She gets involved in student councils, starts blogging and writing, and at age 13 enters the formal youth representation to which she has been elected president at age 15. She is also youth representative in the city development agency and lectures

⁸ In the comparative case study report these biographies spread over all clusters: stories of "self made man/woman", of "experimentation", of "responsibility", of "rediscovering oneself" and of "role models" (Batsleer et al., 2017).

⁹ Here is a strong overlap with the cluster "fighting for justice" and with the dimension of "self-efficacy" in the report on participation biographies (Cuconato et al. 2018)

on intersectionality, racism and afro phobia. After school she wants to study, become a diplomat, publish ten books (!) and continue lecturing. In Amanda's life story the experience of bullying becomes a source of identity and motivation: *"I am still a black woman, I still wear a black body ... if you are racialized in this kind of society, then you will, you are political ... And that is why I burn so much for Afro phobia"*.

Amos (Manchester) is 15 and has migrated with his family from Nigeria where his father worked for the World Bank when he was 12 (he does not speak about the migration process at all). In school in Nigeria, he had two important experiences: he could not join his best friend in secondary school because he was not good enough and he was forced by his teacher to punish his classmates physically. His *"epiphany"* was at age 11 when through his father he met a politician (and former victim of torture) whom he ascribes to have instilled the mission of *"revolution"* in him. In the UK he started getting involved in projects: *"I met a woman ... who is the CEO [of an NGO concerned with working class kids]. She seemed to be the first ever person who understood the word revolutionary. She was the first ever person to tell me that I can achieve my dreams."* He also reports being awarded a prize for a project and recognised by the jury as *"the special kid, the main man of the occasion"*. All this leads to being elected a member of the formal youth representation. In the future he wants to work for the UN as a doctor inspired by a popular (black) neurosurgeon who has written many books on politics and life style.

Overcoming vulnerability

These participation biographies are characterized by vulnerability and injuries experienced in childhood and early youth due to being left alone by the family, by lack of cultural and social capital, by bullying experiences at school or by health problems. Most of these young people share experiences of not having been taken seriously, feeling uncomfortable, in sum of having difficult relations with peers, especially in school. Intentionally or accidentally, these experiences are compensated or even overcome through formal participation, for example by following older young people into participatory settings. In general, recognition by peers seems more relevant than by adults – or better: positions and practices empowered formally by adults are used to change and reinforce the own subject position also with regard to peers. Cases of this cluster are Paula (YSR), Simon and David (HCF, Frankfurt), Giovanna and Cristina (both ACB Bologna), Anna (SCZ Zurich).¹⁰

Simon (Frankfurt) is 15 or 16 years old. He comes from a well-off family that broke apart when his father was prosecuted for fraud. He harassed Simon and his older brother until his mother separated. They moved to his grand-parents but one year later his mother died from cancer. The boys were placed in a foster family and later in residential care while the father served a sentence in prison. Simon presents himself as orientated towards his brother who is extroverted and involved in youth cultural practice while being a motivated student himself. When the brother is expelled from residential care for smoking weed, Simon for the first time is on his own. He ascribes experiences of recognition not to persons but to the situation and place of residential care: *"Only here in Frankfurt, I started feeling to have found my personality."* Impressed by the discussion skills of a peer resident he stands as a candidate and is elected group

¹⁰ In this cluster the dimension of coping with harmful experiences of the report on participation biographies is dominant (cf. Cuconato et al., 2018)

representative and member of the care home council (HCF). He enjoys questioning rules: *“Often I start discussions with the staff.”* After some time, he resigned as processes take too long, power is limited and co-residents are demotivated. But he thinks that his self-confidence has grown: *“I like starting discussions with people who think they are ranked higher ... It’s really fun to counterattack [them] on their own level in a reasonable language ... and they cannot do anything.”*

Paula (Frankfurt) is 16 years old. She has five siblings, her father is episodically out of work while her mother works as a day nanny, so that Paula does not go to kindergarten, but stays at home. When she is 14 the parents separate, the relationship with the father is weak. At primary school, she is diagnosed highly talented and skips one grade. She says, this is the reason of her being bullied by her peers. In secondary school, youth welfare intervenes and aims at placing her in a boarding school for emotionally handicapped children. Her mother succeeds in placing her in a boarding school for highly gifted students instead. There she starts feeling better and engages in the theatre group. After two years, the youth welfare office stops the funding. At home, problems start again: *“I don’t like the word bullying ... I was annoyed and teased ... and because of that my motivation in school decreased.”* In this time, she comes across an ecological-political association which she describes as a turning point: *“... and then my entire life started to change completely... I also learned about YSR ... Well, there I found quite good friends.”* The fact that she does not elaborate on any political topics in the interview suggests that positive peer relationships are her main motive. It seems that her intelligence helps her performing in fulfilling clearly defined roles and thereby securing belonging and recognition.

Progression and career

There are cases of young people who identify with their formal participation roles to an extent that they appear to be already on a professional career track. It needs being said that this classification may be due to the fact that we have little information on the life stories of these young people. The fact that their narratives concentrate on their participation career rather than on their biography may (!) be indicative for this cluster. It is also striking that these young people seem not so much interested in a certain issue they want to achieve or promote but driven by the power, status and creativity inherent to being leaders. On the one hand they are proud that they have responsibility despite their young age, on the other hand they are concerned with legitimising this position with regard to their professional competencies regardless of their age. In fact, they are not necessarily door openers for other young people. *Thibault* and *Léa* (Rennes), *Hakan* (YICE Eskisehir), *Emil* (SCP Plovdiv), *Martin* (SCZ Zurich) and *Giorgio* (YSR Frankfurt) belong to this cluster.¹¹

Thibault (Rennes) is 25. His parents are upper middle class academics and have introduced him into the world of associationism. When he is 12, he and his friends found a junior association, first around sports, later they organise festivals. The experience recognition and support brings him closer to an umbrella organisation of popular education who invites him to join the board when he is 18. He assumes it was *“to have some young people there”* but he accepts *“for curiosity”*. At this time, this organisation aims at increasing its influence in the Regional Youth Information Centre (YICR). As a part of this strategy he is introduced also into the board of

¹¹ In this cluster the dimensions “between youth and adults” elaborated in the report on participation biographies is central while there is also overlap with the cluster “conformist for change” (cf. Cuconato et al., 2018)

YICR and after some time elected president. He describes himself as “*institutionalised*” which for him is not a negative attribute but the core of what he defines as participation or serving the ‘common good’. He is in constant contact with high ranked institutional representatives and describes in detail and justifies his strategy in the power struggle in YICR. He even seems to enjoy being referred to as a “*war machine*”. He emphasises that with regard to management and staff recruitment “*I don’t care if there are young people ... a youth expertise ... well ... it does not mean anything.*” Obviously, he wants to be recognised for his skills and competencies, not for being young. He wants to complete his Master in Political Science and to register with one of the higher education elite institutions nurturing French civil service.

Léa (Rennes) works in the same organisation (YICR) and is 23 years old. She grew up in a small town where she was active in the recreational center. Her story is another one of participation in the course of developing of a professional career. She tells it was her mother suggesting her to take a socio-educative direction in high school, followed by a training course before she decides to enrol in a BA in Education: “*I think I was ... pursuing studies without asking myself whether I would start working or not. So it followed naturally ... There were lots of us.*” According to Léa, her studies led her to YICR. While talking about her experiences there, she underlines how it “*improved*” her academic qualities and how successfully she combined these two spheres in her life: her education and her participation which she realized especially in her MA studies (in Education) : “*The person who corrected my thesis asked me what I had done before. When I told her, she said to me: ‘It shows! Apparently I had managed to ... succeed, always popular education and associative life in mind because ... for me it is complementary. I think it’s really rich to have access to both sides.’*”

Plan B – participation as way of coping with revising occupational choices

In some cases, young people’s biographies are characterised by life dreams which they cannot pursue for different reasons. Engaging in formal participation partly reflects and reacts to a feeling of being treated unfairly, partly it provides recognition and a feeling of self-efficacy which has been undermined by having to give up their intrinsic plans.

Selin (Eskisehir) is 19 years old. Her father owns a gas station, her mother is a housewife and helps the father while her two older sisters are married. Selin presents her father as her “*idol*”, everyone seems to respect him, “*just to mention his name is enough to make things work*”. She underlines that he would have preferred a son and invested in her as if she was his son: “*We go to go-kart together, buy books, read together... When I was a little kid, he talked to me like to a grown up... He always pushes me to go and talk to people ... to improve myself, to go to seminars*”. At the same time, she presents him as controlling her: “*He is oppressive. He always puts boundaries. My friends could stay wherever they wanted. ... For us it was not possible: ‘Where are you? A girl does not stay elsewhere’, and I got really angry at him ... But now I understand. If one day I get married and have children, I will be the same*”. Selin presents herself as both rebellious, which she ascribes to the self-confidence she got from her father, and very conservative politically. She tells about fights with high school teachers whom she accuses of being prejudiced against her because of her mother wore a headscarf. But she also says she is not able to get along with peers: “*I had objectives, I had the capacity, but I can’t get along with people of my age.*” Selin seems torn between the wish to become someone important and the feeling she cannot accomplish anything. Pushed by her father, she wanted to study law but was only admitted to a two-year distance learning programme She had to lower her expectations

and even attended a medical secretary evening class: “*Sometimes I feel like it is over. I feel like a lost case*”. Her involvement in the youth information centre (YICE) started with a camping activity when she was 17 and which seemed an opportunity to evade the control of her father. Since then she has been visiting the centre occasionally without being an active member.

Rada (Plovdiv) is almost 27 years old. She almost apologises: “*I don’t have weird drama in my life ... I’m a normal person from a normal family ... And I like that*”. In fact, even though Rada does not talk about her life in dramatic ways, she reports some important events: her parents separated when she was six years old and she moved to another town with her mother and brother due to which she lost close contact with the father. Her passion is dancing and she manages to study at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts (AMFDA): “*I’ve been dancing all my life*”. However, after two years she has to quit the AMFDA. She does not talk about this in detail, again not leaving much room for drama: “*There, around sophomore year I decided I won’t continue. It was a mutual agreement, well not really... I was just given conditions that did not work for me. Then I applied for University and that was the best thing I could do.*” She does not refer to this as injustice or disappointment, she accepts and decides to study ethnography while continuing dancing outside AMFDA. Nevertheless, she explains her engagement in the student council: “*When I was at AMDFA, I had to drop out. I dropped out, because I was stupid and didn’t realize that I have student rights and I can use them, and that there are people who could have helped me, and a student council, I mean that’s the purpose of it.*” Compared to this biographical account of injustice and rights, her actual engagement appears rather unpolitical. She fulfils an administrative role in the student council (SCP) without questioning its hierarchical structure and the alienation from the majority of students. It seems rather that involvement helped her coping with revising her life plan.

Key dimensions of participation biographies in formal settings

In the following, we introduce key dimensions elaborated and identified in the analysis as crucial aspects of biographical construction of the interviewed young people. They take different expressions and relevance in the biographies (see also Cuconato et al., 2018).

A first dimension is how these young people present themselves in the interviews. The narratives reveal that involvement in formal participation is deeply connected with processes of *self-identity* as well as with *distinction* from others – or of habitus development or transformation. For Amos (Manchester) joining the formal youth representation seems like a mixture of recognition and juvenile omnipotence and is both a result and a trigger of identity work: “*All these things hinting at something special and I feel like right now – it made me know I was something special.*” Giorgio (YSR Frankfurt) presents himself as one who searches for “*real politics*”, Martin (Zurich) interprets his engagement in the school council in analogy to his sportive activities as positioning himself in the competition for life chances. Identity work also means more or less open distinction from others: Amanda (Gothenburg) refers to other young people as “*tired of politics*”, Paula (YSR Frankfurt) distinguishes herself from her female classmates whom she describes as superficial while reflecting on the dilemma between superiority in terms of intelligence and her inferiority in peer relationships. Selin (Eskisehir) presents herself as the “*only one in the class*” who protested against teachers while describing her class mates as “*sheep*”. Simon’s (HCF Frankfurt) presents himself as more moderate regarding drug use and more ambitious and successful in school than his brother from whom he has been dependant. Later in residential care, distinction from others seems less important,

except that it is him who questions the rules and the staff while others limit themselves to subversive strategies.

Identity work and distinction are expressed through different *styles of narrative*. In some biographies a rather ‘adult’ habitus prevails or at least adult phrases appear regularly. Amanda states in retrospect: *“I was terribly involved in political issues and not just like this anti-racism and anti-bullying and so, but especially intersectionality.”* Although she admits not to use this language in her football team, it is unclear if and to what extent her lifestyle has already alienated her from her peers. Peter, co-member of YRG, describes himself as *“social liberal”*, a concept which even in Sweden is surprising if used by a 15 year old to describe himself. Amos constantly practices name dropping of key persons and projects and sounds like a manager when he mentions the amount of funding he has raised with projects. Thibault (Rennes) seems farthest in having adopted an adult habitus. He explicitly distances himself from being young: *“Let's say it depends on how we define youth, but at least I am not old, but I am reassuring. In fact, for an organisation that is very institutional, I am reassuring, I am not a revolutionary and ... well ... I am right in the middle of the institutional huts of the associative world.”*

Thibault seems on track for a *professional career* in politics or administration. Involvement in formal youth participation appears as a springboard also for Amanda who presents herself as *“working ... for the municipality and the state and I also work independently ... I am a freelance writer, I lecture on intersectionality, anti-racism and feminism”* and she aims at professionalising this track. Emil (Plovdiv) had a record of political involvement as a journalist and as a candidate for mayor in his home town before becoming president in the student council. Hakan (Eskisehir) presents himself as an *“older brother”* giving advice to younger visitors of the youth center and having grown into the role of professional youth worker. Martin (Zurich) has no clear ideas yet but sees engagement in the student council as important for the competition for recognised positions. Amos’ career perspective fits to the ‘fairy tale’ style of his biographical presentation. His role model is a famous (black) neurosurgeon who published many books on politics and lifestyle issues, so he wants to become a doctor and work on UN projects. He shares with Emil, Martin and Thibault that themes of participation seem to be less important than power, status and creativity. This may be an expression of male self-presentation although also Amanda accepts political themes which are not on her agenda but connected to power roles.

Another dimension is from what *contexts of socialisation* and what *biographical experiences* these self-presentations emerge. Many of the young people engaged in formal participation come from families with middle to high *socio-economic status* at least one parent with higher education and a corresponding occupational position. However, in some cases social status is undermined by migration, ethnicity or race (Amanda, Amos, Hakan, Giorgio). Simon’s father, a pharmacist, is prosecuted for fraud and once in residential care the effect of coming from an upper middle class family seems to have vanished – except for his educational habitus. In fact, regardless their social background, these young people seem successful in school and aim at pursuing an academic route. Thibault refers to having grown up in a *“culture of associationism”* and appreciates that his parents accept that he takes longer for his studies due to his engagement. Amanda refers to her mother as a role model who helped her reflecting on difference and inequality while expecting to become *“a good person” and*. Peter (Gothenburg) refers to discussions about politics with his father. Selin’s father (Eskisehir) is a role model encouraging

her to raise claims and have a good education. Amos refers to his father introducing him to political circles but is also grateful towards his mother who enabled him having a good start in the UK.

Family experiences are relevant not only for feelings of self-efficacy and self-confidence or the development of certain competencies and attitudes but also for experiences of loss and disrespect. Amanda, Paula, Giorgio, Simon and Rada have to cope with separation or divorce of their parents, Simon and Amos with illness or even death of their mothers. None of them relates this explicitly with involvement in formal participation, but in Amanda's case the absence of the father may have caused a constant search for recognition: "*I missed him very much and he didn't care ... he has never liked me in some way.*" She states that "*quite early I had to take on a lot of responsibility*" and connects this with her career: "*... not only at home, not because mom could not handle it ... but I wanted to take on a lot of responsibility*". Simon reports unfair treatment and physical punishment. He enacts his emancipation process as enabled first by his mother's separation from the father, later by residential care and finally by being separated from his brother. He starts standing up against the staff in a way he never had done with his father.

Peer relationships seem to play an ambiguous role. In few cases, like Thibault (Rennes) there are accounts of growing up with other peers in an associative culture. Cristina (ACB Bologna) is attracted by her interest in older young people, including boys. Simon enters youth cultural scenes through his brother. In the care home, he is impressed by the discussion skills of a peer resident with the consequence that he joins him as a group delegate in the home council. For others, relevant peer relationships only evolve once they are engaged in the formal settings: "*I entered ... for an interest, I remained for the friendship that had established*" (Giovanna, ACB Bologna). In several cases, one has the impression that difficult relationships with peers (e.g. bullying) played a decisive role in engaging in a formal setting. Paula (Frankfurt) seems finding personal balance when she joins first an environmental political group and then YSR where she can secure recognition and belonging by investing her competencies in fulfilling clear tasks. Amanda does not mention any peer relationships except for being bullied by her friend in kindergarten and for playing football. Instead, she speaks about so many activities of engagement that no time and space seem left for 'mundane' youth cultural leisure activities.

Bullying belongs to experiences referred to in terms of *injustice* (Amanda, Martin) and can lead to withdrawal or aggressive behaviour (Simon, Paula). Coping is more difficult if injustice comes from parents like in the case of Simon. The question is also if and when the young people have words for unjust treatment. Amanda starts her self-presentation with the statement: "*Quite early on I became the victim of bullying due to my skin color and due to my hair which is curly Afro hair and this is based in racism, so quite early I became the victim of racism and bullying.*" She builds her narrative and identity on this early experience of being 'othered' while there may be other experiences of disrespect for which she does not have the words yet. Paula and Simon experience having no control over processes of youth welfare services which they evaluate as unjust. Injustice by teachers or professionals are mentioned especially once young people have appropriated a self-concept of resistance or rebellion such as Simon or Selin.

Learning from critical moments is mentioned in some of the biographies. Amanda recalls watching a TV programme on bullying and suddenly realised: "*... and I just, shit, that fits me, so I just to my mother, that I was the victim of bullying.*" The experience of recognition gives

way to a learning process in the course of which the young people also learn to present themselves accordingly. Giorgio (Frankfurt) remembers participating in a visit to a school in Latin America supported by his school as a social project and realising that the whole project was “*useless*” due to a discrepancy between ideology and reality. A special moment in Thibault’s biography (Rennes) is when he finds out at the age of 12 years that he and his friends are allowed and even supported in creating an association by an umbrella organisation. This experience is reinforced by being called into the board of this organisation at the age of 18.

Critical moments can be connected with and mediated by *significant others* as conveyers of insight and understanding or experienced as door openers. Amos constructs a biographical turning point in his young life (at age 11) in a situation connected to his father’s work: “... *a man came up to me and he was the ex-minister of liberty ... one thing I did take away from him was a mission or epiphany and enlightenment shall I say. And my dreams, my ambitions point to one word: revolution.*” In Manchester, he met an organisation aimed at supporting working class young people which seems significant also for other engaged young people: “*I met [organisation] last year and since then has been a dramatic almost life changing journey because of the amount of things I’ve been able to do ... This is probably one of those moments ... My friend was being mentored ... coincidentally I was there at the bus stop as well ... and they said we’re [organisation] and we do this - and meeting me at the time I was at, wanting to change the world, that’s exactly what I wanted to do.*” In contrast to Amos’ spontaneous ‘epiphany’, Amanda seems to have inherited and internalized her mother’s knowledge over time: “*She has worked with different things in life, that has given her knowledge about how different things look in society. My mom has always insisted on being a good person. ‘There are inequalities in society. If you see this, you should not wait for someone else to change but you should try to help’ ... Just the knowledge that we are black people and we need to be extra vigilant of racism and other injustices ... Mother was really aware of such things.*” She frequently refers to having “*always*” been “*aware*”, “*writing*”, “*fighting*”, “*had that role*” or “*wanted to change things in society*”. However, significant others not necessarily are individual persons but also personified organisations (like the scouts). Paula reports joining an ecological association “*and then my entire life started to change completely.*” She meets her first boyfriend who introduces her into left-wing circles from where she proceeds in to the youth and student representation (YSR).

In sum, the biographical constellations of young people in formal youth participation presented above reveal at least three important insights: first, most of them share relatively good starting positions, but the motivational processes and routes into formal youth participation vary considerably; second, these careers emerge from needs and motives for recognition and belonging which they share with other young people and which are not explicitly related with the respective participatory settings; third, it is not necessary their intrinsic interest or belief in a cause that makes them stay involved but the recognition and power tied to this engagement which in some cases provides access to attractive career prospects. As a conclusion, getting and staying involved with formal youth participation requires biographical constellations which are highly individualized and complex at the same time. Apparently, education and training for participation (or citizenship or democracy) are the least important factor accounting for these constellations while habitus formations that fit to formal participation start earlier, result from the interaction of different factors and develop differently also while staying involved.

4.5 Resume

In this chapter we have analysed formal settings of participation as most direct reflections of local constellations youth policies, clustered as youth councils, student councils, care home councils, extracurricular activities of citizenship education and youth information centres. Obviously, interpretation of findings has to take the small size of the sample into account.

It has been seen that depending on their institutional affiliation these settings have different mandates and they are differently supported financially and by staff. These settings reflect structures of social inequality inasmuch as among the engaged young people those from middle class families prevail and all seem ambitious in formal education and orientated towards academic careers. Being initiated or led by adults does not necessarily mean that adults are always present, yet the scope for own initiatives tends to be similarly limited. But there are differences with regard to the positioning of these settings and of the engaged young people between the world of adults and youth culture. The institutional structure of the settings is invested by an adult habitus that young people incorporate, yet not necessarily without modifying it and without experiences of ambivalence. This is especially visible in the analysis of the participation biographies of the young people. Some of them seem to have already developed a habitus of professional, adult policy maker, in the case of others – especially younger ones – there is still a discrepancy between their performance like adults and the adult role, while others again either do not feel the need to or feel ambivalent in assimilating adult role models. Finally, as regards the relationship between participation biographies and the characteristics of the settings, we see that especially young people engaged in the youth information centres perform as adults. In the youth councils we find young people who have developed a political mission which they follow empowered by recognition and resources provided by the institutional framework. Apart from this, youth and student councils and extracurricular activities seem attractive for young(er) people who struggle with peer and family relationships. In the formal settings, they find a context of belonging which they can secure by investing their skills in fulfilling predefined tasks.

These findings lead us to question the binary way in which youth-led activities are opposed to adult-led ones. Existing research has strongly focused on formal participation in terms of adult-led participation. However, based on our analysis one may differentiate that these settings are adult-initiated in the sense that they are institutionalised and implemented by mostly adult actors like policy makers and professionals. Thus, these settings entail norms and rules derived from adult-dominated institutionalised practices and consequently include what we have termed an adult citizenship habitus. This means that moving successfully and effectively in these structures requires incorporating a specific set of behaviours that allows that adults recognise their intentions when installing these mechanisms in the practices of young people. At the same time however, we have seen that there are constant struggles and negotiations on the lead in these settings with adults being more or less open and creative in sharing power with young people and young people more or less adaptive to the inbuilt norms and rules. In fact, there activities and situations that end up being co-opted by young people and that result in the development of young people's ownership and autonomy of practices. Apart from this, reducing settings of formal youth participation to the binary adults-youth entails the risk of neglecting other structures and processes that are obviously at work such as socio-economic inequalities, bureaucratically institutionalised policies, the subordinate role of youth policies

compared to other policy sectors like education or employment and last but not least the trend towards activation. However, young people are addressed as youth by institutional representatives and professionals who are – by role and definition – adults (even if sometimes of same age as addressees). Thus discursive order and practice create a space which among others is structured by the binary adults versus youth.

5. Comparative analysis of functions and power in local constellations of formal youth participation

Formal youth participation does not occur in a vacuum, but is embedded in national welfare states, global discourses and socio-economic trends. For this purpose, we start by relating the formal settings analysed in chapter 4 with the respective local constellations (3.). Then, we seek to analyse them in comparative perspective in terms of elaborating ideal-typical patterns of formal youth participation and contextualise these with regard to regimes of welfare and youth transitions. Third, we will try to elaborate the specific roles and effects of such settings in their respective local contexts taking into account their interrelation with contemporary discourses of youth participation. Finally, we will reflect on the relationships involved with a specific focus on the formation of an adult habitus inherent to formal youth participation.

5.1 Summary of formal settings in local constellations

In this section, we contextualise the formal settings of participation with regard to the respective local youth policy constellations. In the following, we present an overview over the studied formal cases according to their mandate, organisation structure, the positioning between youth and adults as well as the processes of agenda setting (see also table 4).

- *Gothenburg formal youth representation*: Dominant discourse is ‘youth as a resource’ which is reflected by a robust and diversified youth work infrastructure. Municipal youth policy is responsive tending to ‘absorb’ all initiatives, interests and movements. Formal participation is not only well equipped but also rooted in local districts. Thus many young people make experiences of recognition and are encouraged to bring their ideas and views into the public realm. However, this may also imply that all their initiatives are turned into a contribution to the system whereby they need to adapt to be understood and processed. In this case, the function of formal participation lead to a sort of ‘total’ inclusion.
- *Manchester formal youth representation*: ‘Split’ discourse between ‘youth as a problem’ reflected by the shift from a general youth work infrastructure towards problem-oriented youth policies and an image of ‘youth as a resource’ represented by formal youth representation which serves as a dispositive of youth engagement through the logic of sounding campaigns and enculturation into formal politics. Discrepancy between the enunciated content – posited in terms of representing the views of young people by young people, as a democratic forum for debate and decision – and the enunciation – adult-led politics and pedagogisation of the activities.
- *Frankfurt youth and student representation*: The focus on youth welfare traditionally relies on a discourse of youth as a problem. More recently, an emphasis on youth as a resource has gained importance, especially since the shifting of youth welfare to support school and

addressing social problems in school; similar to Manchester, youth as a resource and as a problem are closely linked, although the youth work infrastructure is still there. The school related youth representation can be understood as the deal: accept that your main status is studying then we will empower you to fulfil that role accordingly. In a similar way, participation in the *residential care home council* is limited to a narrow range of everyday life issues. However, compared to the student and youth representation limitations are more overtly justified by a youth as a problem approach which is constitutive for residential care.

- *Zurich student council* is embedded in a similar context to that of Frankfurt although the discourse in contrast highlights the competence of the great majority of the young people while the problematic aspects/groups seem rather being hidden. There is a question as to whether participation is less necessary because they are already participating as they should (as consumers and students) The focus lies in providing students with the experience of being active in shaping their lives as students while subjecting them to accepting the norms and rationales of school. Overabundance of opportunities for young people to “participate”

Table 4: Local constellations and formal participation settings

	Gothenburg	Manchester	Frankfurt	Plovdiv	Zurich	Eskisehir	Rennes	Bologna	
Local constellation									
Characteristic	<i>Young people as co-citizens in a segregated city</i>	<i>'Don't hate, educate' – unless you are struggling with surviving</i>	<i>Youth between schooling and 'chilling' – no mandate for youth policy</i>	<i>Youth policies for entrepreneurship or consumer infrastructure?</i>	<i>Competent young people using a clean and safe city</i>	<i>youth policy for 'transit youth' – modernity and tradition</i>	<i>First associate and institutionalise, then claim your rights</i>	<i>Legends of revolution but no rights and resources for young people</i>	
Socio-economic situation	Medium	Medium	Rich	Poor	Rich	Medium	Medium	Medium	
Youth policy									
<i>Responsive</i>	High	Low	Medium	Low	High	Low	Low	High	
<i>Infrastructure</i>	Yes	Yes/No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes/No	No	
<i>Formal setting</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	
Formal settings of youth participation									
Cluster of setting	Youth council		Home council	Student council		Youth information centre		Extracurricular	
Mandate and activities	Campaigns, consultation	Campaigns	Campaigns, consultation	Everyday life issues	Services and student rights	Social activities	Training and Services	Training and Services	Citizenship education
External organisation	Direct elections	Direct elections	Delegation by schools	Elected by co-residents	Direct elections	Delegation by classes	Recruiting & training users	Delegation by associations	Compulsory, choice of topic
Internal organisation	Inner group	Inner group, youth worker	Inner group	Group representatives	Inner group	Inner group, teacher	Top down from ministry	Top down from board	Inner group
Budget	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Marginal	No	Yes	No
Role of adults	Youth worker (copresence)	Youth worker (copresence)	Youth worker (copresence)	Director (copresence)	Administration (absence)	Teacher (copresence)	Adult setting	Adult setting	Director (absence)
Positioning	Youth in adult environment	Youth in adult environment	Youth in adult environment	Adult environment	Young people, adult habitus	Adult framed youth environment	Adult environment	Adult environment	Aadult framed youth environment
Agenda setting	Adult/Youth	Adult	Adult/Youth	Adult	Adult/Youth	Adult	Adult	Adult	Adult/Youth
Pattern of formal participation (5.2)	Recogniting and addressing	Lead process from above	Assigning a role	Lead process from above	Leave them alone/ providing without promoting	Assigning a role/ lead process from above	Lead process from above	Assigning a role/ lead process from above	Leave them alone without power

in terms of usage follows a logic of provision of services addressing primarily individual development and self-improvement.

- *Rennes youth information centre*: youth participation by educating young people non-formally and providing some of them access into the managing boards of non-formal education organisations. This implies understanding the rules and consequently climb up the hierarchy within associations, not necessarily in state institutions. Participation can be seen as reproduction of corporatist structures. This is reflected by counter movements such as *Nuits debout* which on the one hand criticise particularistic perspectives and selective access while at the same time struggling with not reproducing corporatist structures.
- *Plovdiv student council*: Youth participation appears in documents and is often marked as ‘coming from Europe’ (implying alienation and modernity) and is the realm of NGOs following particularistic interests. Participation is referred to as mechanism of transformation from state collectivism to market particularism. Participatory activity is often framed and outlined in terms of entrepreneurship which also applies to counter-initiatives. The student council seems focusing on individual careers and on services rather than on promoting a student counter culture in university and thereby fits the overall picture.
- *Eskisehir youth information centre*: Youth participation is primarily interpreted as consumerism in a transitory life stage and framed by an authoritarian regime combining modernist and traditionalist aspects. Youth policy and the limited scopes of participation seem aiming at reconciling modern western (youth) cultures with an authoritarian regime. The (supported) ways of using youth work as well as the predefined routes of young people becoming professional youth workers reveal specific ways of reconciling modernity and traditionalism (and exclude others).
- *Bologna anti-corruption group*: The lack of out of school youth infrastructure and formal youth participation makes the school the one and only reliable institutional setting for all young people. Citizenship-oriented extra-curricular activities reflect that formal and non-formal citizenship education only takes place in school in a large scale which means that – unlike other countries – school needs to provide not only teaching but also experience of participation – despite of centralised and bureaucratised school system. The extra-curricular activities are thus a compromise of providing non-formal citizenship education without youth work infrastructure. At the same time, in the specific case of Bologna, young people are being socialised in the local ‘spirit’ and habitus of the ‘fat and red’ city.

5.2 Patterns of formal youth participation in comparative perspective

This section is devoted to framing our findings with regard to local constellations of youth participation and formal participation settings into a wider comparative perspective. We will start by identifying key dimensions according to which local constellations of youth policies differ in facilitating youth participation, what factors are relevant for these differences and how these are reflected by concrete formal settings of youth participation. Moving from this set of dimensions, we elaborate a typology accounting for the patterns of formal youth participations, which means ideal typical configurations of formal youth participation in given local constellations of youth policy, and we will relate these to comparative models of welfare, youth policy and youth transitions. Finally, we will reflect on how recent changes in public policies

towards an activating welfare state have affected wider policy regimes and local constellations at city level and the role that youth participation plays in this respect.

What are *key differences* between the local constellations and the formal settings we have analysed and what *factors* account for these differences? This is a brief list of characteristics arising from the observation of local contexts, youth policies and participatory settings.

- *Socio-economic situation*: Youth policy and youth participation are obviously structured by different socio-economic situations in terms of overall economic performance. Levels of poverty, access to the labour market and to education and training affect young people's life conditions and thus the issues that count in their everyday lives. At the same time, they also influence the resources a city can dispose of in organising youth policies. However, youth policies do not only depend on the economy but also on political will.
- *Institutional arrangements of youth policy*: Local youth policies are in some cities coordinated by central departments, in others spread across different sectors. There is a correspondence between coordinated policies and the existence of robust and reliable youth work *infrastructure*, especially in Gothenburg, Frankfurt and Zurich. Possibly developments of specialised youth policies and youth work professionalism go hand in hand. Well-established youth policies can but do not necessarily have to be *responsive* to changes in young people's life conditions and to initiatives by young people themselves. Apparently, youth policies react more flexibly in Gothenburg and Zurich than in Frankfurt. Also in Bologna, the local government is in dialogue with young people but there is no well-established youth work and youth policy infrastructure. All in all, there is a specific combination of flexibility and structuredness in Gothenburg.
- *Role of counter-initiatives*: Lack of youth policy responsiveness and/or infrastructure are reflected by various counter-initiatives of young people. In Bologna, political protest is rooted and wide-spread but there is also the struggle for the city centre among different groups. In Frankfurt, young people respond to the pressure of education and training by strong reference to 'chilling', in Plovdiv young people respond to the expectation of 'being the future' by consumption and alternative youth culture, in Eskisehir and Rennes, the corporate structure of youth policy is reflected by a spatial division between students and disadvantaged youth. In Gothenburg, public support of young people's informal initiatives seems to contribute to their formalisation.
- *Mechanisms of youth representation*: There are cities with and cities without formal youth representation which may be classified as youth councils. In cities without formal youth representation more targeted settings like student councils, home councils or extracurricular citizenship education – existing in all cities – have to fill the gap. Youth information centres like in Eskisehir and Rennes are highly institutionalised forms of youth work reflecting specific corporatist youth policy constellations.
- *Resources and mandates*: Especially youth councils are equipped with resources in terms of money and professional support reflecting their mandate of learning to participate in a non-formal education way. University student councils have a budget but no support reflecting the older age of the target group and the combination of self-representation service provision. The limited funds and support of school-based settings reflect their limited and mainly educational mandate. The bigger budgets of youth information centres in Rennes and Eskisehir are not particularly managed by young people themselves.

- *Relationship between adults and young people* are reflected by how settings are positioned and position themselves between adults and young people in relation to young people as well as by deciding and setting the agendas of the settings. Here we have the youth councils which are youth contexts in adult environments where the agenda is either predefined by adults or negotiated between the dominant inner groups of young people and the adults supporting or framing the settings. In the university student council adults apparently do not interfere, yet the mandate is strongly institutionalised producing a quasi adult setting.

Across these different dimensions, one can distinguish five ideal typical *patterns of formal youth participations*. These patterns refer to particular relationships between local constellations of youth policies and formal youth participation settings. This also means that more than one pattern can be applied to a single local constellation and, conversely, that a specific pattern is expected to be found in more constellations even with different traits and intensity:

- *Recognizing and addressing*. This pattern refers to the relationship between a well-established and responsive youth policy and a well-equipped co-decision-making structure reaching out to city districts represented by the situation analysed in Gothenburg. There, the function of empowering young people to become ‘good’ citizens is underpinned by resources and non-formal education. Yet, recognition does not go without addressing someone as something – nobody is recognised as citizen without being addressed by the expectation of being a good citizen.
- *Assigning a role*. This pattern characterises the overall youth policy constellation in Zurich while in Frankfurt it also applies to the situation of the youth and student representation. Establishment and responsiveness do not reach the level of Gothenburg while forms of youth representation are limited. Their message towards ‘good’ young people is less powerful while reminding them of their role as students.
- *Providing without promoting*. University student councils are less educational while normally well-equipped with resources. The mandate is limited to representation as well as services related to the status of student in higher education. The intervention is more passive than active and is limited to concrete actions or provision of resources without any emphasis on a model of citizens to promote. Where they are the only or the main forms of representation like in Plovdiv (similarly in Bologna, Eskisehir and Rennes) they reinforce and demonstrate the social inequality of youth participation
- *Leading the process from above*. While youth policies and youth participation in general tend to have a paternalistic and pedagogical approach this is most obvious in settings which are not only initiated but led by adults such as Manchester formal youth representation with its focus on educational campaigns, Frankfurt home council and Zurich student council with their function of providing young people superficial and marginal influence or in Rennes and Eskisehir youth information centres where young people first have to adopt and display an adult habitus before being accepted in responsible roles.
- *Leaving them alone without power*. This type of relationship characterises the situation of the general youth policy constellation in Plovdiv and in Bologna where it also applies to the extracurricular citizenship education activities. Young people are not directly supported,

controlled and educated by co-present adults. However, the adults often define or manage the framework in which young people organise themselves in- or non-formally.

What is the relation between these patterns of formal youth participation at local level and national structures of welfare, youth policy and youth transitions in a *cross-country comparative perspective* (in the following, we refer to youth transition regimes thereby including the role of youth in welfare states)? They have emerged from inductive local mapping processes and ethnographic case studies and we have already shown that local youth policies only to some degree reflect national welfare systems (see section 3.2; cf. Mingione & Oberti, 2003). Even in centralised systems, local implementation allows for considerable variation and inequality between different local settings.

Nevertheless, previous studies on youth policies in Europe (IARD 2001), on meanings and scopes of youth participation in transition regimes (Walther, 2012b; Soler-i-Martí & Ferrer Fons, 2015) have revealed that there are both inconsistencies and correspondences. First, individual access of young adults to social benefits empowers participation in society by providing resources for living and consumption, decreasing dependency on unfair working conditions and fostering the recognition as a person with individual rights (cf. Honneth, 1995). Second, the IARD study (2001) revealed that in conservative welfare states youth policies are characterised by the principle of protection, while in universalistic welfare states young people enjoy a status equipped with both freedom of development and citizenship rights. There is also evidence that in the under-institutionalized welfare model dominates a sort of “safe dependency” under the familiar umbrella (cf. Chevalier, 2016). Third, comprehensive and permeable education systems versus early selection in school reflect different interpretations of a right for education and degrees of choice between routes which even applies to compensatory schemes in the transition regimes (Walther 2012b). Fourth, there are in fact correspondences between different institutional expressions of making young people citizens and ways of regulating their transitions to work (Soler-i-Martí & Ferrer Fons, 2015).

How do our own findings fit into this scheme? What relationship do we find between patterns of local youth policy and participation and youth transition regimes?

- In the case of the patterns of *recognizing and addressing*, there seems to be an obvious correspondence with the *universalistic* transition regime prevailing in the Northern European countries. This correspondence is explained first by the specific governance in Nordic countries characterised by a centralised system in which however municipalities have a powerful role and therefore the relationship between national and local level is based on exchange and dialogue. Second, both the universalistic way of regulating transitions and the response and recognition approach depart from a holistic and relatively unconditional concept of citizenship status; compared to other contexts young people have not to merit citizenship status (which however does not hold to the same degree for migrant youth).
- The pattern of *assigning a role* so far seems in line with the corporatist and employment-centred youth transition regimes (Germany, France and Switzerland). Here, young people are endowed with status and rights as long as they follow regular and standardised occupational trajectories and/or join the corporatist actors dominating the youth sector. This corresponds to the fact that those who succeed in school can choose between different pathways while those leaving with lower and middle qualifications are restricted to the vocational sector. However, this characterisation applies only partially to the situation in

these contexts. Within these institutional socialisation contexts, the participation rights are limited (see below) and channelled into standard procedures that should protect from “deviations” and leave the structure untouched.

- The pattern of *providing without promoting* does not fully fit into this model inasmuch as it rather refers to specific institutions (of higher education) with little variation across national contexts. It is still worth being listed inasmuch as in many countries (not only Bulgaria as Central and Eastern European country but also Italy, Turkey and to some extent France) it is the only relevant representation of young people reflecting the lack of institutionalised status of youth beyond the education system; and even there it is limited to the elite. Where dominant, this pattern has also aspects of the pattern assigning a role, yet without the same degree of resources and power.
- The pattern of *leading the process from above* spreads across various regime types. It covers the discrepancy between tokenistic youth campaigns and controlling social inclusion in Manchester, where it acts with a moralistic aim of preventing from deviance, danger and risks transitions. The approach of promising both youth and society a future in which diverging interests will be resolved characterizes, to some extent, the situation in Plovdiv and Eskisehir, representatives of two transformation societies. Furthermore, this effort can be found where participation is channelled within regular institutions like schools, residential care or youth information centres in Frankfurt, Zurich, and Rennes, all reflecting the conservative or employment-centred regime.
- The pattern of *leaving them alone without power* finally refers to constellations in which young people’s practices and claims are neither supported nor controlled, neither addressed nor recognised by youth policies. This applies to the general youth policy constellations, yet in different ways, in Eskisehir and Plovdiv as well as to the situation of the extracurricular activity of the Bologna anti-corruption group an apparently self-organised space, yet in a compulsory, controlled and fully institutionalised framework.

The analysis reveals that there are correspondences between formal youth participation at local level and the way in which national welfare states structure youth transitions. These boundaries are even more blurred if one takes recent political, economic and cultural changes within welfare states into account in which the global trend of activation converges with the path dependency of national welfare states. This change has been accentuated especially during the recent economic crisis and the related politics of austerity which has affected quality and accessibility of many services, especially in the fields of youth policies (Bradford & Cullen, 2014). There has been a generalized decline of infrastructures, also in the more structured welfare states, in favour of ‘targeted’ measures of labour market inclusion. Apparently, responsibilities have been decentralised to local authorities, yet often without increasing their resources. However, relationships between public and civil society actors have become more complex. The leading idea of activation is shifting to a more preventative approach in terms of investing early in education rather than later in compensation of risks and of increasing the emphasis on individuals’ responsibility for their own inclusion. The emphasis on economic productivity and human capital is reflected by the discourse on ‘youth as a resource’ which needs being “nourished” by providing opportunities of involvement and participation (European Commission, 2009). Activation, thus coincides with social investment but also

control and surveillance aimed at ensuring that individuals are 'active' in securing their social inclusion while youth participation serves to establish and legitimise self-responsibility as a positive value (Barbier 2001; Masschelein & Quaghebeur, 2005; Morel et al., 2011). Of course, activation and its repercussion on youth participation differ across youth transition regimes and across patterns of formal youth participation at local level (cf Walther, 2006, 2012a).

In the *universalistic* transition regime, activation is still embedded in a robust system of social security, education and training and is reflected by possibilities of choice between different education, training or employment options. This is reflected in the Gothenburg case by the level of youth work infrastructure, youth responsiveness and a broad and well-established system of representation mechanisms in terms of 'recognising and addressing'. Yet, also here the findings reveal how especially the experiences of recognition and support in formal youth participation imply the idea and ideology that the welfare state is there especially for those who take responsibility. The marginal role of counter initiatives suggests that the model is quite effective in including young people with different needs and interests into this culture. In the *liberal* regime type, activation is declined more in terms of workfare schemes and control aimed at encouraging individuals to get off the welfare, improving their employability chances in the future and gaining an early financial independence from their parents. The focus on campaigning in formal participation especially serves to display an ideal image of youth both for those addressed by social inclusion measures and for those functioning well in education and employment. They also help covering and hiding increasing social divisions. In the *conservative or employment-centred* regime, activation is being introduced as a counter model against traditional corporatist structures like standardised and selective education and training. Focusing on education and training is therefore a compromise which is reflected by mechanisms of formal youth representation as well as by stressing associations providing non-formal education. In the *under-institutionalised and transformative* youth transition regimes, the crisis and the withdrawal of public welfare have produced a paradoxical situation where growing opportunities of self-determination for the young people is not supported with adequate resources. The lack (absence) of established infrastructures in formal contexts limits the impact of activation as emancipatory process, whereas integration in the labour market and society largely derives from the availability of individual or familiar resources and does not contribute to reduce the social inequalities (especially Bologna and Plovdiv). In the case of Eskisehir, this combines with a situation of external pressure on youth from central institutions (State, parties) which aim at redistributing resources and positions and controlling the set of social opportunities for the young people.

Comparative analysis thus reveals that ideal-typical patterns of formal youth participation first of all reflect local youth policy constellations while being not a direct consequence but definitely not in contradiction with national structures of welfare and wider youth transition regimes. It has also revealed that and how the recurrent re-organising of welfare not only affects local youth policies and thus youth participation but in fact refers to specific discourses of youth participation. One might conclude that under conditions of activating welfare, formal youth participation does no longer 'only' reproduce but contributes to the modernisation of an adult habitus of citizenship.

5.3 Relevance and functions of formal youth participation in local constellations

In this section, we want to analyse the role that formal settings of youth participation play in the local youth policy constellations and if there are differences according to the patterns that we have elaborated. The analysis of mismatches (see 3.3) as well as of the functioning of these settings (see 4.) seems to have confirmed a wide-spread critique of tokenism and ambivalence in adult-led youth participation (see also 2.). Against the backdrop of this critique and taking the distance of most young people with regard to formal youth participation into account the question why policy makers – as well as those young people who actually engage – continue to reproduce these forms and understandings of youth participation. While we see that it is particular actors on the side of adults and young people who make formal settings relevant as ‘youth participation’, the question is what are the effects and contributions of these practices for the local context in general and for these actors in particular that legitimise these mechanisms.

One assumption is that these practices have proved as effective and efficient in enabling the actors concerned for being active in other practice situations. Another is that these actors have the power and/or are empowered through this practice. Asking for the ‘role’ or the ‘function’ of formal youth participation serves to overcome the opposition between “agency” and “structure”, as commonly understood, by realising how a certain structure is always already operating in an individual action and, conversely, how “structure” is completely depended on all the individual actions that sustain it as a “structure”. Thus, we understand functions as relationships in terms of configurations of structure and agency by which power relationships are expressed and reproduced by individual agency. Such configurations are contingent while dominance and routinisation (Elias, 1978). This way, we do not apply a structure-functionalist perspective assuming a mere top down institutionalisation of such settings in order to support predefined values and goals (whose goals and values would that be?) but rather a perspective inspired by practice theory and neo-institutionalism (cf. Meyer & Rowan, 1977, Schatzki, 1996). Such a perspective asks which practices follow from and/or are made possible by specific practice constellations. This means we do not assume that these policies follow a clear plan and strategy of distinct policy ‘makers’ but rather evolve and survive because they prove useful for different actors. Here, reflection of the discursive practices involved in youth participation seems necessary inasmuch as these relate specific knowledge – what is youth participation and how is it practised – with specific subject positions and power relationships.

Legitimising institutional control and normalisation of youth

A very obvious and important role of youth and student councils is that of legitimation. Already in the 1970s social planning included mechanisms of participation aimed at legitimising interventions in public space and in the lives of citizens and at organising consent. We find this function most clearly represented by the patterns ‘providing without promoting’ and ‘leading the process from above’ especially where the home council is concerned. In these contexts, young people are subjected to institutionalised hierarchy and control and the aim of these institutions actually is enforcing adaptation on the side of the young people. As this adaptive socialisation depends on the internalisation by the young people, control and hierarchy need to be concealed or better legitimised – through more or less democratic procedures of transparency and co-determination. Formal participation thus serves to soften control that young people’s growing up does not pose any threat to the given institutionalised order but makes sure that they

enter into the current political and economic order: “The strategies aimed at empowering participants may serve to merely prescribe behaviour in the context of the existing status quo rather than actually providing participants with the tools to challenge the roots of their disempowerment” (Crawshaw 2000, p. 10). This control is possible by bringing those into power who identify and/or feel comfortable with existing institutional structures by recognising and encouraging them but also by supporting (or educating) them in adopting an ‘adult’ habitus (see below). In the formal settings we analysed, questions are rarely raised about the kind of society young people are supposed to be part of. The effect (intended or not) seems to be adapting young people to an already given society, through active citizenship. As a result, most of the activities developed are not political, but ‘technical’, following a logic of provision of services excluding crucial political issues. In Manchester, there was the explicit indication from major officers not to talk with young people about the European referendum or about party politics. In Zurich’s school student committee, all activities are supervised by a teacher who interferes when the discussions do not seem to correspond to the tasks and topics of the committee. Residents of care may raise critique against the restriction of WiFi in the care home but their influence is limited to choice of meals or destinations of excursions

Crisis management

Legitimation and normalisation are closely related with the aspect of crisis management. Some formal settings have been implemented after or with reference to former riots and protest (and Zurich, to some extent also Eskisehir) or as an ‘excuse’ for and symbolic recognition of the difficult socio-economic conditions young people have to face like poverty, unemployment (especially Bologna). Crisis management is inherent to both the pattern of ‘leaving them alone’ and that of ‘leading the process from above’. Young people are portrayed not only as being apathetic and disconnected from politics, but also potentially dangerous and prone to actions that disturb the social order (Gordon, 2007). In the face of actual or potential riots or public manifestations, there is a need to exert control “by way of re-channelling a popular uprising into acceptable parliamentary-capitalist constraints” (Žižek, 2013: 114). In the light of potential uprising and of actual precariousness, youth participation on the hand symbolises that society ‘cares’ while at the same time performs the concern that young people’s time is not “wasted”. This is paradoxically accompanied by a disavowal of adult responsibility

As mentioned by Foster and Spencer (2010, p. 127), “youth ‘problems’ seem especially well suited to risk-factor analysis because young people, defined in various ways, are so often framed as adults-in-the-making, and thus, intervention in their lives is considered crucial for protecting governing interests”. This is what is present in the idea of preparing youngsters for the future and of addressing youth ‘as a resource’. All youth participation has to occur within a certain ‘productive’ frame. In a society of permanent self-enhancing and productivity, activities like hanging around, chilling out, protesting, etc. are seen as a ‘waste of time’. Dillabough (2009) calls it the “utilitarian idea of youth” (p. 216), where young people are perceived as a commodity that cannot be wasted but needs to be made – or better: make itself – useful. Especially in settings characterised by the patterns of ‘leading the process from above’ and ‘assigning a role’ (i.e. especially in Rennes, Manchester, Zurich or Frankfurt to some extent also in Plovdiv) youth functions as a disavowal mechanism, whereby adults allocate to young people the solution for societal problems. Such a framing sheds a new light into the tokenism of youth participation. As studies have been showing, tokenistic practices are responsible for a

staging of participation in which adults appear to take young people's interests into account and make efforts to promote youth participation (Hill et al, 2004; Wyness, 2003; Malone & Hartung, 2010; Van Vlaenderen & Neves, 2004). However, by using young people as tokens, adults are not only showing their interest in youth participation, they disavow in youth, participation as such.

Creating a world of politics without the political

Connected to the legitimising role of formal youth participation to prevent “negative dynamics” like “the discussion of some of the most significant events in school life and hinders a critical reflection of their [students'] situation at school” (Batsleer et al., 2017, pp. 116-117) is the aim of youth policies of providing a positive perspective. In this way, youth participation characterised as ‘assigning a role’ and ‘lead from above’ like the formal youth representations in Frankfurt and Manchester or the school committee in Zurich, ‘providing without promoting’ like in the student councils and to some extent also Gothenburg formal youth presentation characterised as ‘recognising and addressing’ perform an important role in the enculturation of young people into a world of ‘sanitised’ politics, in which non-consensual topics are not foreseen and the emphasis is rather placed on ‘solving contingent problems’ and providing ‘useful services’. In the councils, young people are introduced into rules and procedures that appear to secure transparent and democratic decision-making according to which solutions and decisions can be legitimised as consensual and as the best possible ones. In contrast, the conflictual and antagonistic nature of democracy is foreclosed and replaced by a staged democracy where young people pretend or believe to do politics but without the negativity of questioning the adequacy of established rules and routines while being engaged in improving current social arrangements.

Designing and displaying ‘empowered young people’ and ‘good citizens’

The analysed settings function as a showcase for what adults conceive to be ‘perfect’ young people and ‘good’ future citizens – which has different meanings in different contexts. There is an emphasis on empowering those who “are currently disinterested, and the inclusion into the social, economic and political mainstream of those currently marginalised” (Geddes and Rust 2000, p.44). However, our analysis reveals that where the most disadvantaged fail to be involved working with the motivated, well-educated and ‘smart’ young people means less effort and conflict for policy makers and institutions. It also serves to display how empowered young people and ‘citizens in the making’ (can) look. In the pattern ‘leading the process from above’ this is even more crucial as recently youth policies have dismantled youth work infrastructure and targeted the social inclusion of youth at risk. The ‘message’ of displaying young people ‘in power’ thereby addresses both the ‘disadvantaged’ and the ‘normal’ ones. This applies also in contrasting constellations of youth participation characterised as ‘recognising and addressing’ and ‘leaving them alone’. On the one hand, in Bologna or Plovdiv initiatives of particular young people – that are active without public support – are recognised by dialogue or visibility which is a ‘cheap’ way of showing care and concern while at the same time displaying that one does not have to wait for help from the state but ‘can do’ things oneself. On the other hand, the responsive youth policy with mechanisms of co-determination rooted in a diverse youth work infrastructure, reveals that playing by the democratic rules is rewarded by support and recognition. While most young people in Plovdiv and Bologna do not trust the fragile façade, young people in Gothenburg have e positive experiences even when testing the reliability of

support and the credibility of recognition. In fact, sustainable recognition of a great diversity of needs and initiatives of young people makes youth policies ‘effective’ in designing and displaying ‘good’ citizens ‘in the making’. This way youth participation complements formal education in fostering young people’s learning and personal development. In sum, empowering young people contributes to distinguish between those who are engaged and those who are not. This in turn enables regulation, surveillance and disempowering them to move beyond the dominant discourse of youth (as a resource).

Fun and growth – why (some) young people enjoy formal participation

the analysis of participation biographies of young people actually involved in formal participation reveals that – beyond the discursive practices of legitimation, disavowal and displaying ‘good’ citizens – that involvement for many of them means both growth and fun. On the one hand all of them refer to personal development through the recognition they have experienced, the responsibility they have been given over and the activities they have learned to do. On the other hand, they refer to the fun they have with each other within the peer contexts emerging within these adult-oriented frameworks. Although many of them criticise the superficial and tokenistic role of formal youth participation as “*the lapdog of politics*” (GD YRG, Gothenburg) they enjoy what they do. Their inside view is not one of adaptation but of appropriation and negotiation, of making adult politics more youthful while distinguishing them from those young people ‘out there’ who they refer to as demotivated and disinterested – thus creating the ‘niche’ (or the elite) of those who know better (than adults and peers). The attachment to something identified as ‘wrong’ can only be explained in terms of enjoying the gains it brings (Lacan, 2007; Žižek, 2010). This dimension of enjoyment is important in keeping young people attached to activities they identify as irrelevant or tokenistic. In a way, youth participation can be a privileged way towards ‘adulthood’ in terms of politics, lifestyle and habitus – of learning how to do and profit from activities one does not believe in.

In sum, we can state that a common denominator of formal, adult initiated youth participation is recognising specific ways of moving in institutionalised settings. These ways differ according to settings and local contexts, however they can be interpreted as providing young people a niche in which they can appropriate an adult habitus of citizenship by mimetic and assimilatory learning, by experimenting or also transforming (and thereby modernising) it. In the analysed local constellations these settings play an important role as bridge for a future ‘elite’ to develop and grow up in compromising between being young and becoming adult in a privileged situation of recognition and power. It is important to see the different and changing welfare state contexts in which these constellations are embedded: between the universalistic Swedish model of celebrating and empowering young people as co-citizens and the under-institutionalised Turkish model with its particular amalgam of opening for modern consumer culture and traditional authoritarian governance. Across these differences, the trend towards forming citizens that enjoy rather than escape from taking on responsibilities seems obvious.

5.4 The power involved in forming an adult habitus and ‘making’ citizens

In the previous sections, we have first analysed how settings of formal, adult-led youth participation are framed by local youth policies and national welfare regimes (5.2). The term ‘regime’ already indicates that welfare and – as a part of it – also youth policies are constellations of power relationships between individuals, families, market and state. We have

also pointed to the change of such power relationships under the heading of ‘activation’ implying an increased emphasis on self-responsibility. In a next step (5.3), we have elaborated configurations of these settings and the role they play in their local and national policy contexts. This analysis has drawn especially on the positioning of these settings between adults and young people and the ways in which agenda setting is influenced by this. Apparently, the settings represent different power relationships in terms of recognition they receive from policy actors, financial resources and infrastructural capacities. Especially, youth councils (and here first of all Formal Youth Representation Gothenburg), the university student council in Plovdiv or those young people engaged in the management of the Youth information centre in Rennes seem to have much more power – in terms of possibilities to influence municipal youth or university policies. At the same time, one may also say that they are more subjected to specific forms of institutionalised power. We have interpreted this as the formation of an adult habitus of citizenship which is inherent to and results from these particular practices of participation. Differences result from different social contexts which implies different meanings and form of adult citizenship as well as from different resources, rights and responsibilities and consequently power connected to respective subject position.

We want to conclude the analysis by elaborating the power relationships inherent to the patterns of formal youth participation. In a tentative way, we will theorise the relationships elaborated in the previous section by using different concepts of power for their interpretation.

Being initiated by adults is a key indicator of what we have referred to as ‘formal’ youth participation, being positioned and having to position themselves between adults and other young people is a challenge for those engaged and formation of an adult habitus that fits into the transformation of the welfare state has revealed to be key function and effect of such settings. Thus, formal youth participation embedded in a generational order. In his classic article “The Problem of Generations” Mannheim (1952) underlines the links between the socio-historical context and the emergence of an actual generation. Being socialized in a certain historical context does not translate into being a uniform and homogeneous. According to Mannheim, different reactions to the same historical context form different generation units within the actual generation. Nevertheless, despite these different reactions, they share the same historical context (which nowadays might be formulated in terms of being addressed and formed within the same discursive order). The current youth participation discourse has emerged in a global and neoliberal context with its profound crises such as (youth) unemployment, poverty, migration, and the decreasing sovereignty of national welfare states. We have elaborated that crisis management is one important function of formal participation. The way in which generations are being structured and institutionalised implies that young people are socialised for adapting to, surviving in and taking responsibility for this particular social situation which empowers and disempowers them at the same time. We have interpreted this as being subjected to a mechanism of disavowal. If we take ‘addressing and recognising’ and ‘leaving them alone’ as two extremes of a continuum on which generation relationships between adults and young people are institutionalised and addressed by youth policies, the different power relationships and their consequences become visible. In Gothenburg adults share power to a larger extent and thereby ‘convince’ young people of the gains connected to taking adult-like roles, in Bologna or Plovdiv young people experience the power of adult habitus by being excluded from it.

However, we have also seen that being subjected to a generational order (or power) does not occur automatically. We have seen on the one side that establishing formal participation is way of organising consent which on the other side implies negotiation and conflict. The concept of *hegemony* may therefore help explaining power relationships in formal youth participation. Gramsci (1971) distinguishes hegemony from domination, which means direct physical coercion, by the combination of ideological control and consent. According to him, modern regimes can not sustain themselves only through organised state power and armed force but also need legitimacy and consent through a dominant culture of institutions, ideas and beliefs rooted in people's lived experience and common world-view. This "organic ideology" allows supporting the status quo and legitimising the differential power among social groups. However, this also implies that subaltern groups have possibilities of articulating different visions and alternatives to what is held as normal and legitimate. Gramsci uses the expression "counter-hegemonic struggle" to indicate the conflict for power, control, and recognition. In the formal settings, there are many examples of "domination by consent" () and relatively few cases of resistance against such form of control. Following Gramsci's assumption, a hegemonic design acts whenever adults predefine mechanisms of representation and participation and young people share the assumptions of their functioning. For instance, adults try to convince young people that is 'better' for them to participate in official initiatives and not promoting autonomous activities (as in Frankfurt), to achieve common agreement instead of opening discussion (as in Manchester), while in Gothenburg the mere setting seems convincing enough for the young people. All these implicit or explicit expectations form the image of 'good citizens' and are shared by the young people when they get involved. Yet in some cases, they are also contested like in the students' fight against the proposals of the school management in Zurich or the conflictive discussions on the agenda-setting in Frankfurt. However, rather than aiming at counter-hegemony against the institutional settings, these expressions of opposition result fragmented, episodic attempts of pursuing narrow objectives and partial winnings.

In that sense, the formal settings we studied indeed make up a "hegemonic" constellation (or discourse) of participation, led by adults and contributing to the design and display of 'good' young people and legitimising institutional control and normalisation of youth. Batsleer et al. (2017, p. 133) classified all the participation settings analysed in PARTISPACE as hegemonic, in decline/residual and newly emerging. The formal participation settings are ideal typical for hegemonic settings due to their organisational structures, procedures and budgets as well as due to the recognition they provide young people. This hegemonic position also explains their positioning between youth and adults and that the experience of recognition makes young people stay involved despite their critique of tokenism.

This hegemonic constellation is also reproduced through the – often gendered – hierarchy between the members and the non-members and between the 'normal' members and the core group of 'leaders'. Interestingly, the subject position of formally engaged young people is legitimised by representing 'other' young people from whom they distance themselves the longer they are involved in formal participation. These hegemonic settings are marked by "distinction" (Bourdieu, 1986) and reflect a power relationship not only between adults and young people but also between insiders and outsiders. This distinction reproduces certain social and cultural capital but also implies accepting the rules, obligations and advantages of a certain adult habitus. Thus, "habitus" is another key concept to analyse power relationships within formal youth participation. Bourdieu defines habitus as "systems of durable, transposable

dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations” (1990, p. 53). The concept helps in overcoming the binary between social structure and individual agency by interpreting socialisation as a process of incorporating a specific set of practices by which a given social field is structured and which are endowed with specific forms of power (cf. Wacquant, 1992:3). The adult-led, formal settings are structuring structures where young people are empowered and learn to become ‘good’ citizens. However, ethnographic research has shown that they also serve as “structuring structures“ for the young people to create their own place and generate new practices through transforming the habitus in interaction both with adults and their peers even though this contribute to creating a world of politics without the political while “enjoying“ themselves.

The relation between power and enjoyment leads to another heuristic concept for explaining power relations. According to Foucault (1979), power is exercised between subjects who might not recognise themselves as actors of power and power is not a substance that can be deposited in subjects (the non-Foucauldian notion of empowering) or kept by some sovereign figure (like the monarch). The main objective when analysing power relations is not so much to decipher how power is present in ‘such or such’ institution, or group, or elite, or class but rather how individuals ‘freely’ participate in a certain technique or exercise of power. An analysis of the power relations in formal settings of youth participation will thus not frame the problem in terms of a struggle between those who have power (usually adults, or enfranchised young people) and those who have not (young people). Instead, Foucault invites to analyse how subjects participate in power relations within a certain structural arrangement.

In his studies on changing governance and power relations in neoliberalism, Foucault (ibid.) developed the notion “entrepreneur-of-the-self” Governance is no longer only exerted by disciplinary (such as school, factory or prison) or bio-political regimes (welfare state), but also, and perhaps more important today, through the “self-governing” that individuals deploy on themselves, constantly pressured to optimise their skills, emotions, health, bodies, etc. Within this logic, the ‘self’ is seen as an investment but “how can one govern individuals who are conceived of as autonomous agents of free market choices, i.e., as ‘entrepreneurs-of-the-self’” (Žižek 2013, p. 42)? The “individualisation of social policy” implied by the activating welfare state (see 5.1) contributes to outsource decision-making and risks from companies and states to individuals even if these do not have “the necessary resources or power to do so” (ibid.). This does not only imply that a subject has to work on its self, being the sole responsible for its own optimisation, but to assume individual guilt for failure in case of not being competitive enough.

This logic is also at work in youth policy: “Young people are subject to ‘adult’ discourses and regulations while at the same time carrying certain adult responsibilities and entitlements over which they have little power” (Walsh et al 2017, p. 221). One might argue that competencies and responsibilities of formal youth participation are too limited to apply for activation. However, the analysis across the different patterns shows that resistance against these limitations is marginal (like in Frankfurt Youth and Student Representation or Home Council). At the same time, especially the analysis of biographical interviews reveals how young people have accepted and internalised the offer/demand of taking responsibility both for their participatory activities and for their careers self. For example, Amanda or Thibault have taken the opportunities inherent to formal participation and at the same time subjected themselves in

a way to their logics, norms and rules that they can make the most of them in terms of both power and professional careers. In other cases like Rada or Paula, young people blame themselves for previous failures in school or studies, accept the rules and limitations of youth participation and rather reproduce them by distancing themselves from those who are not engaged.

The trend towards formation of entrepreneurs of the self can be observed across the different patterns. However, one may assume that it is particularly effective where the access to power and resources is more sustainable like in the youth councils or the university student council. Raby (2014) affirms that youth participation deepens neo-liberal individualisation, and obfuscates structural inequalities “because the focus [of participation] is on individualised responsibility and autonomy” (p. 80). The focus is less on working collaboratively to achieve common goals – and to mobilise other young people – but to improve themselves.

In sum, analysing formal youth participation with regard to power relationships allows understanding that and how they fit into the individualised world of neoliberal democracy promoted by the activating welfare state. On the one hand, they prove as conveyors of a specific context-specific citizenship habitus, on the other hand they achieve that young people take responsibility for this process and for themselves, especially where youth participation is equipped with more power, resources and perspectives of promotion and progression.

2. Conclusions

6.1 Local youth policies and formal youth participation – power to the (young) people or marriage of convenience?

Our analysis documented in this report has shown a complex picture of how youth participation is contextualised differently in different cities, how it is addressed and supported in different ways by local youth policies, how this is reflected by different forms of formalised youth participation as well as by mismatches and informal ‘responses’. As regards the context, only socioeconomic resources, political will, and specific youth political approaches pointing towards and infrastructure of youth work and a responsiveness of youth policies together make a difference. Analysing mismatches and informal activities has allowed drawing a sharper picture of the kind of participation that youth policy actually address explicitly and produce implicitly.

The comparison of cases has elaborated five different patterns that differ according to mandate and organisation, resources and positioning between adults and youth: recognition and addressing, assigning a role, providing without promoting, lead the process from above and leaving them alone without power. These patterns are reflections, first, of local youth policy constellations, second, of how national welfare states operate as regimes of youth transitions and third of the contemporary shift towards the activating welfare state. As comparative analysis of policies at local level provides too complex pictures for elaborating models or typologies, constellations stand for the ideal typical relationships of specific local cases that emerge when comparing them with other local cases. At the same time, analysis of the functioning of formal settings has revealed the explicit and implicit functions these play for local youth policies and within urban contexts and the internal and external power relationships

involved. In all the formal settings, young people are addressed as young people and thus positioned and have to position themselves somewhere in between the world of adults and the world of young people. The clearer initiated and institutionalised by adults, the more recognised and institutionalised the settings, the more young people seem inclined, tempted or under pressure to develop an adult habitus. At the same time, analysis has revealed that young people do not simply adapt to the existing norms and rules and internalise the inbuilt habitus but in their process of appropriation (cf. Zimmermann et al., 2018) negotiate, modify and re-signify it (cf. Rowley et al., 2018) in order to identify as young people with the respective tasks and activities (while some adults involved in these settings are more willing and reflexive to share power). This leads to the question how young or how youthful is or can youth participation be – at least if actively promoted and recognised by youth policy actors and institutions; or viceversa: how adult do young people have to perform in order to receive space, recognition and power?

The biographical analysis in this report like in the report by Cuconato et al. (2018) and similar to the analysis of different spaces and styles of youth participation (Andersson et al., 2018; Rowley et al, 2018) reveals the diversity of biographical and life course trajectories into youth participation, even within the same practice, activity or setting. At the same time it has also become visible that what young people were searching for when getting involved with the formal settings (as much as with the informal ones analysed in the other reports) were primarily belonging and recognition; and for different reasons the young people interviewed in the formal settings found these in youth councils, extra-curricular activities or youth information centres. Apparently, youth participation is related with habitus formation in a double sense: the different ways of young people getting involved and active in public spaces expresses different habitus while in the participatory activities different processes of habitus formation are reinforced. While it seems obvious that the powerful recognition connected to formal settings helped these particular young people in fulfilling their biographical needs, they had less problems in compromising with the adult habitus these settings implied and required.

There is another important insight from analysing the ways in which formal participation is involved in structures and dynamics of power and empowerment and from relating it with the context of activating welfare. Apart from forming an adult habitus, formal settings of youth participation do so in a way that adapts adult habitus to a societal context to which one may refer as late modern (Giddens), neoliberal (Zizek) or post-democratic (Crouch) in which assuming responsibility is rewarded while claiming provision and support is more and more rejected from the discursive realm of ‘what can be said and seen’. Formal participation serves as a performance – in terms of both the stage and the enactment – of how citizens need to be in this environment and that it is possible – and even joyful – to perform citizenship in this way. It can be interpreted as a mode of subjectivation in terms of empowering young people while at the same time subjecting and conditioning them to a specific mode of citizenship and agency.

Finally, we want to clarify that we do not interpret the findings of our analysis in the sense that formal participation is only tokenistic and instrumentalising young people. We have seen that young people search and experience recognition, invest creativity and are empowered in different ways through involvement in formal participation. However, at the same time we have on the one hand seen that significant efforts are being made to involve a rather small minority

of young people while on the other hand empowerment always implies both becoming a powerful agent while also subjected to the same power relationships.

6.2 Policy recommendations: reflexivity, responsiveness, recognition – investment, infrastructure, innovation – conflict, creativity, credibility

What does this analysis imply for policy and practice? One could expect that one conclusion would be that policies should withdraw from fostering youth participation in any way as even where it is most generous, well-equipped, responsive and recognised it appears contributing to subjecting young people to the neoliberal logic of taking responsibility for biographical and political processes. However, even if this option is merely academic policy recommendations may start from here with emphasising that PARTISPACE does not focus on promoting a specific model of youth participation. The concern is rather analysing how specific youth and participation policies – often tokenistic ones – educate young people for models of youth participation that serve other policy purposes while ignoring, hiding or stigmatising other practices by which young people try to secure belonging and recognition in and by wider society.

Against this backdrop, there are some aspects that policy making and practice development concerned with fostering youth participation may consider:

- *Reflexivity*: Both organisations and professionals working for and with young people need to develop mechanisms of reflecting what they are doing, why they are doing it and what the consequences – intended and non-intended – are. This includes taking into consideration that fostering formal participation is not per se something positive; that supporting specific forms of (formal) participation may exclude not supporting others (informal ones) which means also to support specific groups of young people (fitting to the formal settings) while not supporting specific other groups (those who are sceptical towards formal institutions); that policies always are also symbolic gestures providing messages and expectations how young people should be (like those who fit to formal participation, not those who are sceptical). Thus, reflexivity is vital to break circles of reproduction of social inequality by formal youth participation. Reflexivity needs to extend to the dynamics and processes within the formal settings and to the positioning between adulthood and youth. Reflexivity however does not mean anything without flexibility and responsiveness.
- *Responsiveness*: Reflexivity in fostering (formal) youth participation needs to go along with responsive youth policy, that means youth policy that considers policies as proposals that are to be negotiated, appropriated or rejected by young people or – as young people have different and developing needs and interest – constantly changed and diversified; what may be appropriate for one group does not work for another, what may fit their needs one day, may no longer be relevant the next one. And non-intended effects may only become visible after some time. If offers are not taken up by young people, this does not mean that they are in principle not necessary and relevant but that perhaps they are not relevant in the way in which they are implemented. Responsiveness implies watching and listening, if necessary asking back and being open for dialogue. Again, openness for dialogue may imply different spaces, moments and symbolic gestures for different groups and individuals.
- *Recognising informal, non-organised or non-institutionalised participation*: A key element of reflexivity and responsiveness is recognition (the triple R) which in this case refers

primarily to the practices and initiatives not institutionalised by youth policies but emerging from young people's searches for recognition and belonging and for spaces in which they can experiment with own practices of coping with their precarious lives, fragmented identities and uncertain future perspectives. Obviously this includes all different kinds and forms of protest of young people. These initiatives are expressions of what is not addressed and covered by formal youth policies and formal youth participation and thus need to be recognised as proposals for innovation – even if practices are limited to new spaces and practices of hanging out and 'chilling' as existential in coping with being a young person under conditions of accelerated neoliberal capitalism.

- *Recognising young people's dilemmas* of engaging in formal participation such as the risk of losing the legitimation, acceptance and credibility of their peers once they develop an adult habitus implied by being involved in formal participation. This needs not only recognising but appreciating young people's attempts of appropriating, changing and flexibilising the institutionalised formats. Further this means accepting conflict – especially in setting the agenda or developing rules – not as disturbing problems but as necessary for identification and innovation. This extends to the dilemmas evolving from gendered, classed, and ethnic stereotypes in internal division of roles. Participatory groups need leader figures which at the same time reproduces internal inequality. Mechanisms within the groups reflecting and reversing such inequalities need to be offered support, yet without interfering and alienating those in weaker positions from their group (→ reflexivity).
- *Youth policy and youth work infrastructure* may sound contradictory to the triple R of recognition, reflexivity and responsiveness. In fact, it is not. One might also say that reflexivity, responsiveness and recognition without spaces, mechanisms and actors that allow for continuity and reliability vanish into tokenistic actionism without sustainability – which is typical for the activating welfare state which actually has turned infrastructure of social services into temporary projects. However, reconciling infrastructure with responsiveness, reflexivity and recognition of the non-institutionalised requires “institutions in the form of anti-institutions” as German social pedagogist Hans Thiersch (1986: #) has defined a key prerequisite of lifeworld oriented social work. This means institutions – like for example organisations and spaces of open youth work – that are reliably accessible in a neighbourhood but prepared to change their activities and decision-making procedures from one day to the other in negotiation with their actual and potential users – or: *'breathing' institutions*.
- Developing and maintaining a youth policy and youth work infrastructure does not come without *financial investment* while at the same time is a way of securing a level of investment once achieved. Robust investment is also essential for a diversified infrastructure that does not only address and fir the needs and interest of well-educated middle class youth but youth from diverse social, ethnic and religious backgrounds. It needs being said that a breathing infrastructure is more expensive than a bureaucratic and hermetically closed one because reflexivity and responsiveness are time- and communication-intensive. Their return is that of youth policies that effectively contribute to preventing social exclusion and keep democracy alive beneath and beyond institutionalised politics.

- *Support democratic and democracy learning without pedagogisation:* Educating young people for active citizenship is a key aim of formal participation programmes. However, participation biographies rarely start from being informed and taught but from experience of participation, experience which is almost always connected to experience of belonging and recognition. This means that (formal) participation that requires learning specific knowledge and skills before getting involved to ensure involvement in the ‘right’, ‘realistic’ and ‘effective’ way undermines its democratic potential. Young people learn democracy by doing and especially if this learning is being recognised and if reflection of this learning is offered but not imposed (with the legitimisation that they have not yet learned and understood well enough) where young people themselves want to improve and develop their activities.

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